

# The Tax Justice Digest

Welcome to the Tax Justice Digest, a regular survey of new and interesting trends in state and federal tax policy.

## Billionaire Oil Man & West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy Have Their Say about Tax Incentives

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Billionaire George Kaiser, head of Kaiser-Francis Oil Co., recently did something unusual for someone in his line of work. He told the truth about the subsidies that the oil and gas industry receives to the **Oklahoma** House Appropriations and Budget Committee. During his testimony, "Kaiser said he could "say unequivocally" that the tax subsidies in question have never influenced his companies' decisions to drill or restore any well in Oklahoma." [Kaiser even joked](#), "In fact, I may lose my day job as a result of my testimony."

Kaiser focused his comments on the number of Oklahomans who could receive health care (125,000) and the raises that could be given to teachers (\$1,300 each) if the state's priorities changed and the average \$75 million in tax credits given to the energy industry over the last four years were put toward other priorities.

Business analysts know that if a company is making business decisions based on tax breaks, then the company isn't on very strong footing to begin with. But comments like these made by billionaire businessmen are quite helpful in cutting through the false claims made about taxes.

Speaking of ineffective subsidies, this week the **West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy** released an [interesting report](#) Money for Nothing: Do Business Subsidies Create Jobs or Leave Workers in Dire Straights? The report details cases of private West Virginia companies cutting jobs even after receiving taxpayer funded subsidies. Accountability and transparency are necessary to ensure that policymakers and the public aren't funding incentives that ultimately do no real good for West Virginia. The author suggests concrete steps that can be taken to ensure both accountability and transparency, including accessible subsidy disclosure, publishing outcome data, enacting claw-back provisions, and the creation of a unified state development budget.

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