



# Tax Policy Center

Urban Institute and Brookings Institution

The Tax Policy Center, a joint venture of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution, has been filling a critical need for effective tax policy analysis since it opened its doors in April 2002. Our objective, timely, and accessible information helps policymakers, journalists, academics, and taxpayers identify and evaluate current and emerging tax policy options. We believe that better information, rigorous analysis, and fresh ideas injected at key points in the policy debate can forestall bad policies and reinforce good ones. Since its inception we have focused on four overarching areas:

**Fair, simple, and effective taxation.** Virtually everyone agrees that taxes should be simple, fair, and efficient. But policymakers disagree over how to define and achieve those objectives. We quantify trade-offs among these goals and identify reforms that increase simplicity, equity, and efficiency

**Social policy in the tax code.** Over the past decade, much of social policy has shifted from direct expenditures to tax subsidies. A full assessment of social policy as well as tax progressivity, marriage penalties, and related issues requires consideration of both tax and spending programs. The TPC is evaluating this revolution in tax and social policy.

**Long-term implications of tax and budget choices.** The U.S. faces a dismal fiscal future in part because of unfunded public obligations related to rising health care costs and the retirement of Baby Boomers. We examine the implications of current policies and proposed tax changes on future generations.

**State tax issues.** Many Americans pay more in state and local taxes than they do in federal ones, and like the federal government, states often use the tax system to encourage business development and help low-income families. As part of UI's State and Local Finance Initiative, TPC experts analyze how federal state and local tax policies interact and evaluate the fairness and efficiency of different ways that governments raise revenue.

Awarded 2012's Tax Notes Person of the Year by Tax Analysts

Awarded 2012's Best Think Tank by the Washington Post's Wonkblog

"The Tax Policy Center, if anything, comprises a gang of raging moderates from both parties who have infuriated ideologues for years by simply telling the truth about the tax system. It has one of the more reliable and unbiased computer models of the nation's tax system."

David Firestone, *New York Times*

"In a highly polarized political environment many did not know whom to believe. The Tax Policy Center was there to help. The Center provides non-partisan, expert but common language analysis of the likely implications of tax policies and proposals, making it a key resource for journalists, policy makers, and citizens."

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, in awarding the Center a 2010 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions

"In a tax debate in which bombast and sound bites often crowd out facts, figures, and reasoned analysis, the Tax Policy Center provides all three, in a easy-to-access, easy-to-understand fashion."

David Wessel, *Wall Street Journal*

## TaxVox the Tax Policy Center blog

Timely commentary on tax and budget issues. It's syndication partners include *Forbes* and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

### THE NUMBERS

Tables and estimates from TPC's state-of-the-art microsimulation model of the federal tax system.

### STATE & LOCAL FINANCE DATA QUERY SYSTEM

Information from the Census of Governments for all 50 states and the District of Columbia over time.

### TAX FACTS

Tax information for citizens, policy analysts, legislators, and the press on federal, state, local, and international tax systems.

### TAX TOPICS

Explanatory and analytical publications, distributional and revenue estimates, and background information on the nation's pressing tax issues.



### THE TAX POLICY BRIEFING BOOK

"A handy primer on how the tax system works."

Tom Herman, *The Wall Street Journal*