



Does a Tax Cut Improve the Odds?

Governor Walker's upcoming 2014-15 Budget calls for an Income Tax cut that averages roughly 2.15% for a married couple filing jointly or \$122 annual savings, per the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Well, most Tax Times readers would agree any cut is a step in the right direction; that individual taxpayers know best what to do with their money, and their family's budget. I would argue that most families in Wisconsin are the nuclear family of a father, mother arrangement and while less money going to the government is like seeing all cherries on the slots, is this a game-changing tax cut for the Wisconsin we hope to see develop in the near future?

Okay, per the stats from the Tax Foundation, WI ranked 43rd in overall taxation last year and 46th for State Income Tax. That's all lemons on my screen when only 7 states in the "land of the free" are higher taxers' and only 4 states charge higher State Income Tax. Holy Gamblers Anonymous, Batman! If my memory serves me, I've only been in one Wisconsin Casino many years back as the guest of my employer. At the end of the evening my host's tokens had disappeared, gobbled up by the pre-determined house odds. Are the State tax rates the same set of pre-determined odds for the citizens of this state.

Wisconsin ranks 32nd highest Corporate Tax, 33rd in Property Tax, but to her credit (that is a lady atop the Capitol Dome) Wisconsin ranks 15th for Sales Tax and 23rd for Tax on Unemployment Insurance taxation, WHEW! Ten States allow Federal Income Tax paid to be deducted, some states, no Sales Tax and a few, including the Nation's most robust State economy of Texas, have no Income Tax whatsoever.

Statistics paint a picture and ours needs some cleaning and repair. Our Governor is on the right track but where he started bold, has he become timid in the area of lower taxation? Wisconsin has the 5th highest State/Local Tax burden in the Nation, Illinois' is 11th but two other Republican governed States, Texas and Louisiana rank 45th and 47th respectively. Okay Governor, whose lead do we take when Illinois who is about to go bankrupt, ranks better than Wisconsin yet Texas and Louisiana are kicking ass and taking names in areas of taxation and business just seems to go their way?

I say, increase the Income Tax cut to 10% , re-jigger Corporate Tax to move our ranking to no higher than 25th, and maybe our State, with a miner on the State Flag and a Badger for the State mascot, can dig her way to prosperity once again and for always. Folks will follow a bold leader; a job that means you can keep a lot more than you did before the cut becomes valuable, more valuable than a free Food Stamp Voucher and cell phone. To his credit the Governor would make being on Unemployment Assistance more accountable and his move should not be lost in the discussion.

Wisconsin Leadership must be bold, if we are to survive the Federal onslaught of increased taxes and regulation (our Attorney General needs to earn his keep) thereby placing Wisconsin in position to come up all cherries on its producer's and worker's screen. If Leadership's only concern is being re-elected, odds are political support will falter, political grifters will fill the halls and the drive-by media will slip their foot on the wheel. Since the Casino-Boss-in-Chief is busy campaigning to make the House odds even worse, our States' Leaders must know when to leave the table, make the Tax cut "real, really big," put a Royal Flush in producer's and worker's hands where they stand a chance of winning at the already rigged Tax Tables.

Richard Parins — President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 28th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

How to catch wild pigs.

You catch wild pigs by finding a suitable place in the woods and putting corn on the ground. The pigs find it and begin to come every day to eat the free corn. When they are used to coming every day, you put a fence down one side of the place where they are used to coming. When they get used to the fence, they begin to eat the corn again and you put up another side of the fence.

They get used to that and start to eat again. You continue until you have all four sides of the fence up with a gate in the last side. The pigs, which are used to the free corn, start to come through the gate to eat that free corn again.

You then slam the gate on them and catch the whole herd. Suddenly the wild pigs have lost their freedom. They run around and around inside the fence, but they are caught. Soon they go back to eating the free corn. They are so used to it that they have forgotten how to forage in the woods for themselves, so they accept their captivity.

Is this what is happening in America?

The government keeps spreading the free corn out in the form of programs such as supplemental income, tax credit for unearned income, tax exemptions, tobacco subsidies, dairy subsidies, payments not to plant crops (CRP), welfare, medicine, drugs, etc., while we continually lose our freedoms, just a little at a time.

One should always remember two truths:

There is no such thing as a free lunch, and you can never hire someone to provide a service for you cheaper than you can do it yourself. If you see that all of this wonderful government "help" is a problem confronting the future of democracy in America, you might want to send this on to your friends.

If you think the free ride is essential to your way of life, then you will probably delete this email.

But, God help us all when the gate slams shut!

Quote for today: *"The problems we face today are there because the people who work for a living are now outnumbered by those who vote for a living."* --Anonymous

"It makes little philosophical sense for the elected representatives of a government that is subordinate to the people to be able to disarm these people. An enlightened state may not remove from the people the basic rights that are recognized in the very document to which it owes its existence. To ask, "Why do you need an AR-15" is to invert the relationship. A better question: "Why don't you want me to have one?"

. . . Charles C. H. Cooke - The National Review

Articles and views appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We want to encourage discussion and input on current issues of taxpayer interest and invite your comments or articles suitable for future "TAX TIMES." Please send them to the BCTA, P.O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI 54305-0684, or call Jim Frink at 336-6410. E-Mail BCTA@ExecPC.Com.

February Meeting Notes. Mayor Schmitt speaks to BCTA.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting held February 21, at Titledown Brewing Co.

Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt updated BCTA members about a number of positive developments for the City of Green Bay. He began by noting that the city's property valuation is growing. It is close to \$7 billion now. Also, the city's debt has been reduced 30 percent over the last several years.

TIF districts in the city are doing well, and downtown development is proceeding well. The VA Clinic construction on the east side moving along on schedule. The 200,000 square foot facility will have \$17 million of equipment installed. There will be an influx of medical personnel to staff the facility when it is finally completed.

The City Deck has been a center of activity this winter with the installation of the ice rink. Unfortunately, with warmer weather approaching, the ice rink will need to be removed soon.

The KI Convention Center expansion will increase its size to 75,000 square feet. Financing the expansion will come from excess funds resulting from increasing the area room tax from 8 percent to 10 percent. Also the state budget is expected to provide \$2 million to assist with the expansion financing.

The Northland Hotel project is awaiting a developer. Plans are for 136 rooms with specialty shops on the ground floor. This project will provide the attraction of a first-class hotel in the downtown area and increase the inventory of hotel rooms in the downtown.

West of the Fox River, *On Broadway* continues to promote development and business activity in the Broadway District. A TIF district for Military Avenue is showing promise.

With the success of the Zippin Pippin roller coaster at the Bay Beach Amusement Park, a 10 year plan for development of Bay Beach is in progress.

Schools: The Schools Committee is monitoring the Pulaski School District's \$22 million referendum package, which includes: \$4.4 million for building repairs, security upgrades and other improvements, a request for approval to raise the tax levy by 650,000 in each of the next seven years to pay for technology, \$9.13 million for building remodeling and some classroom additions, and \$8.19 million for a new high school swimming pool.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for March 21, at Titledown Brewing. The speaker will be Brown County Sheriff John Gossage. Details on the back page of this TAX TIMES.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

"This year will go down in history. For the first time, a civilized nation has full gun regulation. Our streets lwill be safer, our police more efficient, and the world will follow our lead into the future." . . . Adolph Hitler, 1933

"The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the U. S. Government cannot pay it's own bills" . . . Senator Barack Obama, 2006

It's Time to Fix The Fund 80 Loophole.

Regular readers of the Tax Times are aware of our groups' ongoing efforts with our local school districts to stop shifting school related costs into the Community Services Fund (Fund 80). Fund 80 was established by the Legislature to allow community use of school facilities, like pools and gyms, and to allow school districts to recover any added costs via user fees.

Any costs not covered by user fees are passed on to property taxpayers through direct levy. Property taxes for regular school spending are controlled through shared revenue limits put in place by the Legislature. Fund 80 spending is outside of those limits. Because of that, some districts in our area are inappropriately shifting regular K-12 spending into Fund 80 to skirt the spending limits.

We have tried to work on this directly with our local school boards, but have had little success. Since this loophole was created via the 2001 budget bill, we have asked our legislators to correct it in the current bill. Following is the letter we have sent them. Please join us in sending a similar letter to your legislators.

Sample letter encouraging taxpayers to write legislators.

Dear (Senator/Representative)_____.

I am writing to urge you to stand up for taxpayers and close the Community Service Fund (Fund 80) loophole by taking action in this budget session.. CSF was a well intended initiative to enable more community use of school facilities, but many school districts are abusing it to circumvent state revenue limits, avoiding the requirement to gain taxpayer approval via referendum. Currently, all CSF spending is exempted from the spending controls (revenue limits)-the costs of CSF programs are shouldered by property taxpayers as a separate levy. Many districts--the abusers--have improperly moved costs into CSF that were never intended by the legislature, and there is no enforcement mechanism to stop them. An insertion into the 2001 budget bill created this loophole, and CFS abuse has skyrocketed ever since. The number of districts using the CSF has increased from 119 in 2000 to 279 today, and spending has grown nearly 400% from \$16.4 million to \$81.4 million over that same period. Much of this spending is not within the legislative intent of CSF, but is simply done to avoid spending limits.

This loophole was created in the 2001 budget and should be corrected in this budget. This can be done without any negative impact to the districts that are using CSF properly and following the law's intent. Costs associated with CSF programs were intended to be recouped via user fees, and that is currently done by the law-abiding school districts. This loophole can be closed by including any CSF spending not reimbursed by user fees in the revenue limit. This erases the unintended consequences of the 2001 budget action. *Signed*

Closing the loophole will: Allow school districts correctly to continue, unaffected. End the abuse in a simple manner without costly enforcement bureaucracy. Provide tens of millions of property tax relief with no cost to the state. Put those dollars into the hands of citizens to grow the economy.

Inaction will have the following consequences: Abusive districts will expand their practices with impunity. More districts will join the abusers and begin exploiting the loophole. Allow spending and property taxes to rise without regard to the referendum requirement.

You must stop this abuse NOW!

School Vouchers-Good or Bad for Green Bay?

The debate is raging over the Governor's proposal to expand the School Voucher program to nine additional districts, including Green Bay. The Voucher program allows families to use tax dollars to pay for their children to attend private schools. This is a very complex issue and the BCTA Directors have not yet taken a position. Proponents say it provides more flexibility for families and improves scholastic outcomes due to more competition. Opponents say it will bleed tax dollars from public schools, thereby increasing taxes.

In a free enterprise system, competition improves results. To gain market share, businesses strive to produce superior products at equal or lower cost. Education should work the same way. Parents currently can choose to move their children to a different public school, so some competition already exists. Vouchers will increase this competition by adding private schools to the mix. Green Bay District spokespeople say vouchers will increase taxes and will be sharing details of this in a letter to the community. We look forward to seeing those details and the assumptions behind them, so we can take an informed position on the subject.

Rod Goldhahn—Schools Committee

National Debt Update.

From the last day of December of 2012, to Feb. 28, 2013, or a period of two months the U. S. National Debt increased \$337 Billion dollars to a total of Dear (Senator/Representative)_____:

I am writing to urge you to stand up for taxpayers and close the Community Service Fund (Fund 80) loophole by taking action in this budget session. CSF was a well intentioned initiative to enable more community use of school facilities, but many school districts are abusing it to circumvent state revenue limits, avoiding the requirement to gain taxpayer approval via referendum. Currently, all CSF spending is exempted from the spending controls (revenue limits) – the costs of CSF programs are

“Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.” . . . Will Rogers

‘The farther a society drifts from the truth the more it will hate those who speak it.’

. . . George Orwell

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
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ObamaCare and Baby Elephants.

Everyone knows for a fact that elephants grow very large, live a long time, and eat a lot of food during the process. A February 21, article in the *Wall Street Journal* compared the Federal Governments move to provide funding to the states to provide for Medicaid expansion with giving someone a baby elephant as a gift. What looks like a good deal at first could prove to be very expensive and burdensome as time goes on.

In Wisconsin's case, the baby elephant was in the form of a \$65 Million grant offered by the Federal Government through the Dept. of Health and Human Services to apply towards Medicaid expansion. Since that time Newspaper editorials and welfare advocates have been telling Governor Walker to take the money. *"They say, It's free from the government and we can certainly use it, please give us some more."*

Basically, that is the problem. Local and state governments looking for federal handouts to finance their every extra need are one of the causes of the debt crisis our nation is in. Also, federal money also can have strings attached. While \$65 Million is a lot of money to turn down, it only equates to a little over \$11. for each Wisconsin resident. It appears that along with the federal handout will come a lot of government rules and mandates on how the state should run, manage, and pay for our present healthcare system. It could very well end up costing the state and it's citizens far more than at present, but with unknown results. Do we want our Badger Care plan which has been a model for the rest of the country to be managed by Washington but with our money?

With the imposition of *"Affordable Health Care"* AKA/ Obamacare threatening to overrun our entire health care and health insurance system, a lot more information as to what our government has in mind is in order. So far we have heard nothing but speculative guesses with no substantiation. *"Trust us, wait until you see what the plan holds for you,"* chirped Nancy Pelosi. There is little question that it may prove an expensive experiment requiring some more thought.

What started our as a 900 page law has already been expanded to over 6,000 pages with 100 or so regulatory agencies created to manage the system. New regulations are added daily as the deadline for full compliance nears.

The March 4, issue of *Time* magazine devoted 33 pages to an article entitled *"Bitter Pill—How outrageous pricing and egregious profits and destroying our health care."* The article disclosed the many abuses by the health care industry which makes the system so expensive in the first place. Costs should be reduced before the system is overhauled, not the other way around. I could find no reference in the article of their endorsing *"Affordable Health Care"* as being the solution to making health care more affordable for the masses except forcing citizens to obtain more health care insurance to pay for their care. You think health insurance is expensive now, just wait.

Among their findings. The total cost of healthcare in the U.S. this year will be \$2.8 Trillion dollars. This would be about 28% more than other developed countries would charge for the same treatment. Prescription drug prices are 3 to 8 times higher in the U. S. than other countries, even though most of them are developed and manufactured here. Our health care spending is worlds the highest while average life expectancy among the lowest. Common hospital procedures can cost as much 5-10 times what they cost in other countries.

This is not an endorsement of the government run plans which many countries have. Availability and freedom of choice are also big factors. We all should believe that our healthcare system is the best in the world, and we wouldn't want to trade with or copy anyone else. The problem is it has become too expensive and a lot of this can already be blamed on government interference. For example: Anyone eligible for Medicare will attest that when they receive their treatment statements the amount approved for payment is only a fraction of what the provider charged. Medicare then pays 80% of this amount with the balance paid by supplemental insurance or the patient himself. Very nice and cost effective. We can assume however, that patients not on Medicare, insured or not are billed the entire amount which makes insurance expensive and/or creates payment problems for the rest. You may notice more paperwork, privacy disclosures, etc., the result of Government mandates, adding expense for healthcare providers.

Possibly in anticipation of Obamacare prescription drugs and other healthcare costs have been rising rapidly in price. The *Time* article even pointed out multimillion dollar salaries paid to hospital CEOs as a factor along with poor auditing of healthcare bills by insurance carriers, questioning amounts charged and duplicate billings.

The biggest problem of all however, is that in all the pages of Obamacare, there is very little if anything said about controlling the cost of healthcare, and no provisions for enforcing tort reform. One of the biggest items driving healthcare costs are huge lawsuits, (often frivolous) and the cost paid by providers for insurance to protect their interests. While we can agree that providers should be held responsible for their errors, TV ads seeking class action participants is going a step too far.

When details of Affordable Health Care first appeared, it seemed so ridiculous to believe as it would effect the operations of so many industries. Now we see the methodology to pass the bill may have been to give everyone including hospitals, drug companies, equipment makers, insurance companies and lawyers a piece of the action over concern for the consequences. In other words, money talks and politics as usual.

Jim Frink - BCTA



From the internet.

Things That Make Us Wonder.

Anyone who has had loved ones cared for at one of our local nursing homes soon realizes they are very costly facilities to operate, and an expensive place in which to reside. It is common for residents to go through their life savings in very short order, at which time the county through the state often has to subsidize for their care.

Nursing homes are closely regulated by the state, with frequent inspections insuring compliance. Items such as size and quality of meals to cleanliness, proper staffing, quality of life amenities, safety standards and record keeping requirements are established by rules and strictly enforced. This all adds to the cost of operation.

Other factors are that nursing homes are not necessary the most desirable or highest paying places to work, but with more people requiring their services as time goes on will be another major public expense burden.

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Illegal drug use is a constant problem keeping our law enforcement personnel busy, The Brown County Drug Task Force reported 616 arrests in 2012 compared with 529 the previous year. In addition to drugs being smuggled into the county there has been a reported increase in home made drugs referred to as "designer drugs."

Every once in a while it is suggested that if marijuana were made legal in Wisconsin it could save enforcement costs and even provide a taxable source of revenue. Just like alcohol does.

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The U.S. Mint reports that it costs about two cents for them to make a penny and ten cents to make a nickel. No word about all the different quarters they keep coming up with. Just like any government enterprise, the results cost twice as much as they are worth.

In most business enterprises, cost controls and example start from the top and go down, but this seems to be positive proof that with our gov-

ernment waste and inefficiency comes from both the top and the bottom and work towards the middle.

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The U.S. Postal Service has finally announced the end of Saturday delivery service, to be effective August of this year.

While they claim a savings of \$2 Billion annually as a result, it will probably create more postal worker retirees, which is one of their major problems in the first place. They lost \$15.9 Billion last year despite already eliminating 193,000 jobs.

In 1984, Congress passed ERISA legislation requiring private industry to segregate funds to be used for employee retirement benefits. At that time, many businesses were promising retirement benefits to be paid from future earnings. In many cases that promise could not be kept due to economic reasons.

The Postal Service had not set sufficient funds aside so that now their generous retirement benefits are a major expense item.

Raising the price of first class mail a cent or two every couple of years doesn't really help much.

Only a small percentage of mail goes first class while advertising, newspapers, magazines and charity mailings receive the same delivery privileges at a much, much lower cost. Congress doesn't care because their mailings are free.

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The Federal Trade Commission claims that 1 out of 5 consumers have errors on their credit reports which often jeopardizes their ability to obtain credit or borrow money.

Very simple, don't blame the credit rating agencies, or vendors who issue credit. They are only working with what they have to work with. You can't evaluate a persons ability to pay their obligations if you don't have enough information.

While you personally timely pay your bills the interchange of information between vendors and credit rating agencies has been completely stifled by government regulations and individual demand for privacy.

Whenever you do business

with a bank, credit card company or vendor offering credit you will receive a multi-page, fine print disclosure or their privacy terms saying in effect they keep information confidential.

Your Social Security number which is normally a positive identifying factor is never to be disclosed. While this is not all bad in this era of identification theft, you can't expect a good credit rating if information is not made available. What would be worse yet. don't ask the government to keep track of your credit ratings.

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Most of us use plastic credit cards for our more minor purchases as this gives us easy credit and payment options, A couple of items we noticed in the news recently which could even screw this business up.

As you probably know, merchants accepting plastic (VISA/MASTER - Card, Etc.), pay a fee of perhaps 2 to 5% to the card company which in turn takes responsibility for the transaction and in turn invoices and collects from the customer. It is the card company which assesses and profits from interest and late payment fees, which are a big factor as many people will "max" our their available credit making only the minimum payment each month.

However, the card companies also have to absorb bad debts which are a big factor when the economy is poor. Some merchants have objected to paying the fees for accepting the cards and personal injury lawyers have been filing class action suits as a result. Also, as a result of these charges, some merchants have taken the approach of adding the fees to the purchases as if it were another sales tax. If this practice becomes wide spread it could have a negative effect on the way many of us do business.

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United Airlines and U.S. Air have announced merger plans, which leaves just a handful of domestic airlines operating in the country. Every time a merger occurs it is pointed out that the elimination of duplicate flights and personnel will save customers money.

Continued on next page →

Maybe so, but in recent years we have seen nothing but annoying baggage fees, elimination of meals and other amenities, and less per passenger space on flights. A couple of years ago they raised their ticket prices justified to the cost of fuel, but didn't lower them when the fuel price came down. Now the cost is rising again so we will probably see more price increases. It could be worse if the government took over. They would likely run airlines like Obamacare and the postal service by first establishing the price of tickets and not worry about operating costs as the taxpayers would pay the difference.

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At this time, the proposal to merge the Brown County Museum and Library is lacking in details as to its merits. Both are important and assets to the community. Remember they were both housed in the same building until 30 or so years ago but outgrew the building presently the Federal Court House.

The library has been working on renovation which could cost as much as \$20 Million. Parking is mostly regulated by meters which can be a handicap to patrons. The museum is an imposing structure on the banks of the Fox River, but perhaps only a third of its space is used for exhibits while the entire third floor is used for storage of artifacts not on display. While some exhibits are changed from time to time, somehow there does not seem to be a lot to keep people coming back and paying admission.

We are sure those proposing this plan have some viable ideas to present, but the bottom line will likely be the monetary cost and overall value to the community.

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The price of gasoline has some effect on just about everything we do or buy. It seems some super powerful agency is able to control the supply and price at will and all we can do is pay the price.

World demand is increasing in developing countries and despite new discoveries oil is still not what is considered a renewable resource. We should also save some for the future.

Unless someone can figure how to power a truck with a wind turbine or solar panel more serious research is in order. Environmentalists, government and science will have to work together.

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As this is written the Legislature is close to allow new iron mining in Northern Wisconsin. Looking back at Wisconsin history every factory, highway, subdivision or dam ever built here since the state was settled involved some disruption of what mother nature put there and no doubt some people were upset for some reason or other at the time, calling for balance and compromise..

We certainly all agree that the environment should be protected and those causing damage should be held responsible, but unfortunately jobs and the economy also enter into the equation.

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Unless they received a pay increase, workers have noticed a 2% decrease in the size for their paychecks starting in 2013. While the "fiscal cliff" was somewhat avoided, the temporary reduction to 4.2% from earned wages for Social Security benefits went back to the 6.2% rate on wages earned up to \$111,700. For many workers, the FICA deduction exceeds their income taxes,

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It is incomprehensible that our Congress and President cannot sit down and identify at least 10% or \$370 Billion in items to be cut from the \$3.7 Trillion Federal budget. Actually they could cut a lot more but Instead they can't agree on how to cut \$85 Billion, or 2.3% of the budget..

The President is using every classic argument and scare tactic in the book to press his agenda, and the media is loyally trumpeting every word of it. This grandstanding is intended to create public opinion favoring more government spending,

While \$85 Billion is probably pocket change in the Presidents mind, when it comes to spending money, he makes it sound like the end of the world when he wants more. It has all the characteristics of a Gilbert & Sullivan comic opera, but the trouble is that the consequences could be a serious matter for the future or

our country. We are up to our necks in debt and we need an honest explanation and effort from the President to balance the budget rather than theatrics

Considering that Washington spends a little over \$10 Billion every single day, \$85 Billion would last only a little over a week, and at least \$35 B of that would have to be borrowed from others for future generations to pay.

However, because the President and Congress can't agree on how to prepare a balanced budget he claims that everything from airline control towers, the border patrol, FBI, student lunches, military spending and health care will all suffer. The list gets longer every day.

He perhaps forgot that Congress approved a huge tax increase on the "rich" under similar circumstances in January but no spending cuts were made as promised. Every time the National Debt limit is raised "just one more time," to avoid a crisis the rate of spending also seems to increase.

In respect to the President, if all of the services he threatened to cut over a difference of \$85 Billion could be provided the country for that amount, we would have to regard him as a financial genius. The real question would be where he is spending the remaining three trillion, six hundred and fifteen billion remaining in the budget not accounted for.

Also, what would he say if he actually cut all of the federal jobs and services being threatened and nobody noticed the difference?

Rather than dig the country deeper into debt he could start setting examples for taxpayers of his concern. Commandeering a 747 to fly to Florida in order to play golf is not one of them.

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The SS Badger was launched at a time when coal power was the common and accepted method to power ships along with dumping the ashes out of sight somewhere in the lake. Not nice by today's standards.

When the EPA found out about it they told the owners either to scrap the boat or otherwise correct the problem, regardless of cost. They have been extending their warning ever since.

While 500 tons of toxic ash

being dumped in the water each year sounds like the making of an ecological disaster, does it really make a difference? The SS Badger is probably the last of thousands of coal burning vessels built for the great lakes in the past 150 years, and dumping millions upon millions of tons of ashe and other contaminants into the lakes.

In the meantime, there have been many recorded abuses of municipal and industrial pollutants entering the lakes along with digested waste from the wildlife inhabiting them. Yet we regard the water as entirely safe for us to drink.

The question might be, where has all the coal ash dumped in the lakes during the past 175 years gone, and is the Badger itself causing a true environmental problem?

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A proposal was made limiting Brown County supervisors to 12 years, or 6-2 year terms in office. There have also been many proposals to limit the length of time Congressmen and other officials should serve.

While the subject of term limits often is brought up for discussion, one problem is that people in office may be reluctant to vote themselves out. We must be aware that people seeking public office are committing themselves to a lot of time and frustration to a relatively small financial compensation. Many only serve 2 or 3 terms and often it is difficult to recruit qualified replacements.

We realize that some of our elected officials should be replaced more often but many are also dedicated to serving their constituents and we hate to see them leave. It is up to the voters to pay attention to what they are voting for beside name recognition.

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A recent newspaper headline proclaimed, "OBAMA'S VIEWS PREFERRED TO GOP'S." While this could be entirely true, it could also be a classic example of how public opinion can be manipulated by the news media.

A USA Today/Pew research telephone poll of 1,504 results taken in February was the basis of their conclusion. It is not that we question the results so much as where and who the

1,504 persons they called come from? This equates to about one person to every 209,000 U. S. Citizens. There are a great many demographic considerations to cover including age, area of residence and politics. Questions can be worded to qualify different answers. Are we to believe that with as many divisive forces at work in our country one could actually obtain an consensus of coast to coast opinion by selecting one out of every 209,000 people on any subject?

No matter how scientific and accurate the methodology used was this appears to be another example of the headline alone trying to tell people what to believe without encouraging them to think for themselves.

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President Obama, in his recent "State of The Union Address," threw out the idea of helping the middle class by raising the minimum wage to \$9 per hour, up from \$7.75. While this might help some people, it would not help employment rates.

For one thing, if a person is any good, they should already have a job paying better than that or figure out how to get the skills to do so.

While you can't support a family with the minimum wage this is satisfactory for part timers, students, and gaining experience for a better job,

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There is no question that the Governments student loan program has enabled many people to receive a useful college education and keep our institutions of higher learning in business.

It has also created an indebtedness of about \$900 Billion due from students and graduates to the Federal Government. Part of this due to the government having made more money available to more students in recent years. An article in *Forbes* Magazine claims that 1 in 5 of U.S. households owes some sort of student loan debt.

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My dictionary defines the word "sequester," as a transitive verb meaning to seclude, isolate, or to set apart.

If this is true, when Pres. Obama chose this word to describe his spending cuts in an effort to bal-

ance the Federal Budget, it only proves the intention may have been only to select items that the public would relate to rather than across the board as Congress intended.

Another question, if any reductions in Federal services are actually made, will this result in tangible reductions in the amount of money we spend, or will the employees still receive their salaries and benefits but not do any work? Sometimes government employees have ways of bypassing the rules.

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Remember Gov. Doyle? He used his veto pen to insert dozens of policy changes to become law when he signed the annual state budgets.

While the President doesn't have veto power when signing a budget, President Obama has avoided that inconvenience by not signing a budget in the first place and using his "executive power" whenever he felt he couldn't wait for Congress to act on something he wanted.

Dab Weber, president of the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) warns that during the last 90 days of his previous term, over 5,500 proposals for new regulations were submitted to expand his big government agenda. Stay tuned.

As usual, lots of things to wonder about.

Jim Frink

"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of taxpayer related thoughts that occur to us from daily news events. We use reliable, published information and statistics. Some items are unimportant and probably not worth commenting about while others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of future study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in limited space and perhaps put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that our perspective on some items in this column may be contrary to some of our readers. However, one of our purposes is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments or suggestions are welcome for inclusion in future "TAX TIMES."

"Remember that a government big enough to give you everything you want is also big enough to take away everything you have."
 . . . Barry Goldwater

The TAX TIME\$

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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The TAX TIME\$ - March, 2013

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday, March 21, 2013, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titletown Brewing Co.
Speaker, John Gossage Brown County Sheriff

Thursday, April 18, 2013, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titletown Brewing Co.
Speaker, Harry Maier, Green Bay Redevelopment
Authority Chairman

Thursday, May 16, 2013, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titletown Brewing Co.
Program to be announced.

**Public officials and candidates for public office are cordially invited
to attend any of our meetings and be recognized.**

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday
of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Titletown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

Meetings are open to the public.

**BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited
to attend and participate in our open discussions.**

COST: \$8.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.



"A tax on income is the price you
pay for working: a tax on profits,
the price you pay for success: and
a tax on capital gains, the price you
pay for taking risks that work out."

. . . Steve Forbes

SUPPORT THE BCTA

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