

Opinions

I just want to assure you that women and minorities hold an important position in my platform...

...And they always will.



Increased taxes are unacceptable

BY JOHN SLEDGE
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
There are several methods by which governments increase taxes. The first involves excessive spending which takes more of the available resources produced by the people. As government extracts greater amounts of investment capital, fewer resources are left for private job creation, investment and economic growth.

The third way government raises taxes is by force of law openly promoted and passed. Understandably, this method has the least political appeal. We no longer have tax increases. Instead, Congress "closes tax loopholes." A recent listing shows more than 70 ways in which we pay federal taxes on everything from tires to shotgun shells and truck parts. Nearly everything we earn, buy, sell, invest, give away or leave behind is subject to its own special federal tax.

cent while inflation-adjusted federal outlays (spending) rose 400 percent. That means we have been spending almost twice as fast as we have been producing income and that growth in federal taxes has been much greater than the growth in GNP.

Obviously, we are not undertaxed, we are overspent.

We especially need to keep anti-tax pressure on all politicians, incumbents and hopefuls, between now and the November election. Many of these people are misreading the anti-tax mood of the country and need help in getting back in tune with reality.

Now is the time to make sure each candidate fully understands that increased taxes of any type are unacceptable. We must continue to insist on reduced federal spending to cut the size of government and reduce regulatory interference.

Inflation is another method used by government to increase taxes. Government benefits when inflation forces everyone into higher tax brackets. Contrary to what you may hear - government alone is the source of inflation and promotes in several ways, but primarily by monetary policies that stimulate increases in the money supply unmatched by national increases in goods and services.

Most of us have difficulty keeping track of such things as the Gross National Product, often used as a measure of economic activity. But it is reported that in the 34 years between 1950 and 1984, the GNP, adjusted for inflation, increased by 230 percent.

In that same period, federal tax receipts increased about 300 per-

They don't make humor like they did

Yes, I know us old codgers (anyone past 50) are always talking about how they used to do things better. You know, "They just don't make things like they used to."

Well, to some extent, it's true. For one thing, they don't make music like they used to. This can easily be demonstrated by a simple comparison between the immortal songs of, say, Cole Porter, and today's musical kitsch.

They don't make popular singers like they used to. If the people posing as singers on the rock circuit could sing, they wouldn't need to dress funny, go around with their shirts off, sneer at everybody, swallow their microphones, and set off fireworks on stage to drown out the nasal noises they make.

But one of the best examples is humor. Humor just isn't what it used to be. American humorists used to be masters of the clever turn of a phrase, the delicate irony, the unlikely metaphor, the ludicrous exaggeration. Now, our comedians depend on props, make faces, raise their eyebrows a lot, and shock us with sleazy remarks about sex.

As my number one exhibit, I give you Samuel Langhorne Clemens, popularly known as Mark Twain. If it takes visual gags or other kinds of slapstick humor to make you chuckle, forget it. But, if you appreciate subtle, tongue-in-cheek jests, you'll enjoy this irreverent description of a sermon, from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*:

"The minister gave out his text

Lucien Coleman



Things That Matter

and droned along monotonously through an argument that was so prosy that many a head by and by began to nod -- and yet it was an argument that dealt in limitless fire and brimstone and thinned the predestined elect down to a company so small as to be hardly worth the saving."

The writings of Clemens are full of notable one-liners, like these: "All the modern inconveniences."

"The educated Southerner has no use for an r, except at the beginning of a word."

"An experienced, industrious, ambitious, and often quite picturesque liar."

"When angry, count four; when very angry, swear."

"Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits."

"Each person is born to one possession which outvalues all his others -- his last breath."

"Familiarity breeds contempt -- and children."

Then there is that memorable line contained in a cable from Clemens to the Associated Press:

"The reports of my death greatly exaggerated."

And, with that, I rest my case.



Counterfeit laws should be tougher

Counterfeit goods are a big problem in this country. It is estimated that 130,000 jobs and \$8 billion are lost annually to counterfeiters. They have built a booming business passing off shoddy and often hazardous merchandise as trusted, trademarked products.

There is a good chance that you use many of these products: jeans, watches, auto parts, golf clubs, cough medicine -- even deodorant.

These fake goods can mean more than just annoyance. If jeans seams split, you face limited exposure, but if you buy counterfeit brake pads you could get killed. Bogus parts have been blamed for fatal bus accidents and helicopter

Congressman Bill Hefner



business, it can no longer be dismissed as a minor problem.

As a result, Congress is working on bills that would clamp down on the counterfeiters. There are now bills in the House and Senate designed to help.

Without tougher rules counterfeiting will continue to be a low-risk, high-profit venture. Under current laws, a person can produce a counterfeit product, get caught and suffer nothing more than a slow down in his production line.

Counterfeiting has reached epidemic proportions in recent years, yet bills now before Congress can control this problem.

crashes. Counterfeits have also been detected on a space shuttle test, Army missile systems and commercial airliners.

The United States has become the world's largest market for such items which primarily come from far eastern countries.

Because commercial counterfeiting has become a slick, sophisticated and dangerous

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