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National survey shows people want US Senate to repeal Death Tax

Washington, DC — With the U.S. House of Representatives having passed permanent repeal of the estate tax, the focus will be on the U.S. Senate this fall to rid the country of the tax that the majority of Americans believe is unfair, extreme and an example of double and even triple taxation.

In a survey of more than 2,500 voters, two noted national pollsters found that dislike for the estate tax is pervasive, cutting across both political affiliations and income levels. Moreover, the results show it's not just a general anti-tax sentiment. Voters specifically reject the arguments used by those who want to keep the estate tax, also known as the inheritance tax or the death tax, and they are inclined to vote against politicians who support the tax.

The survey was conducted by the Luntz Research Companies, whose clients include several prominent Republicans and national media outlets; and, Global Strategy Group, Inc., which works with the Democratic National Committee and media outlets. Both research companies have offices in New York and Washington, D.C. They conducted the study on behalf of Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), a national bipartisan organization representing more than 430,000 women in business and women business owners across the country.

When parents die, the federal government levies the estate tax on families who are in line to inherit farms, businesses and other properties. The 49 percent estate rate is higher than the highest federal income tax rate.

“The tax is so unfair. It is so high. And who knows what happens to your company, your farm, the jobs you provide and your community, if your children have to sell to some out-of-state buyer,” said Terry Neese, president and co-founder of WIPP. “We want to leave our businesses to our children, but the death tax is a real barrier to that hope.”

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The survey's results are based on telephone interviews with 2,506 American voters; the margin of error is plus or minus 2 percent.

The president of Global Strategy, Jeffrey Pollock, said the survey sends a strong signal to politicians blocking elimination of the estate tax.

“When we asked people if they'd vote for a candidate who would eliminate the death tax or a pro-death tax candidate, voters' preference was clear,” Pollock said. “*They'll vote overwhelmingly for the candidate who wants to eliminate the death tax.*”

Added Frank Luntz, president of Luntz Companies: “No matter what you call it – estate, inheritance or death tax – the American people find it unfair and want it eliminated. People of all kinds, all across the country, dislike the inheritance tax, and that includes Democrats and low-income families. For example, 65% of those who make less than \$30,000 a year think the tax is unfair, no matter what it's called. In more than a decade of polling, I have never seen such hostility toward any other tax.”

Poll Results

Americans were presented with a series of agree/disagree statements on the inheritance tax:

The arguments against the inheritance tax are universally positively received among voters.

Inheritance taxes are an extreme form of taxation. The tax rate, as high as 50 percent, is higher than even the highest federal income tax rate — and that's unfair.

AGREE	79%
DISAGREE	17%

Inheritance taxes represent double and triple taxation. It is unfair for people to pay taxes on income, and then more taxes on what they save, and a third time when they die.

AGREE	79%
DISAGREE	18%

Inheritance taxes are unfair because they single out those who save and invest for no reason other than the fact that they became successful and then died.

AGREE	69%
DISAGREE	27%

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The arguments in favor of maintaining the death tax have virtually no support from anyone in America.

People do not work for inherited income, so inheritances should be taxed at a higher rate since it is not earned income.

AGREE	19%
DISAGREE	79%

The inheritance tax is progressive, and it only affects the wealthiest Americans. Right now, inheritances of less than one million are not taxed. Since only the richest two or three percent of Americans have estates that high, the death tax should not be reduced.

AGREE	28%
DISAGREE	56%

When asked which candidate they would vote for, Americans clearly backed the candidate who says the death tax should be eliminated.

One Congressional candidate says that death taxes should be eliminated. They are unfair because they single out those who save and invest for no other reason than because they are successful. Inheritance taxes are an extreme form of double or even triple taxation, and the rate, which can be as high as 50 percent, is higher than even the highest federal income tax rates.

Another Congressional candidate says that inheritance taxes should be kept. Inheritances of less than one million are not taxed, and therefore inheritance taxes affect only the richest two or three percent of Americans. The wealthy are able to take advantage of tax loopholes to avoid paying their income taxes, and inheritance taxes restore fairness to the system by making up for some of the money that is lost.

If that's all you know about the two candidates, which one would you vote for?

THE CANDIDATE WHO SAYS DEATH TAXES
SHOULD BE ELIMINATED -- 58%

THE CANDIDATE WHO SAYS INHERITANCE
TAX SHOULD BE KEPT -- 32%

NEITHER -- 8%

DON'T KNOW/REFUSE -- 2%

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