

Imagine the Possibilities!

A call to invest in Tennessee, its communities, and its people

Tennessee is a beautiful state with rich natural resources, strong communities, and a positive vision of tomorrow. Unfortunately, our great state is being short-changed by elected officials who have failed to make the needed public investments.

While every year we hear about Tennessee having a surplus or deficit of a few million here or there, these numbers mean little because they only measure revenue against previous years and

the low expectations of our elected officials. They fail to account for how far behind Tennessee is to begin with.

If we measured revenue against what it would take to fund public structures at the neighboring-state average, Tennessee would have a combined state and local deficit of \$3.4 billion. With real tax reform, we can begin to close the public investment and performance gap that is preventing us from reaching our full potential as a state.

Education: Tools for the 21st Century

Tennessee under funds education to the tune of \$2.1 billion when compared to our eight border states. If Tennessee's public investment and performance levels for education were on par with our neighboring states, 32,000 more young adults would be enrolled in our public universi-

ties and colleges, 49,000 more adults would have bachelors degrees in Tennessee, 3,300 more eighth graders would be considered proficient or better in math, and 47,000 more adults would have high school degrees.

Natural Resources: Protecting our Quality of Life

Tennessee's public investment level in environmental protection, parks, and agriculture lags \$300 million behind the region. Meanwhile cancer-causing chemicals released to the environment in Tennessee

are twice the neighboring-state average. While the amount of toxins released is in part a function of the type of industries, adequate enforcement and investments can help protect our communities while promoting safe workplaces.

Public Safety and Other Services

Virtually every public service in Tennessee lags behind the region in both public investments and performance. If Tennessee's investment and performance levels for public safety for example were on par with the region, 16,000 fewer violent crimes and 35,000 fewer property crimes would be committed each year in Tennessee. Transportation, social services, and courts could also be improved if Tennessee invested at the same level as our neighbors.

Download the Real Budget Deficit report at www.yourtax.org/deficitreport/ to learn more.

