

November 2009

Wisconsin's wealthiest pay lowest taxes as share of family income

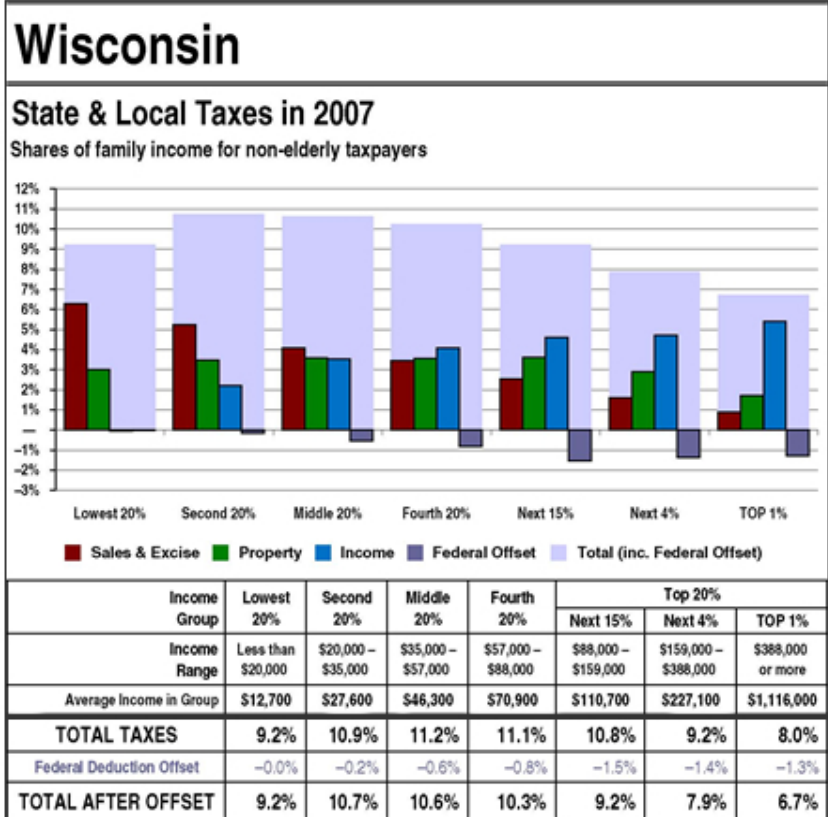
According to a new study by the Institute on Economic and Tax Policy (Itep), Wisconsin low and middle income families pay a larger portion of family income for all state and local taxes than the wealthiest 5% of households. The Itep analysis looks at the distribution of tax responsibility for all states noting the best and worst features for each state.

Itep's study of Wisconsin shows that the state has several positive features:

- a somewhat progressive income tax
- refundable earned income tax credit
- refundable property tax credit.

In addition to the overall regressive impact of state tax policy, another negative feature is the 30% capital gains exemption from taxes. Over the past ten years, the income tax share of state revenue has fallen while the share of sales and property tax revenue increased.

See the whole study at: <http://www.itepnet.org/whopays>



Bayside holding a raffle to fund public safety

There is a great new raffle in Bayside, Wisconsin. Not for local charity but for basic police equipment. The Bayside Police Department is raffling off a 42-inch LCD HD television with a home theater system to raise money for a camera surveillance system needed at a busy village crossroads with commercial development on all four corners.

According to Police Chief Bruce Resnick, the village has had approximately 1,300 calls for service over the past year within two blocks of the intersection. The calls have included a fatal accident, armed robberies, thefts, vandalism, suspicious activity and bad checks. Resnick says the cameras would give dispatchers assistance to determine the identity of suspects, their mode of travel and the direction in which they are traveling. Chief Resnick was told by the Village Board that they supported the surveillance system, "They said it was a great idea; start looking for the money." So Resnick launched the Police Department's first fund-raising effort in his 16 years as chief.



It started in the schools when parents sold pizzas to cover the cost of school operations. Watch for the fire department bingo games and bowling for highway repairs.

WMC Lobbyist becomes mouthpiece for anti-government Koch Industries



Wisconsin's top anti-tax lobbyist has a new gig, but he'll keep on playing the same old anti-government tune. Jeffrey Schoepke had been tax lobbyist for Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC), where he carried the message for the state's most strident anti-tax, anti-government organization. Recently, Schoepke left WMC to become government affairs manager (aka chief lobbyist) for Koch Companies Public Sector LLC.

Koch Industries is a familiar name in the anti-government movement. Its top leaders organized and bankrolled Americans for Prosperity, the national lobby that sponsors the Tea Party protests, along with many other reactionary causes including opposition to national health care reform and opposition to smoke free workplace legislation.

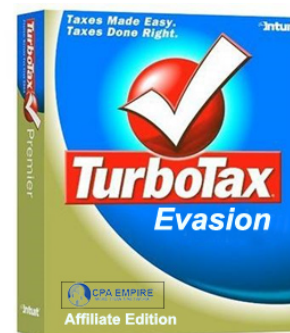
--Excerpt from **Jack Norman's new blog -- The Badger Tax Review** at <http://badgertaxreview.com>

Amnesty for offshore tax evaders raises billions for U.S.

More than 14,700 U.S. taxpayers came forward to disclose billions in offshore bank accounts in 70 countries under a voluntary Internal Revenue Service program allowing most to avoid criminal prosecution as long as they pay what they owe.

"To put it simply, this is a historic milestone for the nation's hardworking taxpayers," IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman said. The total in taxes, interest and penalties collected from those in the voluntary disclosure program will be in the "billions of dollars," Shulman said. The disclosures involved accounts on every continent but Antarctica.

Taxpayers flocked to the amnesty program after the U.S. reached an agreement in August with the Swiss government and UBS to obtain names of 4,450 U.S. taxpayers believed to be hiding assets in secret bank accounts.



GRAPHIC from <http://www.nickycakes.com/5-awesome-affiliate-program-rewards-youll-never-see/>
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33988899/ns/business-world_business/from/ET

Wauwatosa wins property tax fight with local church



Church property used as a residence for the congregation's custodian can be taxed, the Wisconsin Court of Appeals held in a recent decision. In Wauwatosa Avenue Methodist Church v. City of Wauwatosa, the court rejected the church's argument that it is entitled to the tax exemption of Wis. Stat. section 70.11(4) because its custodian is "integral to the functioning of the church." The court held that the tax exemption is restricted to church-owned residences of those religious persons who occupy official leadership roles in the church, such as pastors and their ordained assistants.

<http://www.wisbar.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Tax&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=86399>

Fighting at the Tea Party -- Oh My!

The Tea Party movement is wracked by conflict. Board members for the Tea Party Patriots (TPP) this week filed suit against Amy Kremer, a former TPP leader who fell out with the group over her involvement with a rival Tea Party faction, the Tea Party Express.

At the root of the dispute is the acrimony between TPP and the Tea Party Express, a newer group formed by a team of GOP consultants. Many TPPers see TPE as inauthentic, deriding it as a "Republican front organization." But others have flirted with TPE, apparently out of frustration with the TPP's sprawling structure and unwieldy decision-making process. TPP member Jack Staver suggested that board members were insufficiently transparent about the organization's finances. Staver asked, "How much money does TPP have? How much did we make in DC? Where are the financial statements? Do board members get paid and if so who? Who signs the checks? Where does our money go?"



Charges of lax book-keeping -- and worse -- appear to be breaking out across the Tea Party movement. Matt Perdue, the president of a San Antonio Tea Party group, ripped into the group's treasurer, her husband, and their supporters for conducting a "mass redirection campaign," apparently to line their own pockets using Tea Party donations.

TPP members are worried that the conflict will become public. Gerald Merits stated, "This will go public if we let it drag on long enough and if you don't think this will have a chilling effect on all Tea Party movements raising funds you are living in a world of fairy dust and gingerbread houses," he wrote. "If this goes on long enough, we all go down - NOT just TPP and TPE - ALL OF US."

SPREAD THE WORD -- IT'S THE LEAST WE CAN DO TO HELP.

http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2009/11/party_foul_tea_partiers_eat_their_own_in_bitter_in.php?ref=fpa

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

In his announcement that he would run for Governor of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett made an important change in his remarks from the speech distributed to reporters. The text handed out originally read "Our families and businesses want state tax increases to stop." Barrett changed this and stated, **"Our families and businesses want fair taxes."**

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