

MAINERS for TAX FAIRNESS

Messaging Guide

Top Lines

MEMORIZE THIS

In Maine, the wealthiest 1% pay a smaller percentage of their income in state and local taxes than the middle class, and millionaires pay the same top tax rate as nurses and plumbers.

Tax cuts for the wealthy mean program cuts for you.

- Taxes help pay for important things like schools, roads, and public safety, which benefit everyone. Businesses of all sizes also rely on strong public services, a healthy workforce, and modern infrastructure to succeed.
- Tax fairness means those with more pay more, while those with less pay less. Asking wealthy individuals and corporations to pay their share is responsible and fair.
- Tax structures that favor the wealthy shift costs to workers and small businesses, making life harder for working families. In many states, families with low income pay a bigger share of their income in taxes than the wealthy.

Words Matter

DON'T SAY	DO SAY	WHY
Working families have a higher tax burden than the rich.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working families are already paying more than their fair share. It's time for the wealthiest to do their part.• Working families and small businesses shouldn't have to pick up the slack when millionaires don't pay their share.• Billionaires and big corporations stack the deck to avoid paying what they owe, forcing the rest of us to pick up the slack.	Avoid framing taxes as a "burden" because it leads people to believe that all taxes are bad. Taxes are the way we pay for the vital programs, services, and infrastructure we all share. Frame taxes as fair or unfair to working class people.
"the rich" or "the poor"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The villains</i>: "billionaires and multi-national corporations", "the ultra-rich and wealthy corporations", "ultra-wealthy people and corporations", "the wealthiest people and corporations".• <i>NOT the villains</i>: "working families", "working class people", "workers", "struggling families"	Many people aspire to be "rich" and few people with low income self-identify as "poor". Everyone's concept of "rich" and "poor" is different. But most can agree that billionaires have far more than they need. Even with higher taxes, the ultra-rich will still be ultra-rich.

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“businesses” and “business owners”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The villains</i>: “Multinational corporations”, “wealthy corporations”, “wealthy CEOs”, “Big Ag” • <i>NOT the villains</i>: “small businesses”, “small business owners”, “local shops”, “farmers”, “workers”, “working families” 	Multinational corporations take advantage of tax tricks and loopholes to hide their profits and avoid paying their share. This gives them an unfair advantage over small businesses, who often struggle to compete. Working families and small businesses are the stars of our economy.
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When They Say That, Say This

WHEN THEY SAY	WE SAY
We need to tighten our belts.	When the money coming in isn't keeping pace with rising costs, are millionaires and multinational corporations asked to tighten their belts? No. We've had enough of penny pinching at the expense of working-class Mainers who are already chronically undervalued and underpaid.
Maine needs to make tough choices.	Working families are already making tough choices every day. The wealthiest among us will still be wealthy when they pay their fair share.
Wealthy people will move away if we raise their taxes.	The data shows that <u>isn't true</u> . Fear of offending the rich or scaring off investors is a baseless excuse for short-changing working class Mainers. We should be more concerned about Mainers who can't afford to pay rent, go to the doctor, or find child care.
We can't afford it.	The people fighting for solutions to these problems are constantly told there is no money while new loopholes and giveaways are created for wealthy corporations. It's wrong to ask the most vulnerable Mainers to tighten their belts without asking the wealthiest people and corporations to do the same.
Raising taxes will hurt the economy.	Raising taxes on the wealthiest people and corporations ensures our shared systems are funded and strong. That means high quality schools and services for Mainers and high-quality infrastructure and a healthy, educated workforce for Maine businesses. These are the building blocks of a strong and resilient economy.
Maine has the 5 th highest tax rate.	When it comes to taxes, fairness matters most. Maine has the <u>7th fairest tax system</u> in the nation. Working families and their employers are attracted to states that prioritize the services and infrastructure that taxes pay for. “Low tax” states are <i>high tax</i> for working-class families.
Why do you want to punish success?	We want to <i>promote</i> success. Raising the resources to support good schools, build strong communities, and support our neighbors during times of economic hardship promotes success now and in the future.

Did You Know...?

- A Millionaires Tax in Maine would raise \$200 million per year.
- Ending ineffective Maine corporate tax subsidies would raise over \$100 million.
- Taxing high income from Mainers' capital gains would raise up to \$55 million per year.
- Maine gave away \$12 million in tax credits to a paper company owned by one of the richest families in the world, which shuttered its operations just 5 years later.
- When the Child Tax Credit was expanded during the pandemic, child poverty was cut nearly in half. Despite that impact, Congress let it expire.
- The US loses about \$688 billion in unpaid taxes every year, primarily the result of evasion by wealthy people and corporations.
- On average in the US, the least wealthy 20% of taxpayers pay state and local tax rates that are 60% higher than the wealthiest 1%.
- In 41 states, the wealthiest 1% are taxed at a lower rate than everyone else.
- Over three decades, the net worth of the wealthiest 1% of Americans grew by \$21 trillion, while that of the bottom 50% dropped by \$900 billion. The bottom 50% of American households owns just 2% of the nation's wealth.

MORE GOOD MESSAGING RESOURCES

- [Tax Fairness — An Explainer | MECEP](#)
- [About that tax ranking... | MECEP](#)
- [Taxes are complicated, but the way we think about tax policy doesn't have to be | MECEP](#)