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## Hurry Up and Die; Our 73,000-Page Tax Code

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### Our 73,000-Page Tax Code

[In February], the 16th Amendment that created the federal income tax [turned] 100 years old. For most Americans, this anniversary is a cause of headaches, not celebration. While the first tax code ran to 400 pages, today it is more than 73,000 pages long.

It includes language like this: “For purposes of paragraph (3), an organization described in paragraph (2) shall be deemed to include an organization described in section 501 (c)(4), (5), or (6) which would be described in paragraph (2) if it were an organization described in section 501 (c)(3).”

With incomprehensible lines like that, it is no surprise that Americans will devote 6.1 billion hours to preparing their taxes and complying with tax laws this year. After years of making matters worse, it’s time for the White House and Congress to solve this problem. We need to finally take this opportunity to make our tax code fairer, flatter and simpler.

—Senator John Barrasso (R–Wyo.), *Investor’s Business Daily*

### Shocking State Business Taxation

State business taxation is an overlooked area in need of reform. The Council on State Taxation found that state and local levies on businesses totaled \$644 billion in 2011, or more than double the annual cost of the federal corporate income tax. True, the federal corporate tax rate is too high relative to other countries’ and is hurting American competitiveness. But business property taxes, sales taxes imposed on business purchases, and myriad other anti-investment levies imposed by state and local governments also impede economic growth.

—Chris Edwards, Cato Institute, *Wall Street[entity] Journal*

## Congress Shirks Its Duties

The U.S. Congress has reached the point where it is almost incapable of fulfilling its most basic duties. The Senate, for instance, has not passed a budget since April 2009—more than a year before the first iPad was introduced.

Let's get one thing straight: The sequester cuts are not even close to being large enough to put federal spending on a path toward sustainability. [In February], the Congressional Budget Office released its latest forecast, which takes into account all of the sequester cuts, and still projects that the national debt will reach 101% of GDP—larger than our entire economy—by 2030. Interest payments on that debt will swamp almost all other line items in the federal budget long before then.

Is the sequester an elegant way to reduce federal spending? Of course not. But it may be the only way, given the dysfunction of Congress.

—Tom Giovanetti, president, Institute for Policy Innovation

## Obama's Dismal Record

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projections from January 2009 expected the 2012 deficit to be \$264 billion, but Mr. Obama put us on a different trajectory. His guiding hand has brought the nation closer to financial ruin with a deficit of \$1.1 trillion last year. By the time the next President delivers his inaugural address, our debt will have doubled from \$10.6 trillion in 2009 to more than \$20 trillion.

Mr. Obama promised “hope and change” without delivering either to those struggling to find work. Today's unemployment rate of 7.8% is as high as it was when Mr. Obama came to office. There are 23 million people unemployed, underemployed or who have simply given up looking for work. Thanks to Mr. Obama's policies, 994,000 construction jobs and 757,000 jobs in manufacturing have been lost. Long-term unemployment benefits keep being extended because 5 million have found themselves out of work for over six months. It's no wonder this grim economy has left 46 million people on food stamps.

—Washington Times

## Capital Misconduct

The presidential limousine has a new license plate that reads, “Taxation without Representation.” The change was made, President Obama’s spokesman told reporters, because the current arrangement is “patently unfair” to those who live in the nation’s capital. In keeping with his general commitment to fairness, the President is now set upon “the principle of full representation” and “voting rights” for the District of Columbia’s denizens.

This all sounds rather nice, but the nation’s Founders would have disagreed as to its wisdom—as should all who understand America’s system of government. Washington, D.C., is a federal city, deliberately independent and explicitly set apart from the usual rules. In Federalist 43, James Madison explained that D.C.’s being discrete is an “indispensable necessity,” a means of ensuring that the capital’s host state does not exercise disproportionate influence over the government and undermine the basic principles of federalism. So we can see why Obama disagrees.

—National Review