

November 12, 2013

Tax Revision Commission Public Hearing
1101 4th St SW
Washington, DC 20024

Jessie Posilkin
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Washington, DC 20009

Re: Support for a Progressive Tax Code

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at the Tax Revision Commission Public Hearing. I am here as a resident of the District of Columbia to talk about why progressive taxation is important. I would like to speak in support of the estate tax, in support of a tax on high income earners, and in support of decreasing the tax burden on middle income families.

As a former organizer of the Save our Safety Net campaign, and as someone who works professionally to provide services to low-income people across the country, I know that our municipal services are in high demand. As a person who believes in equity and fairness, I also believe that every resident should pay to support these municipal services, and should pay their fair share.

As others will share tonight, there are a number of way to rebalance the District's tax code.

The first way to do this is to adjust our tax bracket system. This can be done by adding an additional tax bracket. Back in 2010, I organized to create a new tax bracket so that DC's top income tax bracket was not at \$40,000 of income. When I bring this fact up in conversation, most DC residents don't believe me, because it seems so preposterous. While a new bracket for families earning more than \$350,000 was created in 2012, moderate-income families are paying the same rate as families with incomes up to \$350,000. If I were to marry my partner, I would fall into this wide bracket (between \$40,000 and \$350,000). We would happily pay the extra few tenths of a percentage point of our income, knowing that our city will have better schools, streets, and safety as a result of our collective payment.

Another way to rebalance the system would be to create relief at the bottom of the bracket system. Lowering taxes for low- and moderate-income residents without touching the rates at the top would lead to a tax cut for every residents, as a portion of everyone's income would be subject to lower tax

rates.

Lastly, an expansion of benefits to support child-less people would make the system more equitable. The way to do this is to increase the EITC for single workers. As I imagine you've heard this evening, the maximum DC EITC benefit for a worker with one child was \$1,268 in 2012, while a single person without children could get no more than \$190. This would also benefit non-custodial parents, and those who choose not to have children.

As I've learned over the past 4 years, no one likes talking about tax policy, even though it is so important to making our city a great place to live and work. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these issues, and for your time today.