



By Daniel J. Mitchell

Even though Chuck Asay is one of my favorite cartoonists (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), I was not a big fan of one of his recent two-frame cartoons.

But he has more than made up for that slight transgression with this new gem.

I'm biased, of course, since I've already written about California being the Greece of America, but there's plenty of evidence to justify Asay's cartoon.

- California already has some of the highest tax rates in America, resulting in Laffer Curve responses that reduce tax revenue.
- California has violated Mitchell's Golden Rule, letting government spending grow faster than the productive sector of the economy.
- California over-compensates government employees, distorting labor markets and imposing ever-growing burdens on taxpayers.
- California is throwing good money after bad with subsidies for so-called high-speed rail.
- California is suffocating from a knee-jerk impulse for more red tape, regulation, and intervention in almost every area of life, from higher education to babysitting.
- It's hard to see how a state survives, in the long run, with such a burdensome government. While the cartoon is designed to be funny, it also makes a valid point since the Golden State is copying the mistakes that are causing Greece to collapse.

That being said, California can be saved. I already mentioned this morning that voters in San Diego and San Jose voted overwhelmingly to trim the excessive benefits promised to government bureaucrats. But I also should have mentioned that California voters rejected a statewide referendum to boost tobacco taxes.

But the real test will be this November, when voters will be asked whether to vote for a huge income tax increase so that Governor Jerry Brown and the crowd in Sacramento can keep the gravy train rolling along for a few more years.

If voters resist the Washington-Monument-Syndrome demagoguery of the political elite and reject the class-warfare tax hike, then it's possible that lawmakers will finally do the right thing and reduce the size and scope of California's government.

I don't think there's any chance that California will become another Texas. But there's a greater-than-zero chance that the state can pull itself back from the Grecian Abyss.