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Subject: What is a Budget Cut?

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SEMANTIC PROBLEM OBFUSCATES THE BUDGET DEBATE: CUTS VS. SLOBOVIAN LOSSES

Lack of a common definition of the word “cut” is going to cause great public confusion during the forthcoming protracted debate of the state budget. While we believe the general public’s understanding of the word “cut” is a reduction of an existing amount, a number of legislators have morphed the term into something quite different – and misleading. They use “cut” to describe a reduction of an anticipated increase.

Fortunately, there is a good term that can be used to distinguish between a real “cut” and a reduction of an anticipated increase. That term is “Slobovian loss.”

An official government report (The Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee’s “Revenue and Taxation Reference Book” of 1980, page A-10) defines “Slobovian loss” as follows:

“Loss of something you don’t have but thought you might get.”

An illustration of a “Slobovian loss” is as follows: Last year, Santa brought you \$100 for Christmas. This year, you were expecting \$110, but Santa only brought you \$105. In this example, you don’t have a cut in the amount Santa brought you. You have an increase of \$5 and a “Slobovian loss” of \$5.

Cal-Tax believes it will greatly enhance the public’s understanding of the budget debate to differentiate between actual “cuts” and “Slobovian losses.”

(Note: Lower Slobovia is a mythical country created by the late Al Capp in his satirical “Li’l Abner” comic strip.)