

ABOUT TOPOS

- **CULTURE CHANGE STRATEGY**
- **EXPERTISE IN SOCIAL & COGNITIVE SCIENCES**
- **ORGANIZE THE FIELD AROUND STRATEGIES**



STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

WE'RE ALWAYS ON DEFENSE

BAD TIMES:

SACRIFICE

BAD TIME TO RAISE TAXES

WE CAN'T AFFORD...

GOOD TIMES:

PROVE EFFICIENCIES

INVEST NOW, SAVE LATER

FIGHTING OVER SLICES OF PIE

"HANDOUTS" DON'T HELP

THESE ARE "CULTURAL COMMON SENSE" CHALLENGES:

Responsible people live within their means.

Debt threatens economic wellbeing.

Taxes take money OUT of the economy.

***CULTURAL* COMMON SENSE**

WHAT “EVERYBODY KNOWS”



“WE HAVE TO LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS.”

“BUSINESS IS MORE EFFICIENT THAN GOVERNMENT.”

“TAXES HARM THE ECONOMY.”

“POLITICIANS DON’T UNDERSTAND US OR
CARE ABOUT US.”

HOSTILE DISCOURSE

“Stopping blue state bailouts.”
- Mitch McConnell

“An income tax would undermine New Hampshire’s competitive advantage ... and would be a blow to hardworking men and women and businesses trying to recover from the pandemic.” *New Hampshire Union Leader*

“[I]t would be a big mistake to raise taxes on individuals and businesses as they struggle through an economic recovery and a pandemic,” Chuck Grassley

“[Rolling back Trump tax cuts would] have a significant impact in a bad way on our economy,” Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas)

GOING ON OFFENSE

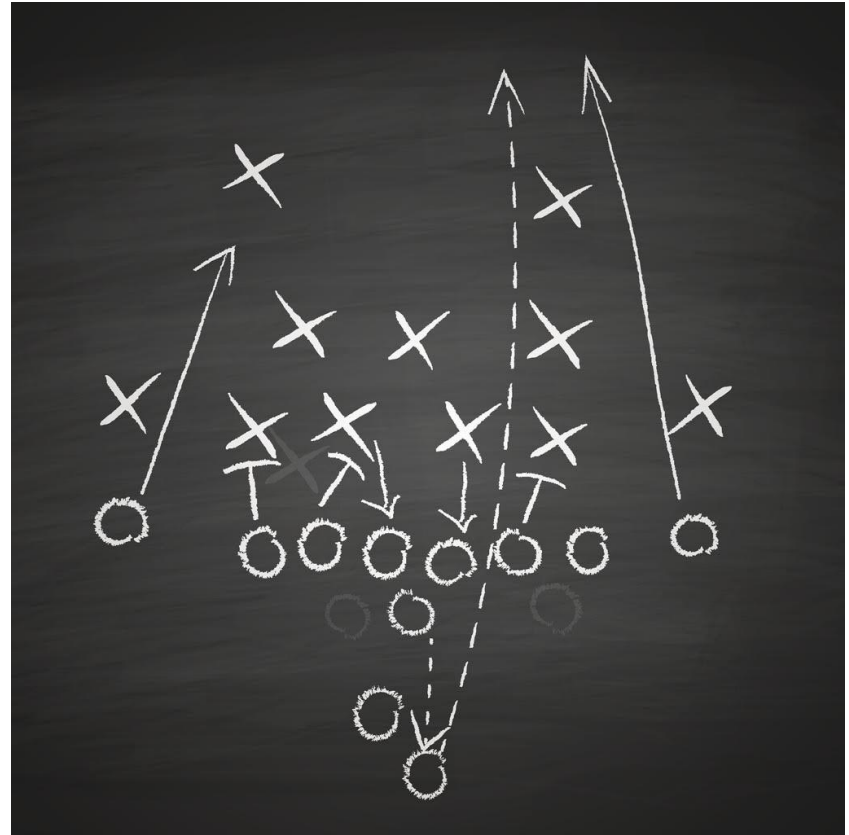
BOLD SOLUTIONS

PEOPLE'S LIVES

ECONOMIC WELLBEING

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

WORKING TOGETHER



If not now, when?

How do we do it in ways that resonate?

CROSS-CUTTING NARRATIVE CHALLENGES

1

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

3

Racial Justice

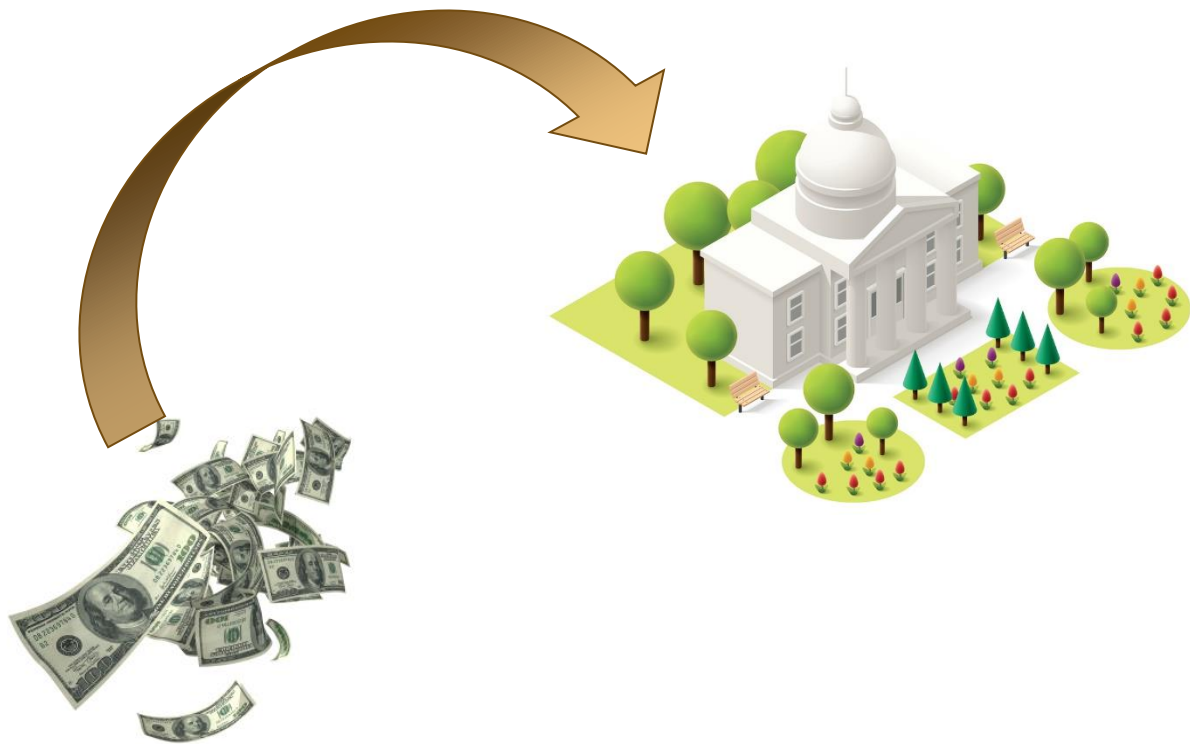


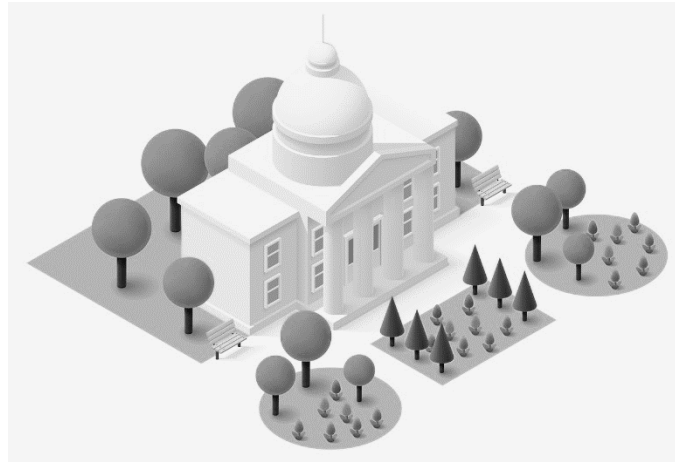
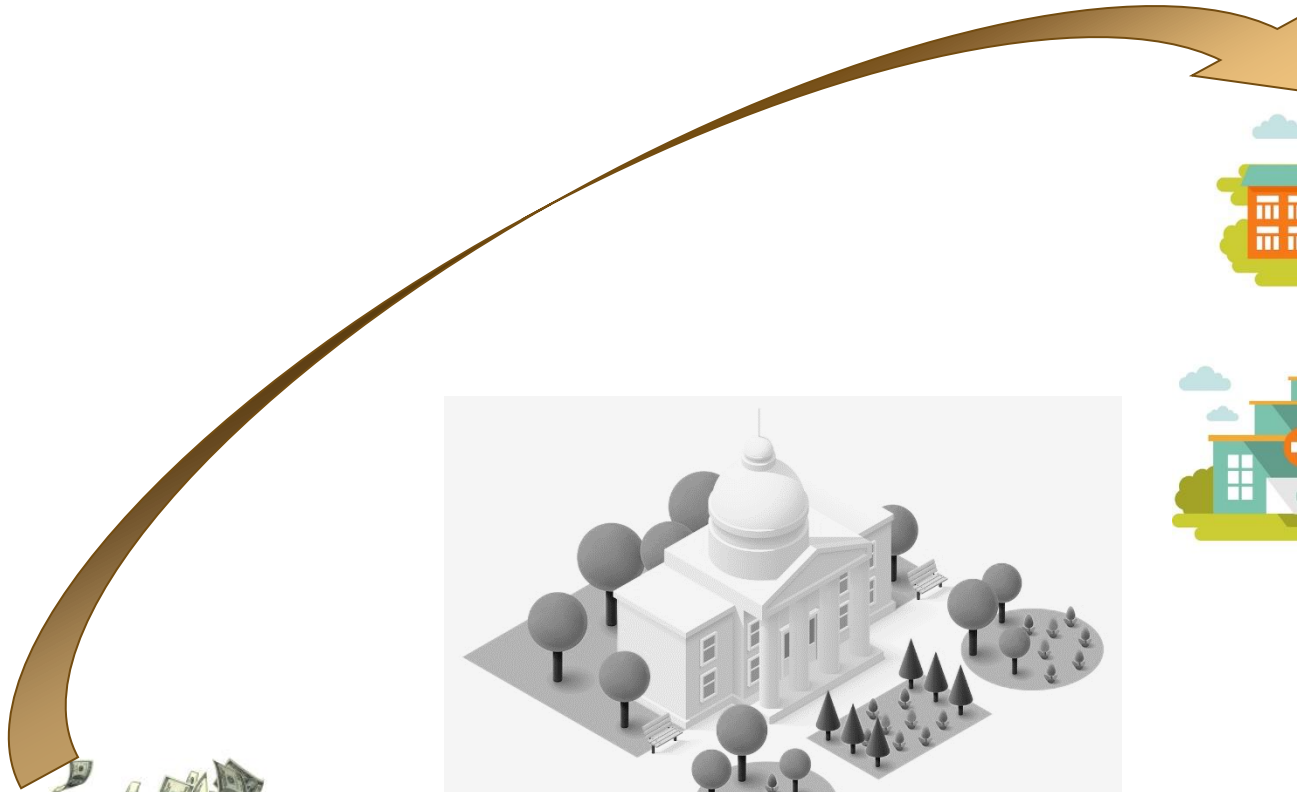
2

Tax & Budget

4

Economy





RECOMMENDATION:
REVENUE = COMMUNITIES THRIVE

IT'S STILL THE ECONOMY, STUPID: TAX POLICY IS ECONOMIC POLICY

OPPORTUNITY TO AGGRESSIVELY MAKE THE CASE IN THE TIME OF COVID:

WE CAN KICKSTART OUR ECONOMIC WELLBEING BY SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS AND...

WE WILL REBOUND FASTER IF WE KEEP MONEY FLOWING TO COMMUNITIES.

CUTTING JOBS — TEACHERS, FIREFIGHTERS, NURSES — WILL MAKE RECOVERY HARDER.

KEEPING MONEY FLOWING

Anti-Austerity

CONNECT HOW GOVERNMENT \$ HELPS ECONOMY:

EXPLAIN FLOW OF MONEY

PEOPLES WELLBEING AT THE CENTER

SHARED BENEFITS

Invest NOW to Rebuild Washington's Economy



Legislature invests in public health, education, infrastructure jobs



More communities thrive



More people spend more at businesses



More people get back to work



More businesses hire more people

ASKING MORE FROM **THOSE AT THE TOP**

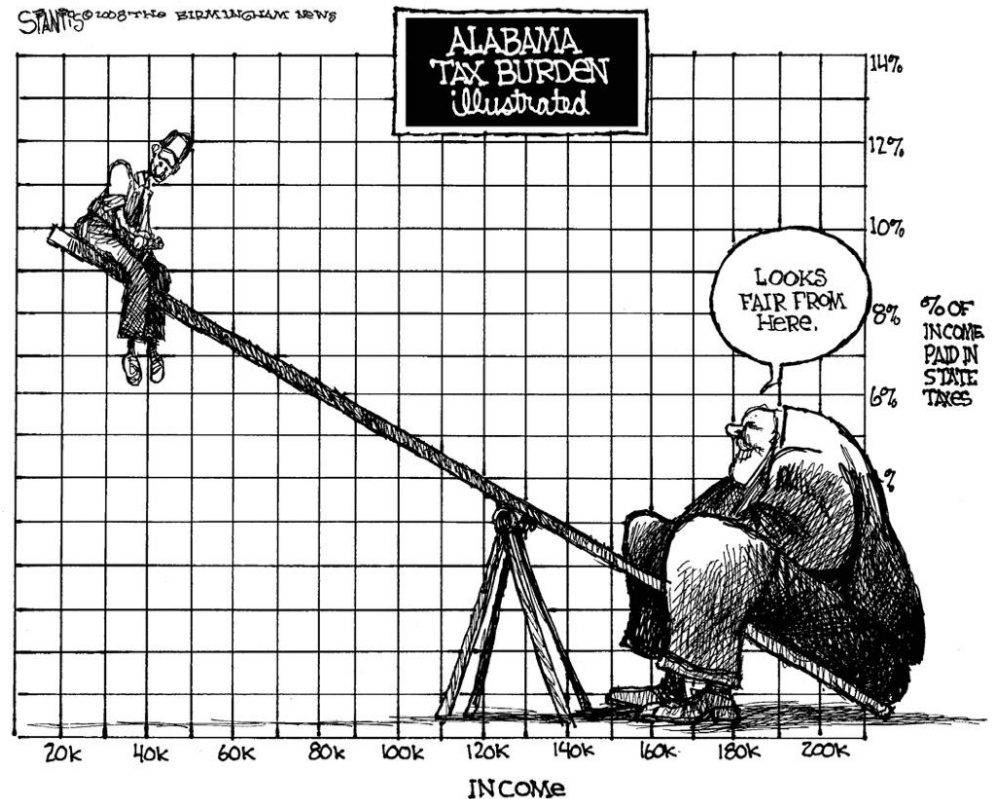
A METAPHOR HELPS DRIVE OUR POINT HOME:

“UPSIDE DOWN”

SIMPLY ASSERTING “FAIR” IS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

REASSURANCE “WE” WON’T PAY

Our tax system is upside-down because it means that a low-income person pays about twice as much of their income to state and local taxes, compared with the wealthiest people in our state.



Maine Video



<https://youtu.be/JEpPs5V2T8Q?t=52>

MN had many of the same problems as ME—aging population, industries had left. So they raised the income tax rate 2% (from 8 to 10) for households making over 250K, and raised the minimum wage. They plowed a third of the money into education, did away with the deficit and invested in creating the sorts of communities that employees and employers both want. This helped create almost 30 times the jobs his tax-cutting predecessor did (172K vs. 6K) and Forbes now ranks MN as a top 10 best state for business.



UNJUST TAX SYSTEM

UNJUST REVENUE

Most of us, whether we're Black, brown, or white, take pride in our work and our work is essential for our state's economic prosperity. But legislators who are mostly White have created racist laws over many decades that prevented people of color from building wealth and prosperity. In the past they sometimes created outright racist laws that kept other people back – such as restricting the rights of indigenous people to fish, and incarcerating Japanese people in camps during World War II causing them to lose income, savings and property. Less obviously, leaders have set up the tax system in ways that benefit themselves, not the rest of us – like how income from work is taxed much higher than income from investments. This system continues to benefit people who are mostly rich and white, at the expense of the rest of us – but it can be fixed.

UNJUST TAX SYSTEM

UNJUST SPENDING

Just 5 miles, and yet a world apart. One side of town has a new school while on the other side of town the school is more than 50 years old with all the maintenance problems you'd expect. Every community—Black, Brown or White, urban, suburban or rural—needs certain things to thrive like great schools, affordable health care and parks. For too long, our community has been ignored, funding everywhere else but here. Now, we are working to bring things back.

NARRATIVE CHOICES



INSTEAD OF:

- Orienting around problems
- Centering “budget” & shortfall
- “Government”
- Resenting the wealthy
- Aid/helping those hurting



FOCUS ON:

- Aspirations, successes, solutions
- Center economic wellbeing
- Community
- Explanations, pragmatic choices



TOPOS PARTNERSHIP

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