



# The Presidential Campaigns Discuss the Candidates' Tax Plans

## *Speaker Biographies*

**Len Burman** is the Robert C. Pozen director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, the Paul Volcker professor and professor of public administration and international affairs at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, and senior research associate at Syracuse University's Center for Policy Research. He cofounded the Tax Policy Center, a joint project of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution, in 2002. He was deputy assistant secretary for tax analysis at the US Department of the Treasury from 1998 to 2000 and senior analyst at the Congressional Budget Office from 1988 to 1997. He is past president of the National Tax Association. Burman is coauthor (with Joel Slemrod) of *Taxes in America: What Everyone Needs to Know*, author of *The Labyrinth of Capital Gains Tax Policy: A Guide for the Perplexed*, and coeditor of several books. He is often invited to testify before Congress and has written for scholarly journals as well as media outlets such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*. He holds a BA from Wesleyan University and a PhD from the University of Minnesota.

**Peter Navarro** is a professor at the Paul Merage School of Business at the University of California, Irvine. This distinguished macroeconomist has written extensively on Asia as well as lived and worked there. He has published ten books, including *Seeds of Destruction*, *Always a Winner*, and *The Coming China Wars*. He has appeared on the BBC, CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, NPR, and *60 Minutes*. He has written for publications ranging from *Barron's* and the *New York Times* to the *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post*.

Navarro's film *Death by China*, narrated by Martin Sheen, was shown in more than 50 theaters around the country, won numerous "best documentary" awards, and today is one of the most popular documentaries streaming on Netflix. He holds an MPA from the Kennedy School of Government and a PhD in economics from Harvard.

**Wilbur Ross** may be the best known turnaround financier in the United States, having been involved in the restructuring of over \$400 billion of defaulted companies' assets around the world. In 1998, *Fortune* called him "the King of Bankruptcy" and in 2011, *Bloomberg Business Week* designated him as one of the 50 most influential people in global finance. He is the only person elected to both the Private Equity Hall of Fame and the Turnaround Management Hall of Fame.

Ross is chairman of WL Ross Holding Corp., chairman of Diamond S Shipping, and vice chairman of Bank of Cyprus. He is a board member of ArcelorMittal, EXCO Resources, Sun Bancorp, and other companies. Ross is a member of the executive committee of the Partnership for New York City, is chairman of the Japan Society, and serves as a trustee at the Brookings Institution and is chairman of its economic studies council. He is on the board of the Yale University School of Management and its new International Center in Beijing, as well as a former member of the Dean's Advisory Council of Harvard Business School.

Ross was named entrepreneur of the year 2009 by *BritishAmerican Business* and received the 2010 Business Statesman Award from Harvard Business School Club of New York. In November 2014, the Emperor of Japan awarded him The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star.

Ross holds a CFA and is a graduate of Yale University and of Harvard Business School (with distinction).

**Gene B. Sperling** is the former director of the National Economic Council and assistant to the president for economic policy. Upon his appointment on January 7, 2011, Sperling became the first person to serve as NEC director and principal economic policy advisor for two presidents: first under President Clinton from 1997 to 2001, and now under President Obama.

In the Obama administration, Sperling has played a key role representing the White House in budget negotiations with Congress as well as serving as the White House point person on several of the president's top priorities including the

American Jobs Act, manufacturing policy, housing, GSE reform, skills initiatives, and patent reform. He played a key role in designing the Small Business Jobs Act, the payroll tax cut, the extension of training assistance and the expansion of tax credits for low income working Americans.

During his eight years at the White House in the Clinton administration, Sperling helped negotiate the 1993 Deficit Reduction Act, the 1997 Bipartisan Balanced Budget agreement, and the increase in the earned-income tax credit. He was a key architect of Saving Social Security First, and played key roles in the passage of the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Hope Scholarship tax credit, Gear Up mentoring, new markets tax credit, and the Direct Student Loan program.

Sperling's work extends beyond economics. Before joining the Obama administration, he was the founder and director of the Center for Universal Education at the Council on Foreign Relations and Brookings Institution and coauthored the book *What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World*. He was also senior fellow for economic policy at the Center for American Progress, where he wrote *The Pro-Growth Progressive: An Economic Strategy for Shared Prosperity*.

Before his current appointment, Sperling served as counselor to the Secretary of Treasury in 2009 and 2010. In that role, Sperling was lead policy advisor on fiscal, budget, tax, job creation, small business policy, and the Affordable Care Act. He was also a member of the Auto Task Force as well as an advisor to Secretary Geithner on financial crisis matters.

Sperling graduated from the University of Minnesota and Yale Law School and attended Wharton Business School.

**David Wessel** is a senior fellow in Economic Studies at Brookings and director of the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy, the mission of which is to improve the quality of fiscal and monetary policies and public understanding of them. He joined Brookings in December 2013 after 30 years on the staff of the *Wall Street Journal* where, most recently, he was economics editor and wrote the weekly *Capital* column. He is a contributing correspondent to the *Wall Street Journal* and appears frequently on NPR's *Morning Edition*.

Wessel is the author of two *New York Times* best-sellers: *In Fed We Trust: Ben Bernanke's War on the Great Panic* (2009) and *Red Ink: Inside the High Stakes Politics of the Federal Budget* (2012.) He has shared two Pulitzer Prizes: one in 1984 for a *Boston Globe* series on the persistence of racism in Boston, and the other in 2003 for *Wall Street Journal* stories on corporate scandals. Wessel is a member of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Data Users Advisory Committee. He teaches in the Dartmouth Tuck School of Business Global 2030 executive education program and has been a visiting journalism professor at Princeton University.

A native of New Haven, Connecticut, and a product of its public schools, Wessel is a 1975 graduate of Haverford College. He was a Knight-Bagehot Fellow in business and economics journalism at Columbia University in 1980-81.