

# A Strange Group Giving Advice on How to Avoid Taxes

By: State Representative Glenn Grothman

Wisconsin's high tax ranking is nothing new. Whether talking about income taxes, property taxes or business taxes, national publications usually put Wisconsin in an unfavorable light. It, therefore, was not surprising when a year ago Kiplinger's Magazine came out with an article ranking Wisconsin as having the third worst tax climate for retirement. (Pennsylvania is worst and New Jersey is second worst.) This not only is a problem for our senior citizens, but also results in lower tax revenue for the state. We all know retirees who have moved to Arkansas, Arizona, etc. for the lower property taxes. We also know snowbirds that spend slightly over half the year in Florida. Since Florida has no state income tax, they only pay federal income tax. It is particularly burdensome for other Wisconsin taxpayers when retirees leave, since retirees do not have children in the school system and are not inclined to commit crimes. Therefore, retirees pay more in taxes than they consume in benefits.

What is surprising is when the Wisconsin Education Association, (the teachers' union), comes out with advice to their members on how to avoid Wisconsin income tax!!! In an article, entitled "Should I retire outside Wisconsin?" they point out to their members that Florida, Texas, Nevada, Washington, and Wyoming have no state income tax. They direct their members to the Kiplinger article describing Wisconsin as having the third highest taxes in the country. They advise renting an apartment in Florida, getting a Florida drivers' license and voting in Florida.

It is certainly legal for the teachers' union to advise their members how to game the system and avoid Wisconsin taxes. They even suggest that you can spend over half the year in Wisconsin if you use their method. But it is very irritating as an elected official to see this group of all groups educating members on how to avoid taxes.

Many people are aware that statewide about 43% of your property tax levy goes to your public school system. It is not as well known that 44% of your state income and sales tax also goes back to your local schools. (University gets 9% and prison system gets 8%.) According to the Manhattan Institute after adjusting for our lower cost of living, Wisconsin spends more per pupil than any other state in the country on education. (Minnesota is second and Pennsylvania is third.) Nevertheless, the representatives of the teachers' union in Madison continue to tell us we need more teachers to lower class sizes and we need higher teachers' salaries.

Well, teachers' union: how can we afford more teachers with higher salaries if you advise your retired teachers to rent an apartment in Florida to avoid Wisconsin income tax? There are so many wonderful teachers in the state of Wisconsin, but their union is doing a disservice to them and this advice further damages their reputation in Madison.

Please let me know what you think on this issue.

Contact me here in Madison---please call 1-888-534-0058.

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