

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Monday, I was in Crystal Lake, IL, in the 6th Congressional District. I was joined by realtors and local elected officials to talk about how the GOP tax plan would hurt families in my home State of Illinois. The families in the 6th Congressional District would be hit especially hard since they are in the 12th highest district in terms of the benefit received from the State and local tax deduction—a deduction that is gutted in the Republican House tax plan.

Republicans released this plan last Thursday, have been marking it up in committee this week, with the plan to have it on the House floor next week.

It is already clear that this partisan plan does nothing more than double-down on some of the most damaging ideas from the framework congressional Republicans and the White House released in September—and the bill gets worse the closer you look.

The House Republican bill would bankroll massive tax cuts for the wealthy few and the largest corporations on the backs of hard-working families in Illinois and across the country.

The bill eliminates some of the most vital tax breaks for people in Illinois—making it so that struggling seniors no longer will be able to deduct costly out-of-pocket medical expenses and that the 1.5 million Illinoisans with Federal student loan debt will no longer be able to deduct the interest paid on those loans.

Congressional Republicans didn't stop at eliminating deductions for medical expenses and student loan interest.

Republicans want to take away one of the most valuable deductions for working families in this State—the State and local tax deduction.

Eliminating this deduction to fund a massive tax cuts for corporations and the ultrawealthy was a centerpiece of the Framework Republicans released earlier this year—a move that would raise taxes on one-third of all taxpayers.

After strong opposition within their ranks for eliminating the State and local tax deduction, the House Republican plan released last week proposes a “compromise” to obtain the support of congressional Republicans that represent States like Illinois.

This so-called compromise eliminates the tax deduction for State and local income taxes, and caps the deduction for property taxes, so instead of eliminating the deduction altogether, they just gut it. If you ask me, that is no compromise at all.

The result is still the same: middle-income families would still be double taxed when it comes to income, sales, and some property taxes—once by the Federal Government and again by the State.

This would make it more expensive for families to fund services at the local level like the local schools, police

and fire departments, and local roads and bridges.

Make no mistake, in Illinois—the State with the fifth highest number of taxpayers claiming the State and local tax deduction—would be hit especially hard. Nearly 2 million Illinoisans—roughly one-third of taxpayers in the State—claimed more than \$24 billion in State and local tax deductions in 2015 alone.

If Republicans are successful in eliminating or gutting this deduction, it will mean a tax hike for working families across Illinois.

If completely eliminated, a family of four living in a place like Crystal Lake making around \$76,000 per year would pay more than \$1,400 more in taxes each year.

And what do Republicans do with the money from raising taxes on one-third of middle-income families in Illinois? They give the ultrawealthy and the largest corporations a tax cut.

That is just plain wrong.

I urge House Republicans to oppose any tax plan that would raise taxes on middle-income families by gutting the State and local tax deduction in order to give cuts to the largest corporations and richest 1 percent.

TRIBUTE TO ANN CLAIRE WILLIAMS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to thank Judge Ann Claire Williams for her extraordinary service to our country. After serving nearly two decades on the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago, Judge Williams announced she would be retiring from the judiciary later this year.

Ann Claire Williams is a trailblazer. She is the first African American to serve on the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals—an accomplishment that one judge called: “the desegregation of the 7th Circuit.” This was just another in a series of firsts for Judge Williams. She was one of the first two African-American women to clerk for judges on the Seventh Circuit. In 1985, Judge Williams became the first African American woman to become a U.S. District Court judge for the Northern District of Illinois. She served as chair of the Court Administration and Case Management Committee of the United States Judicial Conference—making her the first African American chair of a Judicial Conference committee. Judge Williams also became the first African American president of the Federal Judges Association. Simply put, almost every step of her career has broken new ground.

Born in Detroit, MI, Ann Claire Williams began her career as a third grade music teacher after graduating from Wayne State University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and master's degree from the University of Michigan in guidance and counseling. Inspired by the television show “Perry Mason” the only lawyer she

knew growing up—and a competitive spirit, Ann decided to attend law school. She chose the University of Notre Dame and the rest is history—or more appropriately, the rest of her career made history.

Judge Williams has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards. Here are just a few: Chicago Lawyer 2000 Person of the Year; the Arabella Babb Mansfield Award from the National Association of Women Lawyers; the National Bar Association's Gertrude E. Rush Award; the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award; Chicago Inn of Court's Joel M. Flaum Award; American Judicature Society's Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award; the Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago's Pioneer Award; the Leadership Institute for Women of Color Attorneys, Inc.'s Breaking the Glass Ceiling Award; and was recognized by Newsweek Daily Beast as one of 2012's 150 Fearless Women in the World.

Judge Williams has always been proud of breaking barriers and her history of firsts, but she doesn't want to be the last. Throughout her career, she has been committed to training young lawyers. As a founding member of the Black Women Lawyers in Chicago, Judge Williams uses her story to inspire the next generation—and makes clear through her experiences that young women today can follow the path she paved to reach the top of their fields. She also serves as chairwoman of the Just The Beginning Foundation to help guide more minority law students into the legal profession. Under Judge Williams' leadership, the organization has grown to include programs for students in high school and middle school across the country. For all her achievements, it is her commitment to the future that is truly inspiring.

Recently, Judge Williams said.

You want to be nourished by people that understand your story and your experience. But once you're nourished that means you have to go out and deal with the broader world.

Well, Judge Williams has done just that. She serves on the board of Equal Justice Works, a nonprofit dedicated to creating a just society by training lawyers committed to working in the public interest, and despite her busy schedule, she has made time to travel to Ghana, Rwanda, Liberia, and Uganda to train judges and attorneys.

Judge Williams' career is groundbreaking, and she is a role model for countless young women of color—and an inspiration to the rest of us. I am proud to call her a friend.

I want to congratulate Judge Williams on an outstanding career and thank her for all she has done—and all she will continue to do. The country is grateful for her service. I wish her and her family all the best in her next chapter.