



Legislative Services Office

Idaho State Legislature

Eric Milstead
Director

Serving Idaho's Citizen Legislature

To: Members of tax reform discussion group
From: Eric Milstead, Director, Legislative Services Office
Date: July 2, 2015
Re: Recap from Friday's meeting (6/26/2015) with the Utah delegation regarding tax reform

The following are the primary points and suggestions from the Utah meeting.

- a. First, define the problem. Members from the Senate, House and Governor's office must define the problem to be solved. What is the goal? Is the goal to reduce or revise income taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, etc.? Is this an effort to broaden the base or create individualized outcomes? This effort should include discussing each tax to be reviewed (income, sales, property) and the issues associated with each, i.e., exemptions, deductions, credits, revenue sharing, etc. It is not feasible to move forward without an agreement as to how the problem will be solved.
- b. Second, establish working relationships between the Senate, House and Governor's office. Directives from those three offices to staff are critical in making this project work. There should be a clear prohibition on "turf wars" among staff and there should be clear, agreed upon responsibilities of each office and staff. Information must be fully and freely shared. (Deputizing one staffer to review confidential tax return information was critical to the success of Utah's endeavor.)
- c. Third, establish a Legislative Task Force. The Utah Tax Reform Task Force was established through legislation. Here's a link to that bill: <http://le.utah.gov/~2005/bills/static/sb0153.html> The bill provided for 13 members: four from the Senate, seven from the House, and two appointed by the Governor. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House each appointed a co-chair. The charge to the Task Force was general in nature: "The task force shall review and make recommendations on issues relating to tax reform in the state as determined by the task force."

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The bill directed that the Task Force report monthly to an interim committee. The bill also appropriated money to pay for the compensation and expenses of Senators and House members and for staffing the Task Force.

The Utah delegation emphasized the importance of frequent Task Force meetings (weekly), transparency of the process (all meetings were noticed, held as public meetings and the press specifically was invited), and holding public hearings throughout the state. In addition, the Utah delegation noted the importance of working toward achieving buy-in from other decision/policy makers.

The following link is to the Task Force's website and reflects the Task Force's composition, meeting agendas, minutes, materials, subcommittees, etc. In short, this is a comprehensive website that underscores the emphasis on transparency that we heard about at the meeting.

<http://le.utah.gov/asp/interim/Commit.asp?Year=2005&Com=TSKTRT>

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