

Republicans *have a*

TAXING **Problem**



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A MOVEMENT WAITING FOR A MESSAGE



Across Ohio, a quiet rebellion is brewing inside the Republican Party. County. GOP groups are breaking ranks, rallying around a grassroots mission to abolish property taxes—while the party's handpicked favorite for governor, Vivek Ramaswamy, tours the state promising to end income tax instead.

It's a clash that cuts to the heart of Ohio's identity: will Ramaswamy respond to the revolt rising beneath his own base, or will he become another polished candidate who mistakes campaign applause for real connection?

Vivek has the time to pivot and address this consequential problem. Will Vivek listen and respond to the voter's call as Trump once did—by defying both parties, rejecting the machinery of politics, and re-writing the Republican play-book?

Ohio's Attorney General, now out of the governor's race, has publicly admitted, given the chance to vote, Ohioans will end property tax.

Ohioans are as angry as I've ever seen them - and rightly so," Yost told the Ohio Council of County Officials. "These inflationary tax increases are hurting everyone and, in some cases, are forcing people out of the homes they worked their entire lives for."

Across the state in 2024 and 2025 the average increase was 32% for property taxes. 2026 will have the remaining 13 counties reappraised and 28 counties updated. 41 counties are getting ready to experience what the other 47 counties have already experienced. Extreme pain with an average of 32% increase in property taxes.

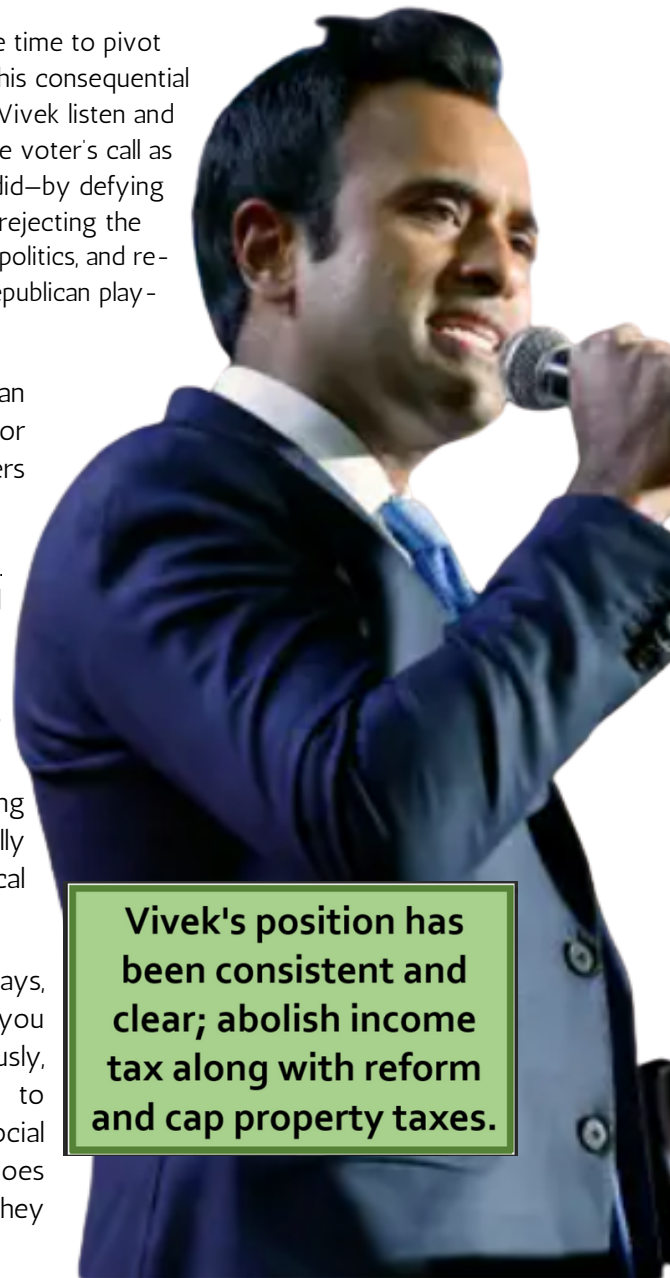
Greg Lawson with the Buckeye Institute reported the Ohio GOP has been working on cutting incomes taxes for over two decades.

This focus is evident in the Republican governors, representatives, and major PAC's such as the Koch brothers American's for Prosperity.

In 2012 the Buckeye Institute[1] stated "Here at Buckeye,... we would like to see a discussion of how Ohio can continue to lower it's income tax rates with its eventual elimination as a goal."

The Party bosses have been working on a plan which has systematically shifted the burden to local governments via property taxes.

"End income tax", Ramaswamy says, because "It's your money and you deserve to keep it." Simultaneously, people are losing their homes to property taxes, and taking to social media decrying their increase. Does Vivek believe it's their home and they deserve to keep it?



Vivek's position has been consistent and clear; abolish income tax along with reform and cap property taxes.

Ohio's Tax Crisis

Abolishing income taxes sounds good, eliciting cheers from the crowd of hopeful hearers seeking a governor who they believe has their best interests at heart. But this quote resonates with marketing painfully close to a JD Wentworth commercial. "It's your money, use it when you need it."

Campaigns are built around identifying and solving a problem. But fixing hard problems creates uncertainty, causes fear, and makes people uncomfortable. Voters generally don't vote for someone who will make life uncertain and confusing. Voters like smooth, predictable, and comfortable.

Vivek is not the first politician to create a problem they can easily fix. He has chosen to spin up the discomfort of income taxes to a painful frenzy while offering a solution he can easily secure and every legislator can rally around. The manipulation creates talking points and easy solutions without doing any **consequential work that may cost them votes**.

Voters will have to decide if Vivek is sincere in fixing a real problem or merely a suave snake oil salesman offering same-stuff-different-day solutions to a non-problem the Republican machine has been grinding out for decades.

Cost of living concerns, including housing, are serious problems in both the 2016 and 2024 GOP Platforms

Grand Old Party what say you?



When private property is not secure, freedom is at risk.

ACCORDING TO THE GOP PLATFORMS, Republicans have a high value in lowering taxes and shrinking the federal government in favor of more state, local, and individual responsibility. Including:

- Pursue Tax Cuts
- Stabilize the Economy by slashing spending and promoting growth
- Promote Home Ownership
- Lower Everyday Costs to drive down the cost of living
- Ensure seniors can live their golden years with dignity.

In short, housing affordability and security is good. Out of control property tax is bad; very, very bad.

GOP endorsed Ramaswamy is careening head on into local GOP organizations eagerly working to end property taxes by supporting the constitutional amendment to abolish all tax on real property in Ohio.

This citizen led grassroots effort known as Ax Ohio Tax has people circulating petitions all across Ohio many with the help of county GOP committees.



Above: Members of Project Promise distribute AxOhTax signs throughout Portage County, marking the launch of their grassroots campaign to end property taxes on March 6, 2025.

Local Republicans are responding as their community's cry for relief. The question remains if Vivek will respond in kind, or do what has always been done – go for the deep pockets.



Republican Party tents at county fairs had petitions to sign but hid them away when Vivek came to visit.



Above: A Project Promise petition signing at Octane Nights—one of many signing events the group hosted this year as it led the movement to end property taxes in Portage County.

Property Tax is linked to state tax revenue. To cut income taxes you must pull back on the size of government or make the services someone else's problem. Part 2 of this series will review the implications of cutting income tax at the state level.

[1] <https://www.buckeyeinstitute.org/blog/detail/three-ohio-think-tanks-agree-on-need-for-tax-expenditure-reform>

[2] https://damassets.ohio.gov/image/upload/tax.ohio.gov/taxeducation/history/taxation%20in%20ohio_history.pdf

[3] <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2024/econ/stc/2023-annual.html>

[4] https://ohioauditor.gov/trainings/docs/2018/Understanding_how_Local_Government_Funds_are_Distributed.pdf

[5] <https://businessjournaldaily.com/ohio-bills-aim-to-ease-financial-burden-for-family-caregivers/>

Elayne Cross has spent the last twenty years working in various political positions while writing and podcasting along the way. Her work focuses on cutting through political theater and exposing the performative side of power on both sides of the aisle – always in pursuit of truth and accountability for the everyday citizen.



The Property Tax Time Bomb



Written by: Elayne Cross

Part 2

The state of Ohio stopped taxing real property in 1932^[1]. But property taxes seem to be the real pain point for Ohioans, especially, the elderly, veterans, and the low income. **When property taxes go up, housing costs go up.**

Ohio does not levy nor collect property taxes but, Vivek Ramaswamy, 2026 Republican Gubernatorial candidate doesn't deflect the issue. He continually says, 'cut income tax and cap property tax.' Why bring it up at all? **Property Tax is linked to state tax revenue.** To cut taxes you must pull back on the size of government or make the services someone else's problem. The GOP has been slowly pushing major essential services off the state budget and onto local and county budgets causing great distress.

Ramaswamy declares Ohio can conduct essential services without the ten billion in income tax revenue^[2] it currently collects. The essential services are, well, essential, and if it's not the state collectively paying then the individual is paying more.

WHAT BURNS TAX PAYERS IS THE PERCEPTION OF SOME NOT PAYING THEIR SHARE.

Tax For Services

RVanessa Williamson, author of [Read My Lips: Why Americans are Proud to Pay Taxes](#) says what burn's tax payers is the perception of some not paying their share. Though some may grumble about income tax, they know it's important to pay taxes for essential services. They just don't want to pay too much.

All Ohioans want the same essentials: safe roads, reliable police and fire services, good schools, and clean water. We can handle much ourselves, but we still count on government to keep the lights on, the roads clear, and the rivers clean.

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If you live in the townships you take more personal responsibility than if you live in the city. But townships also need things like roads, access to fire, and 911. Cities are more densely populated and provide things like city water and septic, but they too have roads and fire and police. Every area is unique and has unique needs and unique services the people in the community deem essential.

Additionally, townships cannot tax income or sales unless they come into an agreement with city which takes a percentage of the revenue as a fee for providing the service. A poor township in a poor county is still poor. But every Ohioan wants to drive on roads that are maintained. Ohioans want every child to be educated. We all want 911 to function anywhere you find yourself in need in Ohio. And we all accept these things cost money, the money we willingly pay in taxes.

In 1934, to meet these needs of all areas within the state, the state of Ohio established the Local Government Fund^[1] (LGF) in conjunction with a 3% sales tax. This LGF was divided up among the 88 counties then further divided based on need to all subdivisions within the county such as cities, villages, and townships. Known as “Revenue Sharing” so more densely populated and prosperous municipalities shares with less populated and poor regions of the state to ensure universal basic essential services.

No government program is without flaws but the LGF continues to be a vital source of funds for townships and poorer communities. Though it is but a shell of what it used to be.

CUTS AND CONSEQUENCES

In 2011, Ohio elected John Kasich governor to fix the budget but the public unions organized and blocked his large reforms. One of those reforms was a major cut to the Local Government Fund, virtually cutting it in half. During the fight a large portion of state expenditures shifted from the state budget to local governments primarily via property taxes.

The pressure of chickens home to roost in local governments has reached the breaking point. The current cry for property tax relief by homeowners, small business, and farmers is a result of this type of action by Ohio’s politicians. The paltry pooled resource of the LGF has forced townships and local governments to raise funds locally, repeatedly, through increased property taxes. Currently there are no efforts to fully fund the LGF. More cuts at the state level will result in larger demand at the local level.

People are losing their homes. And it is the next governor’s responsibility to address it. To avoid political decapitation, Vivek cannot ignore the property tax issue. However, his calls for a cap is not much better then telling the poor who have no bread to simply eat cake.

The irony is not lost when witnessing Republican legislature passing laws to help elderly people remain in their home by offering tax brakes for their children^[2] who help them while simultaneously essentially making property taxes harder to pay resulting in more losing their homes. Will Vivek pivot his focus from income tax to property tax?

Whoever wants to occupy the Governor’s Mansion must consider and influence the out-of-control property taxes. The government should not be crying, “It’s my money, and I need it now.” Members of the Republican Party, Democratic Party, and independent should listen and respond when people cry out for relief. It’s their home and they deserve to keep it.

^[1] https://ohioauditor.gov/trainings/docs/2018/Understanding_how_Local_Government_Funds_are_Distributed.pdf

^[2] <https://businessjournaldaily.com/ohio-bills-aim-to-ease-financial-burden-for-family-caregivers/>

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^[2] <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2024/econ/stc/2023-annual.html>

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