

Tax increases are looming overhead

By: Congressman Tim Huelskamp

Every April millions of Americans gather at their kitchen tables with receipts and pay stubs and attempt to fulfill their legal obligation to pay their taxes. Navigating the complexity that is the U.S. tax code is both challenging and intimidating. Decades of special exemptions, deductions, and loopholes paid as political favors leave Americans pulling out their hair while they try to fill out their forms. On top of that, years of reckless spending and borrowing leave many Americans scratching their heads as to the effectiveness of Washington's expensive pursuits.

However, nearly half of all Americans pay absolutely no federal income taxes. In fact, millions of Americans will view April 15 as a great day. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, in 2009 approximately 30% of those filing tax returns actually received more money from other taxpayers than they paid in income taxes. This is not a refund on what they are paid - this is net income FROM the government.

But come 2014, filing taxes will be even worse for all taxpaying Americans. When the Bush-Obama tax cuts expire at the end of 2012, all taxpayers will be subject to higher tax rates. Those in the lowest tax bracket will see their rates increase by half, from 10% to 15%. Earners whose incomes fall into every other bracket will also see their tax rates go up as well. On top of those increases, the marriage penalty will return, family-friendly deductions like the child tax credit will decline precipitously, and the death tax will climb to 55%. And, we cannot forget about a surge in taxes from ObamaCare scheduled to take effect in 2014.

Many in Washington argue that tax increases are needed to balance the budget. But, based on decades of past experience, tax increases will only result in trillions of dollars more for the government to spend - or waste - not deficit reduction.

I know Washington can do more with less. In my first year in office, we cut more than \$130,000 from our own budget - on top of voting to cut our budget by over 10 percent over the past two years. I have introduced legislation to make sure that the Bush-Obama tax rates are made permanent, and have also voted to cut spending back to levels before the stimulus. Simultaneously holding the line against tax increases and reducing spending keeps more money in the hands of families and out of the hands of politicians and bureaucrats.

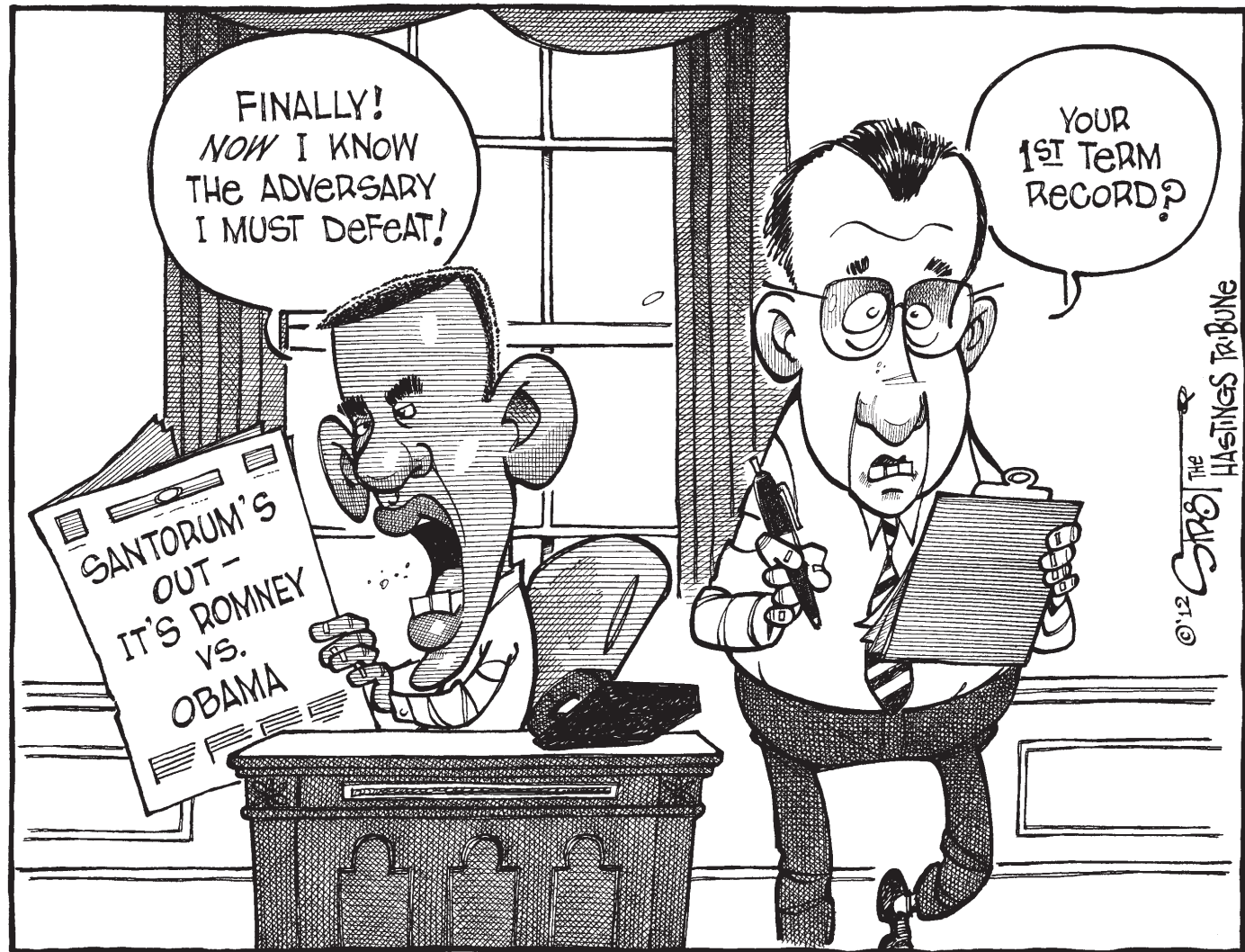
Here are some key points to consider as this massive tax increase looms around the bend:

- It is economically devastating to increase taxes during a recession. It was not that long ago that President Obama himself said: "You don't raise taxes in a recession." Though he seems to have abandoned this belief, I agreed with him then.

- Cutting marginal tax rates can actually increase revenue. President Kennedy championed major tax cuts in the 1960s as did President Reagan in the 1980s, frequently making the case that the federal government can actually take in more money when taxes are low and certain. Kennedy and Reagan were proven right - revenues increased as tax rates were reduced.

- Most Kansans want fundamental tax reform - and I agree. We want a simpler, fairer, flatter tax code where politicians in Washington aren't using the tax policy to pick winners and losers. And we do not want a system where political access and favors means special tax privileges for just a few.

Like many Kansans, I am not concerned that Washington's problem is that it has too little to spend. Its problem is that it simply wants to spend too much. At that same table where American families attempt to navigate the U.S. tax code, they make decisions - sometimes tough - about what they can and cannot afford. American families have had to do more with less; it is time that Washington does the same.



This year's tax deadline is finally here

Call us procrastinators if you will. But when you owe taxes you're not quite as eager to file your returns as you are when the government owes you money.

I did my part before we left for Mexico. I compiled all the information; day by day, month by month. I ran tapes on our monthly utilities; on our average dining-out expense; our total business expenses; how much tools cost; work truck expense. If it was in a deductible category - I calculated it.

This, however, is the point where I hand it all over to Jim. He fills in the blanks. Oh, I help a little. He will have me divide one number by .0296; then multiply by 1.035; add 3.147; carry the 6; and subtract 8. I'll call out the answer; he'll repeat it; I'll confirm it; and he will plug the answer into the appropriate slot.

The deadline to file taxes is April. But because it fell on a Sunday this year we were automatically granted a one day reprieve. Then I heard on the news that Monday is some kind of Internal Revenue Service in-house holiday and we actually have until Tuesday to send our taxes in. I'll share a little secret with you. I'm not telling Jim and, by our standards, we will file early. Paying taxes is like dirty dishes. If

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



you have dirty dishes, it means you have food to eat. If you have to pay taxes, it means you made enough money to be taxed. I don't mind paying my fair share, but when I hear that only 20 percent of the population pays 80 percent of the taxes and that 47 percent of Americans don't pay any taxes at all, it makes me question how fair it really is.

There is a country-gospel song titled, "If 10 percent is good enough for Jesus, it ought to be good enough for Uncle Sam." I'm not kidding. It is a real song. It's starting to make more sense.

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It's been a slow "news" week around our house. Eat, sleep, work; eat, sleep, work.

The only things new are the two heifer calves Jim bought at the sale barn. I just about fell over when he told me how much he paid for them. Let's just say there is no margin for error in raising these two. They will get the

royal treatment until it's time for them to make that return trip to the sale barn. Unless I can sell them privately, first. I'll put in a plug right now. If anyone is looking for fall replacement heifers, these two would be ideal.

We determined this spring we would get a little older calves. Ones that are already eating grass - no more midnight bottle feedings. I had no idea that he would bring home half-grown cows. One is red with a white face and a round, red patch on the side of her head. I said it looked like she had a rosy cheek...so she is "Rosy" and her penmate is a black white-face who got an old fashioned farm name... "Flossy."

They seem very content inside their pen and have really "slicked" it up. Soon, we'll move them to the west pasture. Here, in town, that means we'll move them across the alley to our other enclosure. This week we've been getting them used to us. We walk into their pen with feed, talk nice to them and let them get accustomed to our sound and smell. They are too big to hog-tie and bulldog, so they need to be tame enough to follow us. Everyone's life will be a lot easier if we don't have a rodeo on our hands each time we need to move them.

The importance of making every day, Earth Day

Next week marks the 42nd anniversary of what many consider the birth of the modern environmental movement. The first Earth Day celebration began April 22, 1970.

This is also a special week for those farmers and ranchers who are involved with the production of food, fuel and fiber. The original premise of Earth Day was to promote the conservation of our natural resources. It is only fitting that on this day we showcase the progress of the Kansas farmer and rancher.

To help put Earth Day in perspective, this celebration of our planet really began at the beginning of the '90s. It was at this time that almost everyone jumped on the bandwagon. It became a very "in" thing to bang the environmental drum.

Back then, Fortune magazine was proclaiming for the first time that the environment was a cause worthy of saving. Others shouted from the mountaintops that while some things were subject to controversy - saving our planet was beyond debate.

The entire concept of Earth Day is so popular because it appeals strongly to the "deep" longings shared by many people. In this perfect world, people will fully understand the tools they use, and some believe they can provide for themselves without depending on the professionals and specialists.

In this revamped world, life would

Insight John Schlageck



slow down and be viewed as a whole. This ideology offers a sense of place - of being rooted. Ancient wisdom and grassroots democracy are essential. Quality and equality of life are where it's at. Much is said about ends but little about means. This ideology speaks poetically about much - plainly about little.

So what happens after Earth Day passes?

Most folks go about their daily lives and forget about Earth Day. Some will focus on small things like recycling or changing their shopping habits. Some fringe environmentalists may be forced to re-think their radical positions of imminent apocalypse.

Protecting and caring for this old world we call home is often a struggle. Like each day's sunrise and sunset, we often take it for granted. Conservation of our planet can be a challenge because some regard the land as a private commodity.

Others, including farmers, ranchers and those who make their living from the land, view this planet as a

community to which they belong. They love, respect and care for the land. They adhere to an ethic, which enlarges the boundaries of their community to include soils, waters, plants and animals. Collectively - the land.

There is no other way for the land to survive the impact of modern man. We must always remember that while our land yields fruits, vegetables and grains, it also yields a cultural harvest - one we as inhabitants all share and must nurture.

We must ensure our educational and economic systems are headed toward an increased consciousness of the land.

Today only a handful of people make their living from the land. Today many middlemen, countless machines and sophisticated technology separate man from the land. Many have no vital relation to the land. For them, it is generally thought of as, "that space between cities on which crops and grass grow, or cattle graze."

Let's remember throughout the year, not only on Earth Day, that land is used right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the living community. It is used wrong when it tends to be otherwise.

Let's remember throughout the year our commitment to the successful and wise use of our life-giving land. Let's remember that we have not outgrown the land.



Thumbs up to Caysean Campbell, Jared Tallent and all the other wrestlers who placed at the Midwest Classic Nationals in Kearney Ne. on April 7 2012. Both boys placed 4th and several others placed in the top 6 as well. Job well done. Emailed in.

Thumbs up to all the parents teachers and friends of Norton Community High School involved in Prom and Post Prom. Thank you for all your energy, and dedication in making the celebration enjoyable, memorable and safe! Emailed in.

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