

Reports on the Resistance: Tax Day Protests

April 18, 2017



Tens of thousands of Americans in some 200 cities and towns from New York to San Francisco participated in "Tax Day" marches on Saturday, April 15 to demand that President Donald Trump release information about his tax payments. Some protestors marched at the White House and others at the Trump mansion at Mar-a-Lago, Florida.

Largely organized through Democratic Party groups like Indivisible, the Tax Day demonstrations were peaceful but spirited affairs. Protestors around the country chanted slogans such as "No more secrets, no more lies." Many carried signs and banners reading "What are you hiding?" and "Show your taxes!" One sign read "King George didn't listen to us either," a reference to the taxation issues of the 1760s that led to the American Revolution of 1776.

Thirty-foot inflatable chickens, symbolizing Trump's fear of revealing his taxes, accompanied the marches in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. In many cities people in Trump costumes with orange hair, mean and homely faces, and short fingers mingled with the crowd.

Tax day actually falls on Tuesday, April 18, but demonstrators took advantage of the weekend and spring weather to pressure the president, who will be proposing a new tax code to the Congress, to come clean to the American taxpayers and reveal how much he pays. Billed as the largest demonstration since the women's marches of January 21, the tax protests fell far short of that early massive outpouring.



Though both Democratic and Republican legislators have urged him to do so, Trump has repeatedly refused to release his tax forms as other presidents have done, arguing that he cannot do so because the Internal Revenue Service is auditing his tax filing. When Democrats recently forced a roll call vote on in the House calling upon Trump to release his taxes, 229 Republicans voted against; that is, they supported the president in maintaining the secrecy of his tax payments.

Protestors not only demanded that Trump release his tax forms but also to demand greater transparency and a more progressive tax system. Many other issues were raised on placards and from the rally platforms, such as immigrant rights, environmental justice, and the need for single-payer health care.

Democrats of the progressive variety, such as Maxine Waters of California and Jan Schakowsky of Illinois and others, played prominent roles as speakers at rallies. Speaking at a rally Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, the leading Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee, told the crowd, "It's time to knock off the tax rip offs. No more Cayman Island accounts for the insiders. No more tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. No more special breaks for Wall Street."