



Why does he get a tax break ...and you don't?

Pennsylvania is only one of two states in the union without an excise tax on cigars and the only one without a tax on other products like snuff and chewing tobacco. Even North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee – the major tobacco producing states – tax the stuff.

Pennsylvania's reluctance to assess this tax is not about protecting Pennsylvania tobacco farmers. Five states account for 93 percent of the tobacco production in the country, and Pennsylvania is not one of them. Furthermore, the Congressional Research Service estimates that 94 percent of U.S. tobacco is used in cigarettes, which already are taxed in Pennsylvania. And an excise tax on other tobacco products would have no impact on the state's 30 tobacco manufacturers, since the tax is already assessed in most other states.

In the final analysis, opposition to the tobacco tax is not about jobs since further cuts in the state budget will require significant reductions in the state workforce and likely spur layoffs in related industries.

And, the best news is that a tax on smokeless tobacco and cigars will reduce consumption by younger Pennsylvanians, lowering long term health risks and potentially saving lives.

A tax on cigars and smokeless tobacco products – time to close the loophole.

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