

**TESTIMONY OF EDWARD REHFELD  
BEFORE THE DC TAX REVISION COMMISSION  
November 12, 2013**

My name is Ed Rehfeld, and this is the second time I have testified before this commission. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you, and for taking on the difficult task of recommending changes to the DC tax code.

I have lived in the District of Columbia since 1987, and I am fortunate to be among the top 25% of wage earners in this city. I support the creation of more high income tax brackets, increasing the highest marginal income tax rates, increasing the standard deduction, and expanding the earned income tax credit. These measures would reduce the total tax burden on middle-income earners, strengthen the middle class, and mitigate growing inequalities in income and wealth.

I am also opposed to Policy Option #9, Reducing Upper Income Tax Rates, even though this proposal would lower *my* taxes, because it is regressive, and would widen the gap between rich and poor.

For more than thirty years, this country has pursued tax policies driven by a misguided belief that lowering high-income tax rates benefits even the poorest citizens, and increases tax revenue. Yet today, both in this city and throughout the country, the gap between rich and poor is greater than it has ever been, the middle class is shrinking, our infrastructure is crumbling, and public services face budget cuts. Washington, DC stands at a decisive moment: we can choose to follow the flawed theory of trickle-down economics, or we can choose progressive tax reform.

I support progressive tax reform not simply out of basic fairness, but because such tax policy strengthens the middle and working classes that are the backbone of our economy and the foundation of our political stability.

As the gap between rich and poor grows, we should all worry. We should worry that middle- and working-class families, whose spending drives so much of our economy, are earning less, spending less, and feeling less secure.

We should worry that unless we adopt policies that strengthen the middle and working classes, this wonderful city will become more divided, more polarized, and more segregated between haves and have-nots. Let us move away from an economic geography that is increasingly characterized by bright islands of wealth surrounded by dark seas of poverty.

Commissioners, as you prepare to make your final recommendations to the City Council, I urge you to choose a path of fairness, justice, and shared burden.

Thank you.