

4/02/2009 We Need to Fix the Tax Code

We Need to Fix the Tax Code

April 2, 2009

Madam Speaker, perhaps the most dreaded day of the year for taxpayers will soon be upon us, April 15. We're all at home with paper and pen, with stacks of receipts and books, strewn upon our kitchen table, and as tax day approaches, I come before the House of Representatives to share Kansans' many frustrations and to call upon Congress to fix the tax code.

Our country desperately needs a better tax system. The United States tax code is complex, confusing, and terribly burdensome to taxpayers, and it impedes our Nation's economic growth. The IRS has estimated that individual taxpayers and businesses spend 7.6 billion hours each year filling out their taxes. To put that number in perspective, that's 3.8 million employees working full time for the entire year.

It's obvious, certainly to anyone filling out their tax return this year, that an overhaul of the Federal tax code is required. The Fair Tax Act, which I support, H.R. 25, is a direction we should go and contains many meritorious ideas which would start the process. The fair tax would repeal income, payroll, and a multitude of other taxes. And those taxes would be replaced by a national sales or consumption tax on retail purchases.

But no matter what system we agree upon, what we model our tax reform around, the fact remains: America deserves an easier, commonsense, and less convoluted tax system than we currently have in place. We need a tax system that promotes personal freedom. Decisions should be made based upon what's good for us individually, what's good for our families, and what's good for our businesses. It shouldn't be all about what's good for the tax man.

But instead of tax simplification and tax relief, Americans this year will be facing the same broken system and a budget proposal that increases their taxes to pay for more spending. Many are angry at the reckless spending of this Congress, so much so that a national grassroots movement of tea parties has opened up this spring. On April 15, over 300 tax day tea parties are planned across the country, many of them in Kansas.

Kansans are tired of footing the bill for Wall Street bailouts and rewarding bad behavior in the housing market. They're frustrated with trillion dollar stimulus efforts that fund projects and programs that simply won't stimulate the economy. They're upset with massive government spending that increases our national debt at a time when most American families are forced to tighten their belts and make tough choices.

Americans are struggling, and we need to get the country moving, but increasing taxes to recklessly throw dollars at the problem is not the solution. I am one of only a few of the 435 Members of this House to vote against every stimulus and bailout plan. I'd like to say that there were more of us. Hopefully, this tax day will serve as a reminder for Congress and the administration to put the taxpayer first--spend a lot less and create a tax system that is fair and efficient and that promotes individual freedom.