

Rock Island Committee Urges Springfield to Pass Fair Tax Act

Written by Neal Waltmire
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Without a Fair Tax, the state's looming fiscal collapse would mean an \$8.3 million cut to Rock Island County schools and the continuation of unfair tax and budget policies that stifle middle class families

Rock Island, IL – By a vote of 5-1, the Government Affairs Committee of the Rock Island County Board passed a resolution this afternoon calling on lawmakers in Springfield to pass the Fair Tax Act ([HJRCA 33](#) / [SJRCA 40](#)) as a necessary first step to avoid devastating and unprecedented cuts to local services and to provide tax relief to a majority of Rock Island County families.

“While some extreme partisans in Springfield are ready to drive our state right off the fiscal cliff, a large and broad coalition of citizens in Rock Island and throughout Illinois are fighting for long-term budget reform that includes a Fair Tax,” said Brian Vyncke, a member of the committee who voted in favor of today's resolution. “Beyond stable and sustainable revenues, a Fair Tax represents a tax CUT – not an increase, but a cut – for the overwhelming majority of Rock Island County residents.”

The resolution endorses a Fair Tax, with lower rates for lower incomes and higher rates for higher income, which would provide immediate tax relief for the majority of Rock Island families. Right now, Illinois poor and middle income families pay a rate that is twice the rate of the very rich, when factoring in all state and local taxes paid.

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Peter Starzynski of the [A Better Illinois coalition](#) unveiled the findings of a [new report](#) by the Fiscal Policy Center at Voices for Illinois Children that shows the state will cut \$8.3 million from Rock Island County schools if lawmakers in Springfield take us over the fiscal cliff. He also explained how Springfield's broken budget process is rife with late payments to vendors and local governments, continues to cut vital programs, and provides wasteful giveaways to corporations through unfair loopholes designed by the rich.

"Springfield needs to decide what's more important: coddling millionaires or supporting our local schools," said Vyncke. "We need fundamental, long-term budget reform that includes a Fair Tax because our kids, our seniors, and our middle class cannot endure Springfield's broken budget and tax policies any longer."

Starzynski presented data showing Iowa, a Fair Tax state, has an unemployment rate that is half that of Illinois. He also noted that Scott County, IA has sales taxes and property tax rates that are much lower on average than those in Rock Island County.

"We need a Fair Tax in Illinois, so people live here, work here, raise families here, and make great communities here in Rock Island County – instead of Iowa," said Vyncke.

Illinois lawmakers are currently prohibited—constitutionally barred—from enacting tax fairness. If Springfield passes the Fair Tax Act, voters will have an opportunity to modernize Illinois' Constitution in November to allow a Fair Tax with lower rates for lower incomes and higher rates for higher incomes.

"Why shouldn't Illinois be allowed to tax millionaires at a rate higher than minimum wage workers if that's what citizens decide is best?" said committee Member Don Jacobs.

Momentum for a Fair Tax has grown significantly since the A Better Illinois [launched its campaign](#) in the Quad Cities back in October. The number of petitions signed has doubled to nearly 250,000 and the Fair Tax is now atop the legislative agenda in Springfield.

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[A Better Illinois](#) is a statewide coalition of civic and community organizations, small business, labor and faith leaders, educators, service providers, and tens of thousands of ordinary taxpayers seeking to modernize Illinois tax structure to create greater fairness and long-term economic growth.

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