

Our interests

By Bill Kilpatrick

Now that we are into a federal election it's more important than ever to be thinking about our interests and how they can best be represented in government. But who is 'our' and what interests am I referring to? The 'our' to which I am referring is the middle and lower classes. One of which is shrinking rapidly and one of which is growing exponentially. The interests to which I'm referring is the ability to maintain a decent living in terms of the middle class and the ability to rise from the lower class to the middle class.

However, we are not the only ones that are thinking about our interests in this election campaign, which is shaping up to be the most important in Canadian history. The autocrats, the kleptocrats, and the plutocrats are also worrying about their interests and their eyes are on Canada's natural resources and our social infrastructure. They just need someone willing to let them in. But how do we repel them? Pay our taxes.

The reality is that no one likes to pay taxes. There is nothing worse than working for something only to see a large chunk of it disappear into the ether. What's worse is when you feel that you are not getting the bang for your buck given that health care is in crisis, education is in crisis, wages are stagnant or declining, roads are deteriorating, and homelessness is on the rise. One can't help but wonder where all the money is going?

Here's something important to remember, those people at the top who are telling you that you should pay less taxes are lying to you. The people who are selling this lie are the people who are already shoveling millions and billions into tax free accounts all over the world. According to [taxfairness.ca](#) 'Corporate tax dodging through tax havens costs Canadian governments at least \$10 billion and up to \$25 billion annually, according to the Parliamentary Budget Office. They also overwhelmingly benefit larger multinational corporations and the wealthy, leading to greater corporate concentration and inequalities' all at the expense of ordinary Canadians and small and medium-sized domestic businesses.' To put this into perspective the total revenue from taxes in Ontario in 2022 was around \$50 billion.

Those people who send their money overseas are the people who can afford to pay taxes but don't because they feel they should not have to. They are the enemies of civilization, as the United States Chief Supreme Court Justice Oliver Holmes has said, 'I like to pay taxes, with them I buy civilization.' Subsequently, without taxes we would be left with sickness, barbarism, and slavery.

In my mind, the problem is not taxes, it's one of responsibility, transparency, and accountability. I don't know how many times I hear about the corrupt politician skimming off the top. Government's giving tax breaks to multi billion-dollar corporations and oil and gas companies, who do not need it. In other words, government corruption. It seems like it's an epidemic these days, so no wonder so many people don't want to pay their taxes to governments they don't trust.

Just for a moment, consider a world without taxes, and imagine what would be lost: Healthcare: gone, Education: gone, Infrastructure: gone. What would we be left with? A super rich class, living in gated communities, who can afford to pay for all of these things and the rest of us who will have to make due paying for all the stuff that we don't pay for now.

According to a Toronto Star article the Federal Conservatives are proposing a 2.25 per cent income tax cut that will reduce federal revenues by anywhere from \$12 billion to \$15 billion. The Liberals are proposing a smaller cut of one per cent that would still result in lost revenue of around \$6 billion. None of them are talking about stopping offshore tax havens and cracking down on the wealthy tax cheats, but every income tax cut, every rebate cheque, degrades the quality of life for all of us and it's time we realized that. The Liberal tax cut of one per cent is estimated to save each person around \$412 which means that the Conservative tax cut would save each person around \$900 per year, but what will it cost us? What will have to be cut from government spending and our social safety net to pay for these measly, and they are measly savings? How much more will we have to pay in municipal taxes, health care costs, employment insurance, etcetera?

I've also not heard much about cutting federal or provincial subsidies to multi-billion dollar corporations. Subsidies that you and I pay for with our taxes. Just to give you an idea of how much money is exchanging hands here, in an April 2024 article entitled "Corporate subsidies: the gap between large and small firms" the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, lists nine electric vehicle companies who are setting up shop in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec. The estimated total investment is over \$62 billion, the total taxpayer subsidies: over \$42 billion. \$27 billion from the federal government and close to \$16 billion from the provinces. Keeping in mind the earlier comment about corporate tax dodging and how much of this investment is actually going back into the real economy, we need to question the return on investment of these subsidies. The article points out that three out of four small businesses oppose these large corporate subsidies because they "foster an environment that stifles competition, hampers innovation, and poses challenges for small business growth."

At this point in history when our social infrastructure needs to be supported we can't afford to not be paying taxes that support our health-care, education, employment insurance, dental care, child care, and other vital services that allow us, not corporations and the ultra wealthy, to have a decent quality of life. If we are going to make sure our taxes are spent wisely we need to crack down on tax havens and corporate tax cheats. We need to know that our tax dollars are being spent to our benefit and not to the benefit of those who don't want to contribute to civilization but only to their own bottom line and their shareholders. The kleptocrats, the oligarchs, and the autocrats want to create a divided and hyper individualized world where we fight amongst ourselves while they personally enrich each other, and it's working. They will try and convince us that paying less taxes is in our interests, but it's not, it's in their interest.

Our best defense against autocracy is to ensure that we elect a party that will do the opposite of what we are witnessing in the United States. If we are to hold onto our democracy and our collective and hard won freedoms we need a party that will strengthen the rule of law, including closing tax loop holes, be transparent with spending decisions, and strengthen our social safety net. Pierre Poilievre has stated that "help is the sunny side of control." These are not the words of someone who intends to strengthen our social safety net. Resisting autocracy, kleptocracy, and oligarchy will require a collective effort between all government levels and all parties.

World War One was called the great war for civilization, and I believe that the fight against autocracy, kleptocracy, and oligarchy will be remembered as the second great war for civilization and it's in our interests to not allow them to win. Let's make them pay "their taxes."