



HOW TO PUSH BACK ON ATTACKS AGAINST THE FAIR TAX

Fair tax reform is popular, necessary and the right thing to do. Opponents who want to avoid paying their share don't have good arguments against it, so instead they'll try to confuse voters about what fair tax reform will do. Here are the facts to counter some of the myths that fair tax opponents are already putting forward.

WHEN THEY SAY: The Fair Tax is a tax increase on the middle class

YOU SAY: Under the fair tax rate bill passed by the General Assembly last spring, 97 percent of tax filers will pay less or the same. Only the wealthiest top 3 percent of tax filers will pay a little more on income over a quarter-million dollars a year.

WHEN THEY SAY: The Fair Tax is a blank check for future tax increases

YOU SAY: There is no blank check: Voters know exactly what new rates will go into effect when the fair tax amendment is approved (see above). Going forward, fair tax reform doesn't give legislators any more or less power to change tax rates than they have always had. Fair tax reform does give lawmakers the flexibility to change rates based on income, raising rates for wealthy people who can afford to pay a little bit more, and reducing rates for the middle class and those struggling to get there. Without the Fair Tax, taxes would have to be raised on all Illinoisans by 20% to address our structural deficit.

WHEN THEY SAY: The Fair Tax is a tax on retirement income

YOU SAY: Illinois is one of just a dozen states that don't collect income tax on any retirement income such as 401(k), IRA, pension or Social Security benefits. Fair tax reform doesn't change that.

WHEN THEY SAY: Why not change other parts of the state constitution

YOU SAY: When the constitution is amended by a ballot question, only the specific language in the ballot question is affected. In this case, the fair tax question simply removes the language that prevents having an income tax with higher rates for people with higher incomes, and lower rates for people with lower incomes. (This should not be confused with a constitutional convention, where any aspect of the constitution would be open for debate.)

WHEN THEY SAY: The wealthiest Illinoisans will leave the state if they're finally forced to pay their share.

YOU SAY: There is no research to back this claim up. In fact, research shows there is actually no correlation between a state's tax rates and the likelihood a high-income family leaves the state. Middle and lower-income Illinoisans have been fleeing the state for years after previous administrations left our education system decimated. A fair tax will bring in much-needed revenue to get our state back on track and keep these families in Illinois.

WHEN THEY SAY: Pensions are the real problem in Illinois. Why can't we vote on pension changes?

YOU SAY: Illinois's struggles with meeting its pension obligations are a separate issue from the Fair Tax. Changes to public worker retirement plans will not fix the fact that those who make the lowest 20% are paying nearly double in taxes as those at the top. People have different opinions on the pension issue, but with or without pension changes, our state needs a fairer tax system that works for everyone.