



October 24, 2008

**PLATTE INSTITUTE
TRANSPARENCY
CONFERENCE IS
NOV. 18**

What: Nebraska's first conference devoted to Government Transparency.

Where: University of Nebraska Union in Lincoln.

When: 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 18.

Presenters: John Stossel,

Co-Anchor of 20/20

Shane Osborn,
Nebraska State Treasurer

Dr. Charlyne Berens,

UNL Professor

Roger Lempke,
Platte Institute Executive Director

Nicole Barrett, JD,
Unveiling Platte Institute's Unicameral Votes Online website.



For more details or for a conference brochure, visit www.platteinstitute.org. There are a limited number of tickets available and the event is sure to sell out. Ticket prices for the conference and luncheon together start at \$80.

PLATTE CHAT

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

The Platte Institute released its latest report, Unicameral Vote Transparency: It's Time to Get Citizens Out of the Dark earlier this month. The report, authored by Senior Policy Analyst [Nicole Barrett, JD](#), outlines the lack of transparency in the Unicameral's voting procedure and also calls for that shroud of secrecy to be removed. More information on the report, including a .pdf file of it which you can download, is available by clicking [HERE](#).

Tax Foundation Study Ranks Nebraska's Property Tax Burden as 2nd Highest in Nation

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[Platte Institute Senior Policy Analyst](#)

Nebraskans were again reminded recently by data released from the Tax Foundation in Washington, D.C. that property tax burdens on them continue to be among the highest percentage in the country when overall median home values and median income for home owners were put into the equation.

The study done by the nonpartisan tax research group based in Washington, D.C. reiterates what Creighton economics professor Ernie Goss reported in his Platte Institute for Economic Research study, "Nebraska's Tax Competitiveness: Should I Live in Nebraska?" in which he pointed out that Nebraska ranks 12th in the United

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States in terms of total individual taxes (Sales, Property and Individual Income taxes) as a percentage of income at 10.47 percent.

In the Tax Foundation study, which focused mainly on property taxes on home owners in 2007, Nebraska ranks even higher, second to be exact in property taxes as a percentage of home value only behind Texas. In Nebraska, homeowner property taxes amount to 1.74 percent of the \$122,200 median home value, which is nearly double the national average of .95 percent and is only .10 percent behind Texas. Last year, Nebraska was third behind Texas and Wisconsin at 1.70 percent. No comparisons were made by the Tax Foundation before that.

According to the Tax Foundation study, Nebraskans' median property taxes paid on homes of \$2,127 in 2007 was \$289 above the national average of \$1,838, while their median home values of \$122,200 were \$72,200 below the national average value of \$194,300 and their median income of \$58,544 was \$4,015 less than the national average of \$63,059, which means that people choosing where to live can find higher paying jobs in 29 other states, pay less property taxes in 34 other states and have a home worth more in 37 other states.

In terms of taxes as a percentage of home value for counties with at least 65,000 residents, three Nebraska counties – Sarpy (38th at 2.0 percent), Douglas (55th at 1.9 percent) and Lancaster (57th at 1.9 percent) - rank in the top 60 counties in the entire United States. Incidentally, those are the only three Nebraska counties with populations greater than 65,000, otherwise there likely would be more Nebraska counties among the 3,077 total in the United States in the top part of the listing.

In the top 50 highest taxed counties for property taxes as percentage of home values, 19 counties were found in New York, 15 in Texas, seven in Illinois, three in New Jersey and two in Pennsylvania. In terms of total median property taxes, New Jersey is ranked first at \$6,082 per household, New York is fourth at \$3,486, Illinois is seventh, Texas is 14th, Pennsylvania is 15th and Nebraska is 16th.

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Platte Institute
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THANK YOU.

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An investment in the Platte Institute through a donation is leveraged against the many private sector grant opportunities from foundations and institutes promoting the free market and free enterprise principles that made this country great.

Thank you for your generosity and thank you for caring about Nebraska.

While Nebraska is one of the top two states for property taxes as a percentage of home value, it isn't as high in terms of property taxes as a percentage of income, coming in 10th for 2007. At 3.63 percent of income going toward property taxes, Nebraska trails New Jersey, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, which also have substantially higher median incomes, except for Vermont and Wisconsin.

Nebraskans could probably live with the high percentage of property taxes related to their home values and income if that was the only high taxes they paid, since every state has some sort of property taxes. But it is the additional types of higher taxes Nebraskans have to pay that increase their burden. The Tax Foundation ranks the tax climate of Nebraska 48th for property tax, 33rd for income tax and 42nd for sales tax in the United States. Texas, which is No. 1 for property taxes as a percentage of home values, has no individual income tax, and New Hampshire, which is second in terms of property taxes as a percentage of income, has no sales tax.

For information on the Tax Foundation study, please click [HERE](#).

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