

# The Replace Property Tax Campaign



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*~ Dedicated to the replacement of all property tax, everywhere, with a reasonably scaled consumption tax*

*[This article and campaign were originally written and proposed on November 1, 1998. It looks like it might now be gaining traction.]*

People may feel that the idea of replacing all property tax with a consumption tax is an outrageous—or at best—an unnecessary goal. I hope to convince them otherwise. This essay is not riddled with facts and figures and complex arguments, because I believe that the case against property tax, which involves the right to own private property, is powerful enough to stand on its own. In other words, it doesn't require legal and tax experts to figure this issue out. It just requires common sense, which we all have in abundance (we hope).

This idea is a work in progress, and to call it a campaign at this point requires a bit of imagination. Still, some boxes of tea thrown into Boston Harbor started quite a ruckus, didn't they? This may be an idea whose time has come.

For now, let's review some thoughts about the pros and cons of property tax.

## The Case for Property Tax



Image generated by X/Grok AI.

The short answer is that it's a simple and effective means for localities to raise revenue for important services such as water, sewage, fire departments, police, etc. All very valid things that no one wants to see decline.

The more people move into an area and build properties, the more the tax base expands and the wealthier the city becomes. It makes sense, and it works.

## The Case for the Total Replacement of Property Tax

Just think of how much you would like to own your own home (if you don't already) or how much you like owning your own home (if you currently own one). It feels great, doesn't it? A family's home is their castle; their bastion of security, and in some cases, the place they would like to remain for all their days. Take a typical home...

The family worked hard to raise the money to buy it, and finally paid the mortgage off completely. It's their home—or so they think.

“It ain't.”

With property tax on their “home, sweet home,” the house and land, in a functional sense, belong to the city or town that has attached property tax to the property. In a nutshell, your city owns your home and “rents” it to you.

If you don't pay the property tax, the city will come and take it away from you. Period.

Someone may think, “Well, the property tax isn't that much, and it's worked into my mortgage, so I'm fine with a small amount of tax.” It might seem that even after the mortgage is paid off, it's only a few hundred dollars per month, so what's the problem? But it could be much more, depending on where you live. Perhaps the worst part of the property tax scheme is that localities have carte blanche to raise the taxes anytime they want to. I know of people who owned their homes free and clear and had lived there for decades, and then had to move when the towns raised their property taxes to an amount that they could no longer afford. Whether the property tax is one dollar or one thousand dollars per month, the real issue is that as long as property tax exists, you do not own your own home.

Now think for a moment about the same home without any property tax attached to it. You've paid for it, and you own it. There are no liens attached. No debts. No property tax. No one owns it except you. Now imagine for a moment that you fall on hard times. You may not have much money, but you have a place to live. You can hole up in your lovely home for the rest of your life, and no one can take it away from you. It feels good, doesn't it? (The issue of cities forcing a sale of a home because of “eminent domain,” to build a highway or a

shopping center, is a different question, although that law can also be misused.)

From this point of view, the idea of attaching property tax to your “home, sweet home” violates and nullifies the ideal and right of every individual to own their own home. *With property tax, private ownership is eliminated.*

Think about it—with property tax, even after you’ve paid someone for your home, you have to pay City Hall forever, in order to remain living there. Forever and ever and ever. It’s not a very secure feeling, is it?

### **The Solution:**

#### **Replace Property Tax with Consumption Tax**

Everybody understands that cities have to keep running. They have to get their money from somewhere. (Helping them cut their budgets is another campaign.)

Let’s just not have to pay again and again for the same item, and let’s make sure that we really do own our homes, cars, and other items of property.

So, it would seem that the only other source of revenue is the much-hated income tax (we won’t even think about it!)—or the levying of a reasonable consumption tax.

Frankly, the consumption tax can be attached to many types of purchases, in quite a large way. For example, when one has to buy a house for \$100,000, let the city attach a consumption tax of some figure (for example, \$10,000). That’s just an example, and may be too high, or too low, depending on the city’s budget and the ratio of other consumption taxes. We already pay a *lot* of tax at the gas pump, and we hardly ever think about it.

The issue is that we should only be taxed on what we consume and *not* on our income (which often isn’t enough, and hurts way

too much) and *not* on our property, for endless generations. We pay only *once*, at the time of purchase. Period.

Because everyone has to spend money on many different items, the city will have a constant stream of revenue. If it's a town without many shopping areas, then some other creative means of raising money can be considered, as long as it doesn't violate private property.

### **Things That Shouldn't Be Taxed Excessively: Water, Food, Medicine, Electricity, and Heat**

People who are suffering economically should not be taxed unduly—they simply can't afford it. The realm of human suffering isn't a Democrat or Republican issue—it's an issue of heart that belongs to everyone. Public policy should base its content on the heart of unselfish regard for all human beings. If it does, compassion will direct public policy in a direction of goodness.

Excessive taxing of necessities like water, food, medicine, electricity, and heat has too much potential to be a cause of suffering. Let the person who needs to eat buy food without an extreme amount of tax attached to it—it's a reasonable and unselfish thing to do. For those categories, no taxes, or very small taxes, are more appropriate.

### **The Implementation: National Versus Local Level Laws**

One way to implement the replacement of property tax with consumption tax is to create a wave of public opinion that will then influence each locality, one city at a time. Frankly, that's too slow, and fraught with the probability that "XYZ City" will just say no—and merrily keep taxing the property of its citizens. Of course, if the citizens "vote the bums" out, they can change things—but influencing the citizens of each and every town is a mammoth job.

A more efficient method would be to create federal rulings that would outlaw property tax as a violation of the right to own private property, and require consumption taxes to be implemented instead. One way to achieve this would be to bring lawsuits against various municipalities, challenging property taxes as unconstitutional. The best outcome would be a Supreme Court ruling in favor of abolishing property tax.

### **What You Can Do!!!**

It's simple, at this point. Communicate about this issue and create a tidal wave of public opinion. Only massive insistence from voters will have any power to drive this policy change to fruition. Talk to those in power, including:

- Your congressmen and senators
- Your mayor and city council
- Your governor and state legislators
- Your friends and fellow activists
- Your newspapers and media outlets

and...

- Flood social media with this issue!

I believe that repealing property tax is possible. Most of all, I believe that doing so will fundamentally improve the quality of life for citizens wishing to own property of any kind, whether it's residential or commercial.

It is our right to own our properties. Let us now truly make it so.

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