RBC Fair Tax Messaging Guide

Key Messages

- **Tax Relief and Tax Fairness.** *Middle class and working families are struggling and deserve a break.* In Illinois, the lowest income people spend more than 3x as much of their income on state and local taxes than the wealthy do. The Fair Tax would provide a tax cut to the vast majority of Illinoisans while asking the wealthy to pay their fair share.

- **Investing in Building Healthy and Thriving Communities.** Our state has been devastated by a record long budget impasse. The bi-partisan budget that the General Assembly passed was a vital step in stopping the bleeding and stabilizing our state. *We need to invest in building the thriving communities we all want,* including good schools, healthy families, thriving colleges, support in tough times, and safe streets. We should ask the wealthy to pay a little more, to ensure that all our communities can grow and thrive.

- **The Wealthy Should Pay Their Fair Share.** Over the past decades most new income has gone to the top 1% of earners. While the rich hire accountants and lobbyists to create loopholes and tax breaks for themselves, the rest of us have suffered. The Fair Tax will *make sure the wealthy pay their fair share.*

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| **Be aspirational and focus on values.**  
We feel first and act second. Projected a vision of what we believe motivates people to act. | **Repeat unhelpful stereotypes**  
Even to debunk a myth, repeating it normalizes the stereotype. Be sensitive to the words you choose. |
| **Elevate our public systems.**  
We can’t call for investment in our public systems while running them down. Focus on the positives that our systems can provide. | **Step into the other side’s frame**  
Stay on message and on your points. Don’t use frames or generalizations that can damage our argument. |
| **Focus on Building/constructing collective benefit**  
Talk about “we”, the benefits to our communities as a whole, and fostering the human potential available to all of us | **Use otherizing language like “the poor” or “vulnerable people” or focus on individual benefits.**  
These arguments play into negative understandings of our public systems and the people who access them. |
| **Select Stories Wisely**  
Provide life-cycle examples and stories that focus on communities. | **Focus on Compelling Individual Examples**  
These fall into an individualistic/charitable public perception. |
| **Reframe and Make an Affirmative Case** | **Rebut and Speak in Statistics or Jargon** |