Local government, universities and hospitals have been using tax dollars to ask the state to increase higher taxes, a Mackinac Center report released today pointed out.

The Mackinac Center’s Diane KATZ said local entities use tax dollars to pay for public relations campaigns to get the state to raise taxes so they get even more money.

“That these groups are using tax dollars to lobby for higher taxes is an insult to Michigan taxpayers and contrary to the best interests of the state,” she said. “The groups’ message is that in the midst of Michigan’s single-state recession, workers, families and businesses should sacrifice in order to make budget decisions easier for government officials.”

The campaign in question is called the “Michigan Fiscal Responsibility Project” and is being run by a Lansing public relations firm hired by the Michigan Municipal League; the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan; and the Michigan Health & Hospital Association.

“It is routine for groups like the League, Presidents Council and hospital association to lobby legislators for specific appropriations related to their budgets,” Katz said. “In this instance, however, they are pressing lawmakers for higher taxes, which constitutes political activism of a much greater magnitude.”

Dave WAYMIRE, spokesman for the Michigan Responsibility Project, said the group is just providing factual information for taxpayers. The group is alerting taxpayers to the fact that states with the lowest taxes are also the poorest.

“It’s really no different than when former Speaker of the House Craig DEROCHÉ (R-Noví) hired Patrick ANDERSON to develop reports to provide information for taxpayers,” he said.

“This is a prime example of the privatization that the Mackinac Center is always advocating,” he concluded.