



James Deese
...Happy the way it is



Shirley Escribano
...Reserved comment



Andrew Gray
...Basically okay

Opinions On The Street

Local Citizens Air Their Views On:

"Should Tax Laws Be Simplified?"

The only things in life that are for certain, the saying goes, are death and taxes. There has been talk of tax reform or tax simplification over the years; but more recently, the idea that the country's income tax system needs to be changed has drawn greater attention and received increased support from members of Congress and even the President himself.

In his recent State of the Union Address, President Reagan referred to a tax simplification plan which he endorses and challenged the Congress to seriously tackle the inequities built into the present income tax structure.

Black Press

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found in every state except North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho and Wyoming, says the professor, a former editor of the Washington Afro-American and assistant editor of the Kansas City Call, both Black papers. Some cities have a number of competing Black papers, basically trying to appeal to the same target population. In Chicago, Tinney says, there are a dozen, six in St. Louis, six in Washington and three in Kansas City.

Tinney notes that finding the more than 230 Black papers took quite a bit of "digging" on his part and that he was assisted by student researchers. He admits that it is difficult to verify circulation of the papers since only about one-sixth are audited, adding that a "conservative estimate" of circulation is between six million to 7.5 million. The industry estimates more than 4.5 million.

He has found papers that aren't listed in the major industry publication, Editor & Publisher Yearbook. For example, the 1984 edition lists only one Black paper in Buffalo - The Buffalo Challenger. Tinney has identified two others: the Buffalo Criterion and the Buffalo Fine Print. In Washington, he also found two more - The Washington Sun and D.C. Talk-in addition to the four that are listed.

Often the papers not included in the E&P Yearbook are found in "mom and pop" stores in the Black community, he emphasizes. And many are giveaways or controlled circulation papers that generally depend on local advertising.

Most Black papers are weeklies and many are family owned and operated. There are only three dailies - The Chicago Daily Defender, Atlanta Daily World and the New York Daily Challenge.

There are about 12 "semi-weeklies," published twice a week. And there's a monthly "magazine," The National Leader, combining the characteristics of both a newspaper and magazine. The paper started in 1962 as a weekly tabloid, says Tinney, who served as its religion editor.

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Post reporter Audrey Lodato asked area residents their thoughts about the present tax system and the need for tax reform. Should taxes be simplified? Do changes need to be made? Here is what they had to say on the subject.

●ANDREW GRAY, an accountant whose office is located on Beatties Ford Road, expressed the opinion that the present system is a good one. "Basically, it's okay the way it is," Gray replied. "Changes could hurt a lot of people." Some possible ways people could suffer, he noted, might include a drop in charitable contributions if that were not deductible; or the loss of the home mortgage interest deduction would hurt home buyers. He thought that tax reform "may help poor people and the rich, but it might hurt the middle class." Overall, Gray is not in favor of tax reform.

●SHIRLEY ESCRIBANO, of Dunston Court, is an Equal Opportunity Specialist for the Federal government. Ms. Escribano hesitated to give her opinion because of her work. In reply to the question about the need for tax change, she commented, "I wouldn't say overhauled, I'd say changed." She added, "I'd better reserve comment."

●JAMES DEESE, a City worker for the sanitation department, resides on Reid Avenue with his wife, Ossie Lee, and children, Rosalie, Caria, Doris, and Johnny. Deese thinks the present tax system is fine. "I'm happy with it as it is," he remarked. He believes it to be fair, and added, "If they change it, they're liable to take more money."

●MARGARET B. CRANKE, of Vancouver Lane in Gastonia, operates a convenience store. After thinking about the question of whether or not taxes need to be simplified, she responded, "It depends. Some taxpayers don't understand the present tax system."

Ms. Cranke would consider the President's proposed plan. "It has some merits," she continued. "We must look at the pros and cons. Some people's taxes may go up, but you have to look at the whole picture, at what gets taken in and what is leveled."

●BOBBY CRANKE, of Ragan Drive, listened to what his mother had to say, and then added his opinion. "The present system should be simplified," he declared. "Now taxes are in the interest of big business. It's hard to understand how the little person can make it."

●WALTER HUNTER is a retired high school football coach living on Isaac Drive. Mr. Hunter is definitely in favor of tax reform. "I certainly think it could use some changes," he began, noting that as a retired person, his disability benefits are being taxed. He'd like to see Congress take a close look at cuts in Social Security. With regard to other aspects of taxation, Hunter commented, "Some of the largest companies do not pay taxes. This needs to be scrutinized very carefully. Perhaps there's enough loose fat hanging out there that we could eliminate some of the debt." He continued, "We need a more simplified tax system, but I don't think you could have a flat tax and still give tax credits in areas where they should go." He thinks that those with meager incomes would then pay too much. "Simplification should be closed. The tax system has worked well but in the past few years, the burden has shifted to middle class and lower income persons," he concluded.

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