

OPINION

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Daily
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One knave's plan

Flat tax equals bad fix for archaic system

The current tax code is a mess.

It includes five tax rates for different income levels, innumerable loopholes and deductions, and more than 400 different forms. And the rules are nearly incomprehensible and always changing.

Few Americans would disagree that the tax system needs revision. But a flat tax is the wrong answer.

The flat tax proposed by Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes is very simple. After an initial deduction of \$36,000, all income would be taxed at a rate of 17 percent.

This flat tax would make the system simpler, but not better.

The rich would benefit the most under the Forbes plan. The current 39.6 percent rate on the highest earners would be cut by more than half, and income from investment earnings, dividends and capital gains would not be taxed at all. It's no wonder Forbes, son of publishing magnate Malcolm Forbes and the editor-in-chief of Forbes magazine, is pushing his plan so hard.

The poor also would see some tax relief from this system because families making less than \$36,000 would pay no taxes at all.

The biggest losers under this plan, however, are already-struggling members of the middle class. Although the actual tax rate on middle-income families would be reduced, many deductions would disappear.

Under the Forbes plan, no deductions would be allowed for mortgage, interest or state and local taxes. Nor would it allow deductions for charitable contributions. There would be no break on the 15.3 percent Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes, and employers no longer would be able to deduct the cost of health and life insurance.

The result would be that families with incomes between \$30,000 and \$90,000 would end up paying more.

The effects of a flat tax have not been fully explored by Forbes or the other politicians offering flat tax proposals. Even though the middle class would pay more, some economists have estimated that a flat tax would result in as much as a \$200 billion loss of revenue for the federal government.

The tax system needs change. Changes should be designed to make the system not only simpler, but also more equitable. The flat tax fails on the second count.

Editorial policy

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1996 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

Letter policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St. Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ant-icipation

I suppose the fine article by Kristi Kohl on choice in abortion (Jan. 30) will be responded to by anti-choice people. I anticipate several lines of argument:

— That abortion is physically dangerous to the woman. Actually, it's less dangerous than carrying the fetus to maturity.

— That having an abortion sometimes leads to bad psychological effects, such as depression and regret. But look at the alternatives—even when pregnancy is wanted, many mothers get postpartum depression. And the struggles of parenthood aren't always pleasant, either. For a woman who bears a child and gives it up for adoption, there might be longer-lasting depression and remorse than if she aborted.

— That physicians want abortion to be legal simply because they make more money that way. Gynecologist-obstetricians, who perform abortions, make a lot more money if there is a full-term pregnancy and delivery.

— That the abortifacient drug RU-486, now being considered for use in the United States should not be approved because it has side-effects. All drugs have side effects, and it's up to the physician and the patient to weigh the courses of action. It should also be pointed out that a patient can be treated with RU-486 in a doctor's office, where no one else need know her reason for being there; then she wouldn't have to endure the taunts of anti-abortion people, as she would when walking into a clinic.

Edgar Pearlstein
professor emeritus
physics

Not worth it

I would like to respond to an article in the Jan. 16 issue of the Daily Nebraskan. The article talked about the issue of parking on campus. The article stated the problems of the parking for the



Aaron Steckelberg/DN

commuter lots, but at the same time failed to tell of the problem that is still present in the residential lots.

I live on campus, and when I come home at night it seems almost impossible to find a parking space after around nine or ten o'clock. Last semester, I was in a design studio for architecture, and I spent most of my nights up at Architecture Hall. When I came back, I never got a parking spot in the area-three lots where I had my permit. This permit cost me over \$70, and I paid this money so I didn't have to walk as far from my car to the house. In the end, I ended up never parking in that lot because of the fact that I was gone all the time. It just doesn't make any sense that we can pay for a permit but never be able to park there.

The other thing that I would like to discuss is where all the money that we pay for the permits is going. It just seems likely to me that some big wig says he is going to raise the price of permits so he can buy his children a little something extra for Christmas. In conclusion, it just seems odd to me that we can pay \$70 for a piece of cement that we may or may not be able to park in.

Ryan Desch
sophomore
secondary education

Try a new angle

I would like to commend you on the fact that you haven't been using every opportunity to slander the greek system this year. I have been here for 3 1/2 years and for the first time I have not felt like I am being ostracized by your paper. I am a member of Triangle Fraternity here on campus, and the way greeks have been represented in your publication has, quite frankly, made me sick. Last year, and especially the year before, it seemed that your editorials, articles and the letters-to-the-editor you printed blamed every problem on this campus on the greek system.

Unfortunately, this writing did nothing to help out this campus. On the other hand, it did nothing but make greeks feel like we should stop making an effort to do anything to help out. If people knew the truth about what we stand for, they would see that most of what you have written about the greek system is inaccurate, biased and slanderous. Furthermore, there was not a single article that talked about the good things we do, not only for UNL, but for various charities in Lincoln and nationwide.

The fact of the matter is that the greeks are a major part of this campus. There are a lot of students who would never make it through college with their sanity if not for the greek system. We provide a sense of family and friendship for students that can't find it anywhere else. If people would only stop to look at the things we do, not only for this campus but for the world outside UNL, they would see that we are much more involved than most of the students on this campus.

Finally, for those of you that still feel we are a plague on this campus, I have only one thing to say: If you don't like what we stand for, then don't come to our parties on the weekend.

Jason Hutton
senior
secondary education

Please
Write Back!

Send your brief letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" Street, Lincoln, NE 68588, or Fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.