

Opinion

Election year calls to lower tax gap

The tax-filing deadline April 15 for most of the country is legal holiday in Massachusetts and resulted in an extra day's reprieve for update New York and New England has hardly ended debate over the fairness of the income tax system.

Although an estimated 97 million Americans filed their income tax returns by the deadline, tax evasion is thought to be at an all-time high by Internal Revenue Service officials. Taxes lost through cheating are estimated at approximately \$10 billion a year, which would be enough to reduce the federal budget by one-half.

Some tax experts believe that almost every taxpayer cheats in some way, given the relatively slim chances of getting caught. The booming tax-shelter business, resentment over inflation-produced "bracket creep," knowledge of the widespread "underground economy" and frustration over the maze of tax laws.

Combined with two other factors—election-year politicking and the deficit reduction efforts—this growing disaffection has spurred sentiment for a thorough overhaul of the income tax system.

The need to find an easier way than budget cuts to reduce the deficit gap has prompted some to predict that 1965 will be a year of tax reform, regardless of who is president.

All three Democratic contenders have quietly embraced legislation sponsored by Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J., and Rep. Richard

Goldwater, D-Mo., that would "flatten" the current progressive system into three brackets, end deductions save for the home mortgage interest break, and eliminate the indexing provision of President Reagan's tax cut program that is designed to prevent inflation from forcing wage earners into higher tax brackets.

But the Senate didn't even the first half of the primary campaign circuit, with the exception of Walter Mondale's scare charges that the president favors an end to the mortgage interest deduction—a change, incidentally, Jimmy Carter favored in 1970.

Publicly, the president has only stated that an "entirely different form of taxation" might be necessary. Privately, he is reported to have instructed the Treasury Department to come up with a fairer, more simplified tax system after election day.

Such a tax overhaul would restore public confidence, reduce cheating and give taxpayers more incentive to work and save. But the prospects of obtaining tax reform would be enhanced if candidates recited to election-year demagoguery instead of thoughtful discussion of the issue. Congress also must overcome its tendency to give in to special interest lobbying and complete tax laws in the name of simplifying them.

Finally, taxpayers must realize that they can't ask for lower taxes and increased government services at the same time.

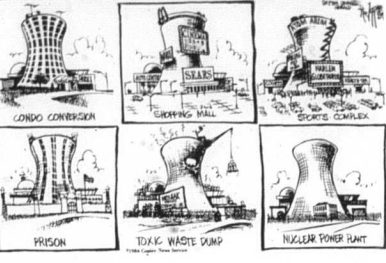
Americans pay for Japanese car quota

A voluntary quota which Japan has placed on its shipments of cars to this country is doing the United States no favors.

Down Memory Lane

Letcher, Boyd win top awards; Smith, Young CHS royalty

If COAL CONVERSION BECOMES NO LONGER FEASIBLE . . .



Agree or not Something 'fishy' about all this

By S.C. Van Curen
Frankfort—There is still hope the state will be successful in getting the Department of the Interior to continue financing operation of the federal fish hatchery over here, Carl E. Kay, commissioner of Fish and Wildlife Resources said last week.

Russ Metz

The precise action of the London Parliament makes no sense as you do, replied by Kay.

The Courier Mercury

Published every Thursday on 234 Locust Street, Corbin, Kentucky. Phone (606) 281-2444.

Subscription rates: Single copy 10¢, 12 issues for \$1.00, 24 issues for \$2.00, 52 issues for \$4.00.

Op-Ed page

Rumor has it that I snore... but I don't believe anything I can't see or hear

"You people have been telling me I snore. I have steadfastly denied my snoring," Lewis Grinstead said snoring of the Atlanta Journal. He got on his feet.

"I was going to say, 'I snore,' but I don't want to say it. I snore, but I don't want to say it. I snore, but I don't want to say it."

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As sure as May brings flowers, classified brings results