



Chambana Sun

Caulkins sees more Republicans in Springfield as key to addressing taxes, outmigration issues

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As a longtime Republican, Dan Caulkins admits he's gotten to the point where he finds what Democrats have to say is what interests him the most.

"I'm anxious to hear them tell me why they think we are losing population in Illinois the way that we are," Caulkins told the *Chambana Sun*. "I would like to hear them tell me what they think a viable solution to that problem would be. If they think the answer lies in higher taxes and more regulations, there's even less hope for them than I thought."

A new Cato Institute report finds that residents in so-called high-tax states like Illinois are leaving for other places at a much higher rate than in low-tax states.

Out of the 25 states with the highest taxes, all but one state has recently suffered net losses in population, according to the study. By contrast, nearly 70 percent, or 17 of the 25 states with the lowest taxes had a net increase in migration.

With some of the highest property tax rates in the country and on the heels of enacting a 32-percent permanent income tax hike, Illinois rates among the states with the largest levels of outmigration.

"If you want to ruin an economy, Democrats in Springfield have shown you a perfect way of doing it," said Caulkins, who is running against Democrat Jennifer McMillin in the 101st District. "I can't imagine educated people with life experiences not understanding why Illinois is at the top of a list like this for outmigration."

The wealthy and well-skilled residents are leading the exodus out of state to lower-taxed and more efficiently run places, according to the Cato Institute.

In 2016, Illinois lost approximately 42,000 people, with those choosing to flee taking almost \$5 billion in personal income with them.

While some states faced with dwindling populations have tackled the issue head-on and sought to take steps to lower taxes, Democrats in Illinois don't seem to share that philosophy, Caulkins said.

The *Chicago Tribune* reports gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker has pushed the idea of a progressive tax as part of his platform. More recently, party members have rallied behind a statewide property tax hike proposal that's promoted as a way to pay down pension debt.

“I think having more Republicans in Springfield is a core part of the change we need in resolving some of these issues,” Caulkins said. “We need a fresh point of view and different perspective. After so many years of being a political system, even crazed things like this become normal. We need a return to reality coming from people who aren’t politicians and are just solely concerned about turning Illinois around.”

The 101st House District encompasses parts of Champaign, DeWitt, Macon, McLean and Piatt counties.