



## **Communications & Social Media Toolkit**

From the Illinois Federation of Teachers

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Illinois Federation of Teachers  
*A Union of Professionals*



Thank you for joining us in our digital campaign for a Fair Tax in Illinois, **Vote YES for Fairness!**

You can use this toolkit to guide your social media posts and tweets that show your support for a Fair Tax in Illinois. Members' voices are critical in spreading the word that a Fair Tax is absolutely vital to put Illinois on a path to fiscal responsibility and properly fund public schools and services without working people bearing the tax burden.

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## **Why support the Fair Tax?**

Illinois residents will vote this year on whether to pass a graduated income tax, or Fair Tax. A Fair Tax is a necessary change to our constitution that will bring fairness to our tax system, asking the wealthiest Illinoisans to pay a little more so that the tax burden no longer falls on the state's working people. The other 97% of us – those earning \$250,000 or less – will see a tax cut or no change at all.

By slightly raising taxes on the top 3% the state will bring in an estimated \$3 billion dollars, which is a huge step in filling the current state budget hole. That is why IFT supports this measure and proudly advocates all members to **Vote YES for Fairness.**

## **What will it take to pass a Fair Tax?**

To enact a Fair Tax in Illinois, one of two things must happen when we vote:

- 60% of those answering the referendum must vote YES, or
- A simple majority of all those voting in the election must vote YES

That's why we need your help to spread the word about the benefits of a Fair Tax!



## What's Inside?

Helpful Links  
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## How To Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help you share the reasons why a Fair Tax is vital for our state and needed now more than ever.

You can use everything on the following pages to get involved! Here's how you can help:

- ✓ Share posts, graphics, videos, and links on social media.
- ✓ Use the talking points and graphics to compose an article in your local newsletter or on your member website.
- ✓ Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- ✓ Talk to your colleagues, family, and friends about why we need a Fair Tax.
- ✓ Send us a video explaining why passing the Fair Tax is important to you and your community.
- ✓ Vote YES on the Fair Tax ballot referendum!

## Questions?

Contact the IFT Communications Department via email at [info@ift-aft.org](mailto:info@ift-aft.org), or by sending us a message on Facebook or Twitter. Our staff can help you with any of the communications tactics listed above.



## Helpful Links

- [IFT Fair Tax Central](#)
- [IFT Voter Information Page](#)
- [IFT Twitter Page](#)
- [IFT Facebook Page](#)
- [IFT Instagram Page](#)
- [IFT Resolution 1 from the 2019 Convention](#): Advocate for Passage of a Fair Tax in Illinois
- [Vote Yes for Fair Tax Campaign](#)  
*IFT is part of a coalition of statewide unions that support the Fair Tax. This page is the online headquarters for that broader campaign.*
- [Fair Tax Calculator](#) – Use this to determine what your taxes will be once a Fair Tax is enacted.
- [Fair Tax FAQ](#)
- [Fair Tax 10 Minute Meeting Agenda](#)
- [County Level Fair Income Tax Data](#)

## Important Dates

- Vote by Mail **now!** Mail-in ballots must be received by October 29. [Here's how.](#)
- Statewide Early Voting in Illinois: September 24 – November 2, 2020
- Election Day: November 3, 2020

## Campaign Hashtags

- #FairTaxNow
- #VoteYESforFairness

## Join the Movement – **Endorse the Fair Tax today!**

You and/or your local union can show your support for a Fair Tax by officially endorsing it through the Vote Yes for Fair Tax campaign.

- For [individuals](#) willing to sign up for updates from the Vote Yes for Fair Tax campaign
- For [IFT leaders and spokespeople](#) to publicly endorse the Fair Tax and participate in the campaign
- For [local unions](#) willing to publicly endorse the Fair Tax



## Talking Points That Guide Our Messaging

- The Fair Tax will allow Illinois to invest in the areas we need it most – public education, human services, health care, and job growth – and only raises taxes on income over \$250,000. This means only the wealthiest 3% of Illinoisans will see a tax increase.
- The Fair Tax will bring greater fairness to working people by establishing higher rates for higher incomes (over \$250,000/year) and lower rates for low and moderate incomes.
- The Fair Tax will raise revenue by over \$3 billion so that Illinois can invest in our local communities, all the while bringing fairness to our tax system.
- The way our current tax structure stands, low income and working people now pay twice as much as wealthy people as a share of their income. We can end this and bring fairness to Illinois tax structure by voting YES for a Fair Tax.
- Our current unfair tax structure will do nothing to address the disparities that working families are facing. By enacting a Fair Tax, we can begin to help our lower- and middle-income Illinois families, who were financially hit hardest by the crisis, to recover by bringing in an additional \$3 billion per year to fund public education and critical services.
- Passing a Fair Tax this year is needed now more than ever. Without the Fair Tax, it will be more difficult to get our state back on track and require all of us – not just the richest 3% - to pay much more in taxes. This would devastate hundreds of thousands of working families.
- Coronavirus has impacted nearly every facet of our state, but one thing that hasn't changed is the need for a tax system that is fair and works for everyone.



## Talking Points (continued)

- Our current tax system is outdated and unfair, burdening the middle- and lower-income families who are suffering the most from the effects of the coronavirus crisis as they try to recover and rebuild. The Fair Tax will set this right by ensuring that taxes for 97% of Illinoisans are lowered or stay the same while investing in the people and communities most impacted by the crisis.
- If this pandemic has taught us anything it is that we need to be prepared to fully fund public education and state services. To do that, we need to bring fairness to our tax system so hospitals, school districts, communities, and vital services are properly funded.
- We need to fund essential priorities like public health, public safety, schools, and social services. These sectors have been among the hardest hit economically by the pandemic. This crisis has exposed how inadequate our current tax system is at funding the critical health services we count on to protect us, and it unfairly burdens those on the frontlines.
- This crisis underscores racial inequities that already plague our communities. Frontline workers who cannot work remotely are at increased risk of exposure. Seniors and people with underlying health conditions face a greater threat of severe illness. Lower-income individuals and families are less able to withstand the loss of jobs and income. And people of color are disproportionately represented in all these groups. Passing the Fair Tax is an important step to address these inequities, allowing anyone who makes less than \$250,000 a year to get a tax cut while generating the resources needed to make real investments in programs and services so everyone can be safe and thrive.
- This fall, we should all vote YES to reforming our tax system. Vote YES for the 97% of Illinoisans who need protection and support not only during a pandemic but in the future. The recovery will be long and trying but it starts by ensuring that our tax system is fair for working and middle-class families.



## Talking Points to Combat the Opposition

*These arguments are for use when directly challenged by a member, or when all the above points have failed to convince them. We suggest starting with the pro-Fair Tax information from the previous two pages because we see positive results when fairness and investment in communities are at the center of the conversation.*

*Their point:* Voting YES for a Fair Tax means that our taxes can go up at any time.

*Ours:* Right now, the flat income tax can be raised at any time. It just went up a few years ago under Governor Rauner, if you recall. Changing the income tax to a progressive structure doesn't give any more ability to the legislature than it already has – it just makes it more fair for the people and small businesses who take home less than \$250,000/year and asks those who are lucky enough to make more than that to pay a little more. On top of that, in the 30+ states who have a progressive tax, this doesn't happen. If anything, taxes are lowered over time because of the amount they bring in by taxing the most wealthy.

*Their point:* Illinois needs to make cuts first before asking taxpayers for a new tax.

*Ours:* Illinois has the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the US and the 6<sup>th</sup> largest population yet ranks in the bottom third for spending on services per capita because of budget cuts over the last 20 years. We also have the smallest number of state employees per capita in the country. We've been cutting, and it hurts our students, universities, healthcare, and public services. A Fair Tax would strengthen the budget by asking the wealthiest 3% of the population – those making over \$250,000 – to pay a fairer amount of their income towards making our state work for everyone.

*Their point:* This tax structure will hurt small businesses.

*Ours:* Only those businesses making over \$250,000 per year will see an increase – that is 5% of Illinois small businesses. The rest will not be affected or will see a tax decrease.

*Their point:* If we tax the wealthy, they'll just leave Illinois.

*Ours:* This is a scare tactic and doesn't actually happen if you look at the data. States with highly progressive income taxes like New York and California thrive and are home to many of our most wealthy U.S. citizens.



### ***So why do people oppose the Fair Tax?!***

Opposition campaigns are run by groups like the Illinois Policy Institute, who are funded by millionaires and billionaires that (1) don't want higher taxes and (2) want to keep power away from workers like us. Their motivations are to accumulate wealth on the backs of Illinois workers and communities. Our current tax structure favors them, and they don't want it to change.





## Dealing with Trolls and Opponents

*If you're active on social media, no matter the platform, it's inevitable that you will someday come across someone who disagrees with you. They might be on the opposite side of an issue, or they're trolling – purposefully contradicting or saying something controversial to get a reaction. Rather than let that dissuade you from posting or tweeting, these tips can help you in your response to those people.*

*Opponents are not as bad as trolls. Legitimately disagreeing with someone is human, and it's a part of our everyday lives – at work, at home, and even with strangers in public. If you know the person who is disagreeing with you, you'll know how best to respond. Some of the same tactics mentioned below for dealing with trolls can apply here as well.*

### What can you do to deal with trolls?

1. Ignore them.  
Trolls are fueled by your responses. They want to keep the conversation going and they want attention. Don't give them the energy, and most likely, they will go away.
2. Respond with facts.  
Cite credible news sources or other websites that prove your point. Include the link. Once disproven, most will stop talking.
3. Don't take any bait.  
If they're pressing on a particular issue or asking a question, ask yourself why? If you're choosing to respond, don't do it quickly. Think through what you type. Don't set them up to spike.
4. On Facebook, don't delete: hide.  
You have some options when it comes to managing Facebook comments on a post. You can delete them, but they'll know that their comment is gone if they go looking for it. If you hide their comment, they will still be able to see it, and so will their friends...but no one else will!
5. Block them.  
This is a last resort, but if someone is commenting with especially negative or offensive comments, you always have the option to block them. That means they won't be able to interact with your page anymore. Clearly, this is the most extreme response, but it does get rid of the problem!



## **UPDATED** Sample Tweets and Posts

You can share all the graphics, videos, and links on social media, but here are a few examples utilizing our **Vote YES for Fairness** talking points:

### *Tweets*

I will be voting YES for a #FairTaxNow to bring fairness to our tax structure and investment to our schools and communities.

A #FairTaxNow will benefit all of us – including small business owners – by asking only those making over \$250K to pay their fair share.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/letters/ct-letters-vp-082020-20200819-acyhayi5zjhbna6uluvlxxeci-story.html>

You can also retweet [this](#) or [this](#) or [this](#)!

Endorse the Fair Tax today and share that on social media as well! See links for union leaders, unions, and individuals to endorse on page 4 in **green**!

### *Facebook Posts*

I'm voting YES for a Fair Tax this election because it will bring fairness to our tax structure and revenue to invest in our schools and communities.

A #FairTaxNow will benefit all of us – including small business owners – by asking only those making over \$250K to pay their fair share.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/letters/ct-letters-vp-082020-20200819-acyhayi5zjhbna6uluvlxxeci-story.html>

You can also share [this](#) or [this](#) from IFT's Facebook page!

Endorse the Fair Tax today and share that on social media as well! See links for union leaders, unions, and individuals to endorse on page 4 in **green**!



## Graphics

Find these graphics [on our website](#)! Use them in newsletters, emails to members, and on social media.

### Facebook Graphics



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## Facebook Graphics (continued)



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## Facebook Frame for Profile Picture

Use our Facebook frame to show support for the Fair Tax. To change your frame, select “Update” on your profile picture, then click “Add Frame.” Find the frame searching for one of these terms:

*FairTaxNow*

*Fairtax*

*Vote YES for Fairness*

*Illinois Federation of Teachers*

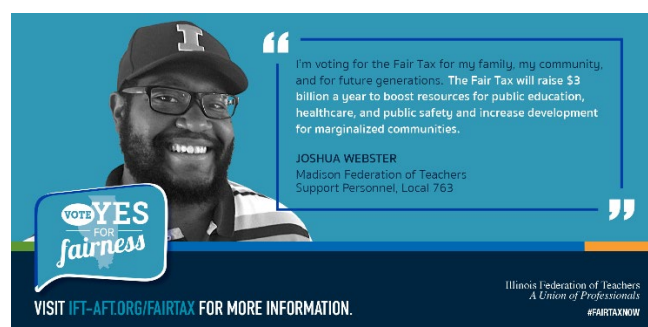
## Twitter Graphics



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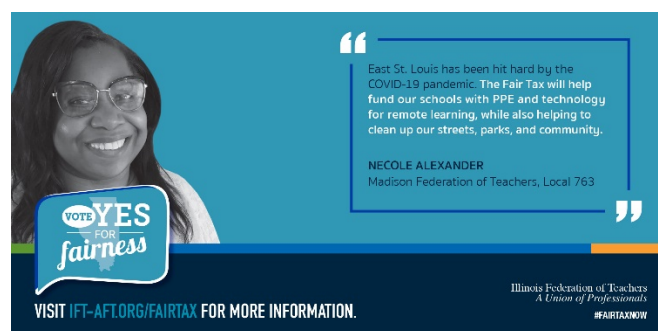
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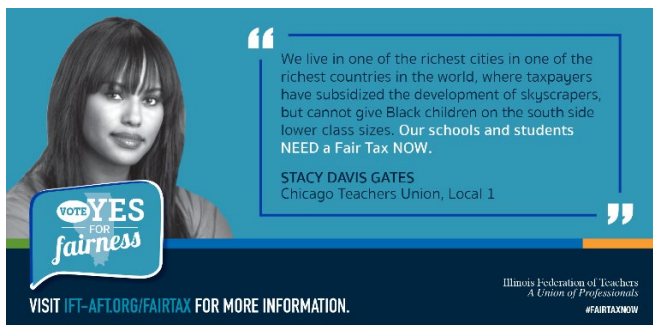
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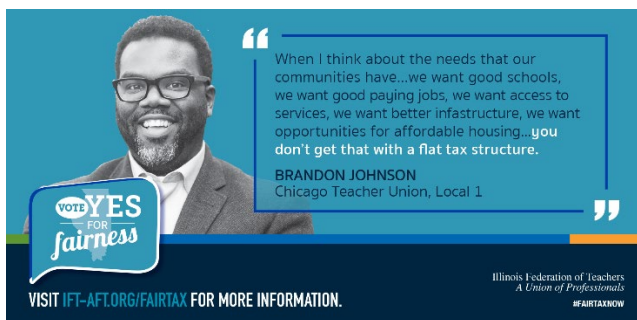
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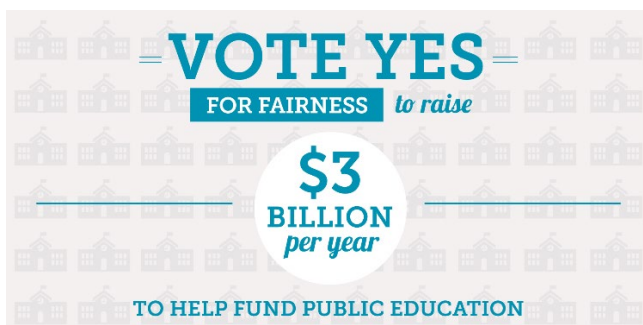
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## Twitter Graphics (continued)



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## Zoom Background



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## Flyers

[Fair Tax for Illinois Informational Flyer](#)  
[Fair Tax Frequently Asked Questions](#)

**NEW!** Member Spokesperson Flyers

- [Ellie](#)
- [Rachel](#)
- [Joshua](#)
- [Barbara](#)
- [Necole](#)
- [Allison](#)
- [Rich](#)
- [Tara](#)
- [Stacy](#)
- [Spencer](#)
- [Brandon](#)



## Videos

**NEW**

[IFT President Dan Montgomery:  
Vote YES for Fairness](#)



**NEW**

[IFT Secretary-Treasurer Jane  
Russell has some 4-letter words  
for you](#)



**NEW**

[Fair Tax Calculator - IFT  
Member Results](#)







## Videos (continued)

[These IFT Members are Voting Yes](#)



[Fair Tax. Fair Future.](#)



[The Fair Tax Explained in About a Minute](#)





## Example Letters to the Editor

*You can use these as a blueprint for drafting your own to send in to a local newspaper. Or, feel free to write your own using our talking points. If you have questions about the process, contact [info@ift-aft.org](mailto:info@ift-aft.org) for assistance.*

*Example 1, from a PSRP's perspective:*

A Fair Tax = A Fair Chance

This year, Illinois voters can vote to amend our state constitution to allow different income tax rates based on income levels. The Fair Tax assesses a higher tax on folks who earn more than \$250,000 annually and gives the rest of us a tax cut. The net result is an additional \$3 billion per year.

I support a Fair Tax for three important reasons.

1. **First, our current tax system is grossly unfair.** For years, Illinois' outdated and unfair tax laws have hindered the ability to properly fund our schools, fix our roads and bridges, provide social services to those in need, and have disproportionately left our most vulnerable populations behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these issues. A Fair Tax will give us a fair chance to change this.
2. **Second, our public education systems and critical social service providers desperately need additional funding.** In my job as a paraprofessional, I've worked with kids with varying hurdles: autism, learning disabilities, language impairment, vision issues, and more. I've seen firsthand how the added stress of COVID-19 has derailed some students mentally and emotionally.

This fall, we are going to see a rise in students who qualify for free and reduced lunches, who need access to counselors, nurses, and social services. We're going to see students who have not received individual instruction fall further behind and need additional support. We're going to see students with disabilities need extra accommodations to make up for services that can't be replicated remotely. A Fair Tax will give Illinois schools funds to allow teachers and paraprofessionals, like me, to provide these essential services to all students, regardless of zip code.

3. **Finally, a fair tax system could lead to a fair health care system and an employment system that invests fairly in workers.** Illinois' tax structure needs to be based on the 21st century, not more band-aids on an already broken and unfair system.

If you see this the way that I do, please join me and Vote YES for a Fair Tax.



## Example Letters to the Editor (continued)

*Example 2, from a community member's perspective:*

To the Editor:

With the election approaching, we're hearing a lot about the Fair Tax. As a resident of (INSERT CITY/TOWN), I want to tell you why I plan to support it.

The income tax system in Illinois has benefitted the rich for decades. Lower- and middle-income families pay more as a percentage of their income than the wealthy. That's just flat out unfair.

Because our state relies on property taxes to fund schools and services, average homeowners have seen our property taxes steadily increase. It is a major burden and has created a system that ensures wealthy communities have more resources for their students and schools than their neighbors. That's unfair too.

The Fair Tax could help us fix it. By asking those who can afford it – the 3% who earn more than \$250,000 per year – to pay a little bit more, we can lower or stabilize taxes on the rest of us and generate billions to invest in our communities, jobs, schools, colleges, and universities, healthcare, and more.

Opponents are trying to scare people, and they're being dishonest. I've heard some say that a Fair Tax would give lawmakers the power to increase taxes whenever they want, but there is zero reason to believe that – it hasn't happened in the 33 other states that have a Fair Tax. I've also heard that a Fair Tax would harm retirement income. AARP says that's false, and so does Illinois law. Don't believe it.

Here are the facts: A Fair Tax will help lower- and middle-income families and provide funding for important programs and services we all need. It's a win for families and (INSERT COMMUNITY), so I plan to vote YES for fairness. I urge my fellow residents to do the same.



## Example Letters to the Editor (continued)

**NEW:** Example 3, from a teacher's perspective:

I am a teacher in **TOWN**, Illinois, and I will be voting YES for a Fair Tax when I complete my mail-in ballot. Let me tell you why.

I have been teaching for **XX** years. In that time, I've watched our public schools make do with less and less funding. I've watched my community's working families struggle with rising health care costs, job cuts, and unfair taxes while the rich get richer. I've watched my credit card bill go up at the same time every year when I purchase school supplies for my classroom and think to myself, "Did I really just spend that much on work?!" And now during this pandemic, I've watched all of that get even worse.

I'm tired of watching this show. It's time to change the channel.

I'm ready to see our public schools get better funding. I'm ready to see real investment and more jobs in my community. I'm ready to see some relief for working families. I'm more than ready to see the top earners pay their fair share in taxes. And a Fair Tax will allow me to see all of that.

The Fair Tax will bring greater fairness because it will establish higher rates for higher incomes (over \$250,000) and lower rates for lower incomes. It will raise state revenue by \$3 billion PER YEAR! This money can go towards investment in our schools, communities, health care systems, and more.

Let's make this happen. Let's all change the channel. Let's vote YES for a Fair Tax on our ballots this year.



## News You Can Use:

The articles can be shared on social media at any time. The list will grow as more are written.

### *Articles supporting the Fair Tax:*

- **NEW:** Gaebler Resources for Entrepreneurs: [Illinois Fair Tax Vs. Flat Tax: Why A Flat Tax Is Not Fair](#)
- **NEW:** IFT: [The most important election of our lifetimes](#)
- **NEW:** Gaebler Resources for Entrepreneurs: [Illinois Fair Tax Vs. Flat Tax: The Decreasing Moral Value Of Money](#)
- **NEW:** KFVS: [Fair Tax proposed in Illinois](#)
- Tri-State News: [Graduated income tax could 'relieve' property tax pressure, advocates say](#)
- IFT: [Official Fair Tax Language on the Ballot](#)
- WMBD: ['Vote Yes for Fair Tax' coalition urging Illinoisans to vote for November's constitutional amendment](#)
- Chicago Sun-Times: [Everything you need to know about the proposed graduated income tax](#)
- Chicago Tribune: [Column: Now more than ever, Illinois needs a progressive state income tax](#)
- Chicago Sun-Times: [How do we thank 'essential workers?' Vote for a graduated Illinois income tax on Nov. 3](#)
- One Illinois: [Rural, downstate counties to benefit most from Pritzker 'fair tax'](#)

### *Articles busting the opposition's myths:*

- **Myth:** The Fair Tax will stop entrepreneurs from starting companies and creating jobs.  
**BUSTED:** [Fair Tax amendment would benefit young entrepreneurs](#), Crain's Chicago Business, July 2020
- **Myth:** A Fair Tax will open the door to your retirement being taxed.  
**BUSTED:** [AARP releases statement in support of Fair Tax](#), IFT, June 2020
- **Myth:** A Fair Tax will drive the wealthy out of Illinois.  
**BUSTED:** [Illinois Is Not Losing Its Highly Taxed Residents](#), Chicago Magazine, January 2020
- **Myths:** (1) Illinois needs to fix the pension system first; (2) Legislators must first cut spending; (3) It's a blank check to raise tax rates in the future; (4) The wealthy will move out of Illinois.  
**BUSTED:** Column: [The top four arguments against the 'fair tax' and why they fail](#), Chicago Tribune, April 2020



*Letters to the Editor:*

- **NEW:** Chicago Tribune: [Letters: 'Fair tax' would not affect most small businesses in Illinois](#)
- **NEW:** The Southern Illinoisan: [Voice of the Reader: Our communities need the Fair Tax](#)
- **NEW:** Effingham Daily News: [Letter to the Editor: Support the Fair Tax Amendment](#)
- Effingham Daily News: [Illinois needs the Fair Tax plan](#)
- Peoria Journal-Star: [Let's do what's right by passing the fair tax](#)
- Lincoln Courier: [Letter: Vote yes for fair tax amendment](#)
- Rockford Register-Star: [Letter: Fair Tax is needed for families to thrive](#)
- Champaign News-Gazette: [My Turn | It's only fair: Graduated-income-tax amendment deserves your vote](#)
- Windy City Times: [VIEWPOINTS In support of the fair tax](#)
- Alton Telegraph: [Your View | The Illinois income tax structure is regressive and unsustainable](#)
- Oak Park Wednesday Journal: [Graduated-rate is the only fair income tax](#)
- Chicago Sun-Times: [A graduated income tax means greater fairness between the rich and the rest of us](#)
- Oak Park Wednesday Journal: [Unfair taxes contribute to racism](#)
- Effingham Daily News: [David Seiler, Local Columnist: Graduated tax would benefit those with lower incomes](#)
- Peoria Journal Star: [Commentary: Working people need a fair tax](#)
- Alton Telegraph: [Your View: Now more than ever, working people need relief](#)