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# Tax reform needed to support services

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Written by  
**Jeanette OXFORD**

People used to say that my father, a small-town grocer, was a better Christian than businessman. He never let anyone's kids go hungry over an unpaid bill.

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We need more of that kind of compassion today.

But my father also realized that true prosperity requires more than personal generosity — he and countless other seniors have depended on Social Security for their income and dignity in retirement.

I was able to attend college only because of state and federal grants, and student loans.

That's why I'm particularly saddened that some of the government services that helped create America's middle class are being slashed by the across-the-board "sequester" budget cuts. And some in Congress propose even deeper cuts.



"We face an ethical choice: Do we allow corporations to keep their tax loopholes, or do we restore the services that strengthen working Americans?"

And I'm angry that while vital services are being cut, the country's most profitable corporations are hiding profits in offshore tax havens to avoid paying their fair share.

Congress has turned a blind eye to this corporate tax dodging, even though it means more cuts and more pressure on working families.

With the next battle over the federal budget about to begin, it's time to reform this system.

We face an ethical choice: Do we allow corporations to keep their tax loopholes, or do we restore the services that strengthen working Americans?

Achieving real tax reform isn't easy. I should know. When I served in the Missouri legislature, I worked hard to reform a state system that was outdated, unfair and inadequate. I continue that effort now.

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But the case for restoring federal tax fairness is clear.

Despite racking up record profits, **corporations are supplying the smallest share of federal revenue in 60 years**. Some pundits claim that corporate tax rates are too high, but many of our most profitable corporations **are paying just one-third the official corporate tax rate**.

Some corporations, such as **General Electric, Verizon and Wells Fargo, go for years at a time without paying any federal income taxes at all**.

**Jeanette Mott Oxford is executive director of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare. She served 2005-12 in the Missouri House of Representatives.**

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