TAX POLICY CENTER
URBAN INSTITUTE & BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

After the Midterm Elections: Implications for Tax Policy

Speaker Biographies

Former Senator John Breaux is cochair of Squire Patton Boggs' Public Policy Practice, where he provides strategic advice to attorneys and clients on various public policy matters, with a focus on health care and energy law. Breaux led a long and distinguished career in the US Congress. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1972 at the age of 28 and was the youngest member of Congress at the time. He represented the 7th District of Louisiana for 14 years before being elected to fill Senator Russell Long's seat in 1986. Senator Breaux was a widely recognized bipartisan leader in the Senate, and in 1993 was appointed by his Democratic colleagues to the post of Chief Deputy Whip, a position he held until his retirement. He also held several key Senate committee positions. A senior member of the Finance Committee, Senator Breaux served as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy. He also held positions on the Subcommittee on Health Care and the Subcommittee on Taxation and Internal Revenue Service Oversight. From his position on the Finance Committee, he forged compromises that led to passage of the welfare reform and health insurance reform bills in 1996. He also helped lead efforts to reduce the capital gains tax and provide tax relief for college education expenses.

William G. Gale is the Arjay and Frances Miller chair in federal economic policy in the Economic Studies Program at the Brookings Institution. His research focuses on tax policy, fiscal policy, pensions, and saving behavior. He is codirector of the Tax Policy Center, a joint venture of the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute. He is also director of the Retirement Security Project. From 2006 to 2009, he was vice president of Brookings and director of the Economic Studies Program. Before joining Brookings, he was an assistant professor in the department of economics at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a senior economist for the Council of Economic Advisers under President George H. W. Bush. He is the coeditor of several books, and his research has been published in several scholarly journals, including the *American Economic Review*, *Journal of Political Economy*, and *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. In 2007, a paper he coauthored was awarded the TIAA-CREF Paul A. Samuelson Award Certificate of Excellence. He has also written for policy-related publications and newspapers, including op-eds for CNN, the *Financial Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. Gale serves on the editorial board of several academic journals and has served on advisory boards for the Government Accountability Office, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Joint Committee on Taxation and on the board of the Center on Federal Financial Institutions. Gale attended Duke University and the London School of Economics and received his dcotorate from Stanford University in 1987.

Howard Gleckman is a senior fellow in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where he edits the fiscal policy blog *TaxVox* and the daily news summary *The Daily Deduction.* He is also affiliated with Urban's Program on Retirement Policy, where he works on long-term care issues. Before joining Urban, Gleckman was senior correspondent in the Washington bureau of *Business Week*, where he was a 2003 National Magazine Award finalist. He was a 2006–07 media fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation and a visiting fellow at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College from 2006 to 2008. Gleckman writes two regular columns for *Forbes.com*, on tax policy and elder care. He is author of the book *Caring for Our Parents* and speaks and writes frequently on long-term care issues.

Cathy Koch rejoined Ernst & Young in February 2018 as Americas tax policy leader. She previously worked for the firm at Washington Council Ernst & Young from 2000 to 2004. Before joining Ernst & Young, Koch served as chief policy advisor to the Senate Majority Leader for Tax and Economics. She also led business outreach for the leader and the Democratic Caucus. In this role, Koch led all tax and economic policy initiatives for the leader's office and was central to strategy and communications on various issues. She was deeply involved in almost every Congressional tax and budget measure since January 2013, when she joined Senator Reid's office. Koch's prior experience on the Hill included three and a half years on the Finance Committee, first as staff director for the Finance Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure, and then as the tax chief of the full committee. As the chief tax policy staffer on the Finance Committee, Koch led the Committee's tax policy legislative efforts, and she coordinated all communications and negotiations regarding tax issues with the administration, Republican and Democrat leadership, and tax-writing committees in the House. In addition to her experience on Capitol Hill, Koch spent two years as the director of US tax policy for General Electric. She also served as a director of global government affairs at Amgen, Inc., where she was involved in site selection negotiations. Koch began her private sector career working on tax policy at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Koch started her tax career as an economist at the Joint Committee on Taxation.

Mark J. Mazur is the Robert C. Pozen director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center and a vice president at the Urban Institute. His research interests cover all aspects of tax policy. From 2012 to 2017, he was the assistant secretary for tax policy at the US Department of the Treasury. Mazur served in the federal government for 27 years in various positions, including policy economist at the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation; senior economist at the President's Council of Economic Advisers; senior director at the National Economic Council; chief economist and senior policy adviser and director of policy at the US Department of Energy; acting administrator of the Energy Information Administration; director of research, analysis, and statistics at the Internal Revenue Service; and deputy assistant secretary for tax analysis in the Office of Tax Policy. Before entering public service, Mazur was an assistant professor in Heinz College at Carnegie-Mellon University. He has a bachelor's degree in financial administration from Michigan State University and a master's degree in economics and a doctorate in business from Stanford University.

Mark Prater serves as a managing director in PricewaterhouseCoopers's Tax Policy Services Practice in Washington, DC. In his role, Prater advises clients on tax policy issues and tax legislation with a concentration on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Prater graduated from Portland State University in 1981 with a bachelor's in accounting. He obtained a juris doctorate from Willamette University in 1984 and a master's in taxation from the University of Florida in 1987. Prater became a member of the Oregon and Washington State bars in 1984 and a certified public accountant in Washington, DC, in 1986. From January 1990 through November 1993, Prater served as a tax counsel on the Republican staff of the US Senate Finance Committee. In November 1993, Prater was promoted to chief tax counsel on the Republican staff of the Senate Finance Committee and in January 2007, added the role of deputy staff director of the Republican staff. In September of 2011, Prater was selected as staff director for the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. Prater retired from federal service in 2018. Prater frequently speaks to national professional tax organizations, tax groups, undergraduate colleges and universities, and professional schools.

Sandra Salstrom currently serves as a legislative representative for the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal employee union. Before joining the American Federation of Government Employees, Salstrom served as the legislative director for Americans for Tax Fairness and successfully led their campaign to ensure that no Democrat voted for a tax reform bill that cut taxes for the wealthy and no corporations and put their interests ahead of workers and families. She was previously the deputy assistant secretary for Legislative Affairs for Tax and Budget at the Treasury Department during the Obama administration and spent more than four years on the Hill working for Earl Pomeroy, a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee, and Marty Meehan. Salstrom holds a bachelor's in communications and political science from Wake Forest University.

Tom West recently left his role as tax legislative counsel at the US Treasury's Office of Tax Policy. While at the Treasury, West oversaw all aspects of domestic tax policy. He also served in an acting role as assistant secretary for tax policy from January to August 2017 and worked on both tax reform legislative efforts and implementation of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.