

Friday, August 27, 2010

As summer draws to a close Congress has two more weeks of August recess. Both Houses are scheduled to return to work on September 13th.

This week, we're publishing an abbreviated newsletter. We'll resume our full-length version after Labor Day.

Washington Roundup

Excise Tax - Council on Foundations' Call to Action

As we [reported](#) in June, Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) introduced a bill, [S. 676](#), to change the private foundation excise tax rate to a flat rate of 1.39%. Identical legislation (H.R. 4090) has also been introduced by Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL), in the House. Senator Schumer intended to offer his bill as an amendment to the tax extenders legislation that was then pending on the Senate floor. He did not, due in part to strong objections from the Senate Finance Committee's Ranking Member, Charles Grassley (R-IA).

To bolster support for Sen. Schumer's bill going forward, the Council on Foundations (COF) is circulating a letter urging Congress to pass the flat rate excise tax legislation in September. To date, over 80 foundations have signed onto the letter. If your foundation would like to sign the letter, [here](#) is the link to COF's call to action.

Making Headlines

Here are recent headlines you may find interesting:

Social Innovation Fund (SIF)

Following the announcement of the Social Innovation Fund's first round of grants, comments have been published regarding the selection process. Some in the nonprofit community questioned potential conflicts of interest and secrecy surrounding the selection. SIF has now posted online the applications of the organizations that were awarded funds, along with the ratings and comments they received from reviewers.

- 8/24 [Amid Concerns of Favoritism, Federal Officials Disclose New Details on Selection Process](#), Chronicle of Philanthropy
- 8/23 [Lessons in Social Innovation: A Call to Action](#), Chronicle of Philanthropy

- 8/22 [Questions Arise as Millions in Federal Grants Go to Former Employers of Obama Administration Officials](#), San Francisco Examiner
- 8/21 [Nonprofit Fund Faces Questions About Conflicts and Selection Procedures](#), New York Times
- 8/18 [Stonewalling at the Social Innovation Fund](#), Washington Post blog by Paul Light

Giving Pledge

Discussion continues on the merits of the Warren-Buffett challenge to the world's billionaires.

Various voices weigh in:

- 8/20 [Wealthy Businessmen Often Feel Obligated to 'Give Back.' Who Says They've Taken Anything?](#), Wall Street Journal
Philanthropy Roundtable board member Kimberly Dennis challenges misconceptions related to the Giving Pledge and philanthropy in general.
- 8/12 [Is the Giving Pledge a Good Idea?](#), The San Francisco Chronicle

Commentary

Summer 2010 [Conversations with...The Issue: Threats to Philanthropic Freedom](#), Washington Legal Foundation

Former Attorney General of the United States and Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh leads a discussion with Dr. Larry P. Arnn, President of Hillsdale College; Heather R. Higgins, President and Director of The Randolph Foundation; and Adam Meyerson, President of The Philanthropy Roundtable about the connection between philanthropy and freedom, and efforts that threaten to sever that link from activist groups and the government.

REGISTER NOW

2010 Philanthropy Roundtable Annual Meeting
[Explore, Dream, Discover: The Power of Philanthropy](#)
 October 14-16 ~ Amelia Island, Florida

ACR sessions include:

- [Creating Sanctuary States for Philanthropic Freedom](#)
- [Right, Left and Center: Why They Each Have a Stake in Philanthropic Freedom](#)
- [The Federal Legislative Forecast: Outlook for Philanthropy in 2011](#)
- [Transparency Spectrum](#)

[Register now](http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org) (www.philanthropyroundtable.org)