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### Prof. Edward Zelinsky on Donald Trump's Tax Plan

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

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## PROF. EDWARD ZELINSKY ON DONALD TRUMP'S TAX PLAN

September 30, 2015

### Here's How Trump's Tax Plan Would Affect You

By AIMEE PICCHI, [The Fiscal Times](http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/09/29/Here-s-How-Trump-s-Tax-Plan-Would-Affect-You) (<http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/09/29/Here-s-How-Trump-s-Tax-Plan-Would-Affect-You>)

September 29, 2015

Donald Trump's tax plan was revealed with a message for millions of Americans: "You win!"

But like everything linked to taxes, not everyone would win equally under his plan, which the Republican presidential candidate says is geared toward providing tax relief for the middle class and giving the U.S. economy a boost by lowering business income taxes.

To be sure, there's a long road ahead before the general election in November 2016, but Trump's proposal raises evergreen questions about the country's tax system, such as why it's so complicated and whether struggling middle-class families should get more of a break. Trump's plan is geared to appeal to his supporters, one-third of whom earn less than \$50,000 a year -- the group that the candidate claims would benefit the most from his plan.

Yet the biggest winners under Trump's plan would be, well, people just like Trump: America's richest citizens. That's because he's proposing a big reduction in income taxes for married couples earning at least \$300,000, as well as a plan to eliminate the estate tax, which only kicks in at about \$10 million per couple, said Edward Zelinsky, a law professor at the Cardozo School of Law, who specializes in tax issues.

"The truth is most lower income folks don't pay tax in our system today anyway," Zelinsky said, who added that Trump is claiming to

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remove people from the tax rolls who already don't pay much, if anything, in federal tax. "Thanks to the earned income tax credit and standard exemptions, roughly half of Americans don't pay significant income taxes."

Trump's plan is "really good for high income tax payers," he added.

One caveat: Trump's four-page proposal is short on details. As a result, some issues are unclear, such as his assertion that many deductions would be eliminated, although his plan maintains deductions for charitable giving and mortgage interest, which are two of Americans' most popular deductions.

[READ MORE \(http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/09/29/Here-s-How-Trump-s-Tax-Plan-Would-Affect-You\)](http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/09/29/Here-s-How-Trump-s-Tax-Plan-Would-Affect-You)

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The Utah Supreme Court cited Zelinsky in *Steiner v. Utah State Tax Commission*.

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Professor Chris Buccafusco (<https://cardozo.yu.edu/directory/christopher-j-buccafusco>) spoke to *Rolling Stone* and *The Wall Street Journal* about the Katy Perry copyright case.

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[Professor Sam Weinstein Comments on T-Mobile/Sprint Merger in NY Times and Wall Street Journal \(/news/professor-sam-weinstein-comments-t-mobilesprint-merger-ny-times-and-wall-street-journal\)](#)

Professor Sam Weinstein was quoted in *The New York Times* regarding the T-Mobile/Sprint merger. "There is a lot of criticism of the agencies that they are not doing enough about big tech and this is a way to respond to that criticism," he said.

