

Talking About Taxes

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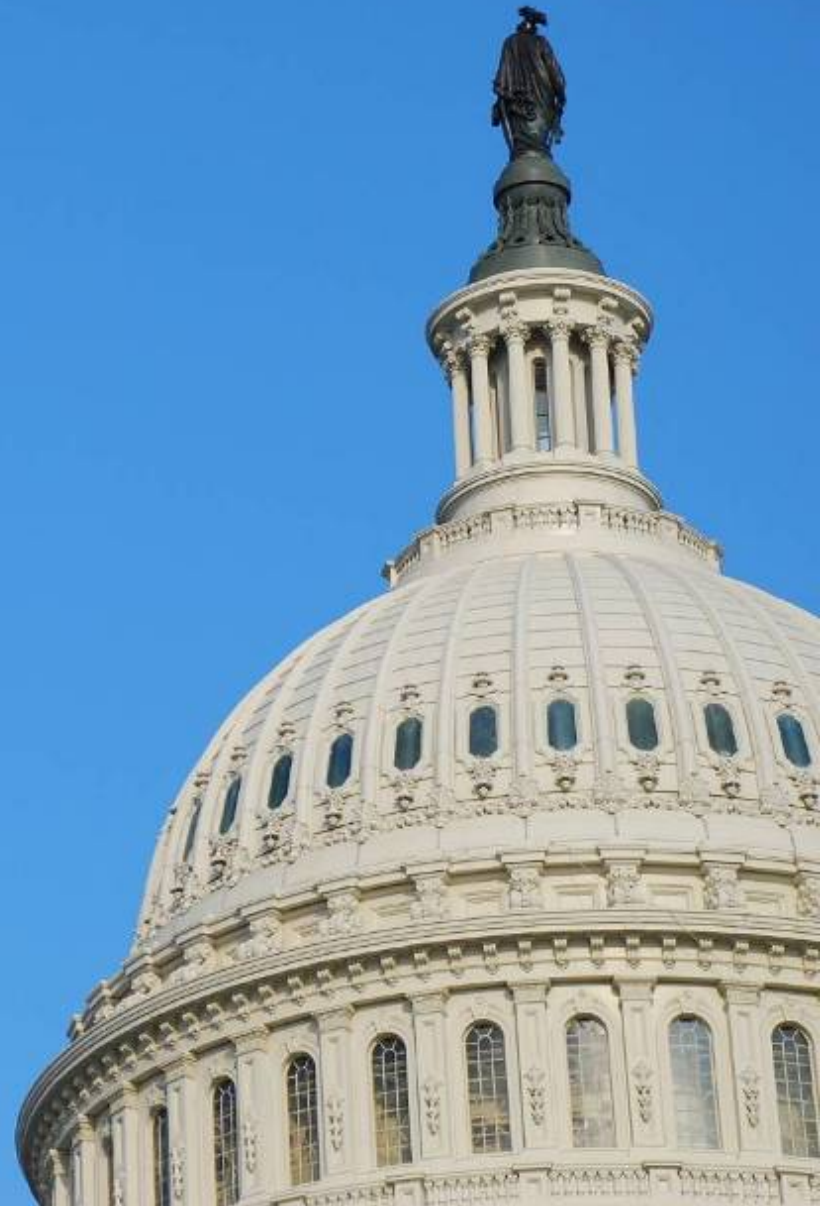
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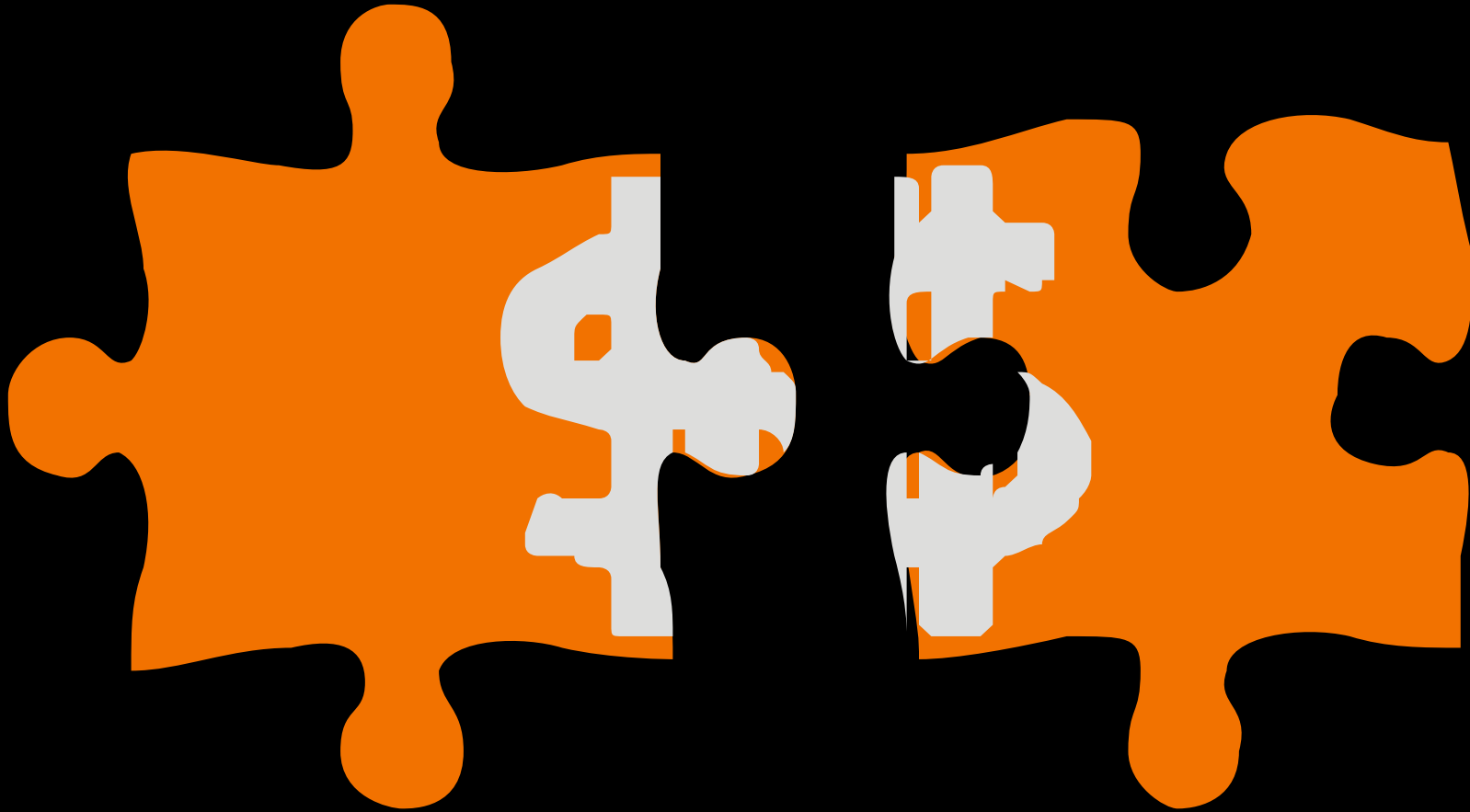






“Legitimacy and a steady source of revenue provide the twin foundations of any enduring government.”

- Marjorie E. Kornhauser – “Legitimacy and the Right of Revolution: The Role of Tax Protests and Anti-Tax Rhetoric in America”



Taxes have become
disconnected from their **purposes.**



stoplight

power lines

traffic sign

street light

NO
TURN
ON
RED

street sign

phone lines

CUT TAXES
NOT
DEFENSE

STOP
TAXIN
WELFA

ZERO
TAXES

power
for
traffic
light

road

sidewalk

Household Budget Metaphor Dominates



=



People see ability to economize, but not the ability to raise more revenue.



Changing the Conversation

Reconnect Taxes to Purposes



Reconnect Taxes to Purposes

The **public structures that underpin our communities** – such as schools, roads, clinics, police and fire protection, and health inspections – all depend on a system of budgets and taxes that supports them adequately now and into the future. **Taxes are an essential part of the equation**; how they are raised and the level of resources they provide **will affect our quality of life now and into the future.**

An Eye to the Future



Tax day and Tax Freedom day are focused on **one day on the calendar.**

Reset the context by focusing on the role taxes play in **helping us meet future goals and objectives.**

An Eye to the Future

On Tax Day, millions of Americans will do what generations before have done – **invest in our country's future.** Just as our parents and grandparents paid taxes to build the schools, transportation systems, health clinics and parks we benefit from today, our tax payments this year continue this effective system of **forward exchange.**

Don't Reinforce Bad Frames

Avoid these:

- Tax Burden
- Tax Relief
- Hard-earned tax dollars
- Taxpayer

Targeting those not “Paying their Fair Share”

Efforts to focus on those who should pay more – the **Wealthy and Corporations** – still need to make the case for “why.”



The Trouble with Fairness

- Eye of the Beholder
- Self-Interest and Consumerist Thinking trump
- Its about the Tax, not the Purpose
- Drives people to simple, equitable-sounding solutions - sales tax /flat tax
- Default – “taxes are inherently unfair”

Navigating Fairness

- Take a **practical, management stance** (what is the best tax structure to run a modern state).
- Make it about the **tax "structure" or "system"** not "greedy people and corporations."
- Try using terms like **"upside down,"** or **"out of balance,"** instead.
- Find ways to turn attention to the investments in **public systems & structures that make wealth and economic success possible.**

Why the Wealthy and Corporations should Pay More

The public systems that our taxes support are the **foundation of our nation's economy**. Everyone – individuals and businesses alike – needs to shoulder an appropriate share of these costs. Our nation was built on the notion that **those who have benefitted the most from our country's public investments should also pay the most for their upkeep**. For some time now this basic principle has been eroding away. Over recent decades **the share of taxes paid by high income earners and large corporations has been reduced while middle class families have paid more** and our public systems have declined. This great American tax shift is undermining the foundations our economy and our society.

Summary

- Reconnect taxes to their purposes
- Keep an eye on the future
- Don't reinforce bad frames such as tax burden or household ledgers
- Make a practical case for fairness



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