



Letter: Tax analysis shows poor pay disproportionately

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State and local legislators should read the 2009 report titled, "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All 50 States." The report, by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, a Washington, D.C., non-profit, non-partisan research group is the result of a study in all 50 states and the District of Columbia that measured state and local taxes paid by different income groups.

The main finding is nearly every state and local tax system takes a greater share of income from middle- and low-income families than from the well-off. Nationwide, the state and local tax rate for the best-off one percent of families had an effective rate of 5.2 percent while the middle 20 percent was 9.4 percent and the poorest 20 percent was 10.9 percent.

Texas has the honor of having one of the top 10 most regressive systems. The median family income in Texas in 2008 was approximately \$50,000 and paid 8.5 percent in state and local taxes. However, the lowest 20 percent with an average income of \$11,200 pay 12.2 percent of their income. The rate for the top 1 percent, whose average income is \$1,753,600, is 3.3 percent.

Does anyone think that's fair? Perhaps Christians should ask themselves, especially during the Easter season, "Is a tax system where the rate for the least well off is nearly four times that of the most wealthy one Jesus would advocate for?"

I think the answer is no.

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