

Re: How to pay for government?

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- *From:* The Ghost In The Machine <ewill@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 14 Oct 2006 17:00:03 GMT
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In sci.econ, Zerge
<zerge@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote
on 13 Oct 2006 16:16:33 -0700
<1160781393.820827.153150@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>:

The Ghost In The Machine wrote:

I have a dumb question. If there is a FAQ on this, my apologies in advance, and just point me to it, but there are several methods by which we can pay for government (assuming, for the sake of simplicity, a standard tri-pillar arrangement: judicial, legislative, executive — similar to the one in the US and many European countries, and that government is even necessary, desirable, or functional).

Which is the best method, and why?

[1] Pay-as-you-use. This is vaguely Libertarian but the general idea is to either hire private security to do legal enforcement, judicial would be paid on a per-case basis, and legislative would do as little work as possible, perhaps on a volunteer basis. Presumably, this system would work (FSVO) in an area where the laws are not in great flux, and in any event we already have consensus on issues such as murder and rape anyway.

[2] Income tax. Basically, the government extracts services from a declared percentage of one's transfer payments — I work for XYZ Corp, they pay me, I pay government a certain percentage out of what XYZ Corp pays me.

[3] Sales tax. XYZ Corp and individuals also might pay a certain percentage on everything sold (new or used) or bought, or maybe both (buyer-seller split sales tax).

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I don't think there's a definitive answer. In real life, countries use the three methods combined.

As do we. SS in particular is a rather regressive income tax. Most school systems are paid by property taxes, which is basically an income tax although one might also call that an ownership tax (a fourth entry). Roadways are (AFAIK) financed -- supposedly -- by excise taxes on gasoline, basically a sales tax.

So it's a mix, especially since we have multiple levels of government (federal, state, county, municipal).

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#191, ewill3@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Conventional memory has to be one of the most UNconventional architectures I've seen in a computer system.