

# Tax Day Headaches: Public Understanding of the Tax Code and Perceptions of “Fairness”

## Speaker Biographies

**Mark J. Mazur** is the Robert C. Pozen director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. His research interests cover all aspects of tax policy. From 2012 until early 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 doctorate degree in business from Stanford University.

**Vanessa Williamson** is a Fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings. She studies the politics of redistribution, with a focus on attitudes about taxation. She is the author of the new book *Read My Lips: Why Americans Are Proud to Pay Taxes*. Bringing together national survey data with in-depth interviews, *Read My Lips* presents a surprising picture of tax attitudes in the United States. Williamson is also the author, with Harvard professor Theda Skocpol, of *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*, which examines how the Tea Party pushed the Republican Party farther to the right. Williamson previously served as the Policy Director for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. She received her Ph.D. in Government and Social Policy from Harvard University. She has a master’s degree from NYU’s Institute of French Studies, and received her B.A. in French language and literature from NYU.

**Karlyn Bowman** is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. She joined the Institute in 1979 and was managing editor of *Public Opinion* magazine until 1990. From 1990 to 1995 she was the editor of *The American Enterprise*. Bowman studies and writes widely on many public opinion topics. In 2002, she inaugurated a series of AEI Public Opinion Studies that are available on AEI’s website. They include “Polls on Patriotism,” “Attitudes Toward Homosexuality and Gay Marriage,” “Public Opinion on Taxes,” “Attitudes Toward Social Security Reform,” “Attitudes About Economic Anxiety,” and “Attitudes Toward the Environment and Global Warming.” In 2014, she coauthored an e-book on attitudes about the 2008 financial crash and Wall Street. In 2015, she published another e-book on views of the American Dream. Bowman also compiles and edits AEI’s monthly polling newsletter, *Political Report*. In 2015 and 2016, she collaborated with Bill Frey at the Brookings Institution and Ruy Teixeira at the Center for American Progress on a project on America’s changing demography nationally and in the states. She is a regular participant in AEI’s Election Watch event series, the longest-running election analysis program in Washington, DC, and she writes a column for Forbes.com.

**Christopher Faricy** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He is the author of *Welfare for the Wealthy: Parties, Social Spending, and Inequality in the United States* (Cambridge University Press 2015). His research has won a number of national awards including the American Political Science Association's 2012 Harold D. Lasswell Award, and the Midwestern Political Science Association's 2010 Pi Sigma Alpha Award. His research has appeared in various journals including *The Journal of Politics* and *Political Behavior* and has been financed by The Russell Sage Foundation. His research has also been written about in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Vox*, *The American Prospect*, *Slate*, *Salon*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Mother Jones*. Chris received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a M.A. from the University of Michigan. He is currently writing a book on public opinion towards federal tax breaks in the United States.

**Robert M. Tobias** is currently teaching at American University where he has been a Distinguished Adjunct Professor in Residence since August 1999. He is the Director of Business Development for the Key Executive Leadership Programs, and founded the Key Executive Leadership Certificate Program in 2002. He is also the Director of the Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation at American University that brings together members of Congress, political appointees, career executives, union leaders, academics, and the consulting community to discuss and attempt to resolve public policy implementation issues. Mr. Tobias has served as a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board since September 2000. The Board has broad strategic and budget oversight responsibility for the Internal Revenue Service. Mr. Tobias was selected by Thomas Ridge, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Kay Coles James, Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to the Human Resource Management System Senior Review Advisory Committee which is charged with providing options for a new DHS personnel system. Prior to his work at American University, Mr. Tobias served for 31 years with the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) and from 1983-1999 as its President. Mr. Tobias is also a frequent contributor to *Federal Times*, *Government Employees Relations Report*, and *Government Executive* magazine on current federal sector public policy implementation issues.

**Howard Gleckman** is a senior fellow in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center at the Urban Institute. At the Tax Policy Center, Gleckman 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.