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**Editorial | Island Voices**

# Join Tax March seeking disclosure of Trump's taxes

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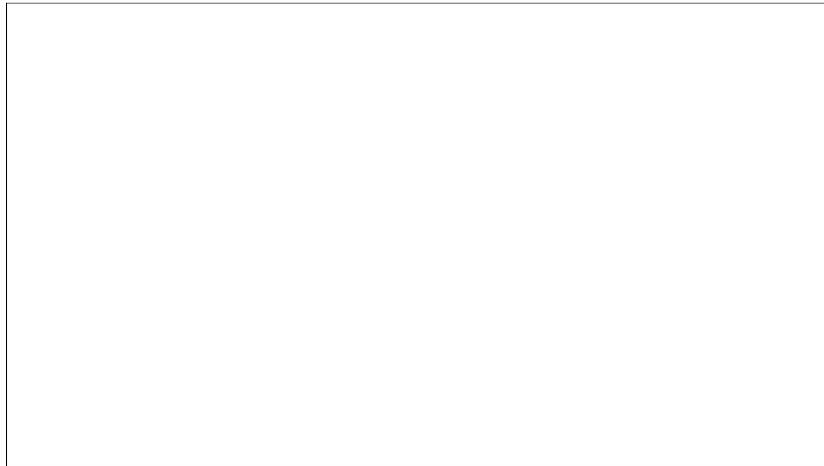
By April 15, the majority of individuals working in this country will have paid their taxes. No one likes to part with their money, but many, including immigrants and undocumented workers, view this act as a duty, since it supports programs and infrastructure from which they themselves benefit. As an expression of enlightened self-interest, paying one's taxes is not just "giving back"; it is an investment in one's community and one's self. This is why many find it galling that a multimillionaire would brag, as now-President Donald Trump did during the first debate with Hillary Clinton, that he is "smart" for avoiding federal income taxes.

For more than four decades now, every major political party nominee for president has shared his or her tax returns. They view it as the opportunity to demonstrate that they pay their "fair share;" they view it as an extension of their patriotism. Beyond this, the disclosure of financial records is an important safeguard against high-level government corruption. This is precisely why the framers of the U. S. Constitution included the so-called Emoluments Clause. Article I, Section 9, Clause 8 strictly prohibits elected officials from accepting money from foreign governments.

In recent days, we have learned that Paul Manafort, Trump's one-time campaign chairman, profited handsomely from a deal to advance the Russian government's agenda. A cloud of suspicion continues to hang over the 2016 election after FBI Director James Comey announced that there is an ongoing investigation into possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian intelligence operatives regarding

the release of information obtained in the hacking of the Democratic National Committee.

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Given the international dealings of the Trump Corporation, constitutional scholars argue that Trump has been in violation of the Constitution since taking the oath of office. The truth is that barring a full financial disclosure, we cannot know for certain. But even the appearance of a conflict of interest undermines democracy, since there is no way to determine where the president's revenue comes from, and thus where his allegiances lie.

The case of President Trump reveals how dangerous it has been to rely upon precedent, as opposed to law. This is why U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) has introduced House Resolution 186, a bill that directs the Department of the Treasury to provide the House of Representatives with Trump's full tax returns from 2006-2015. This legislation was introduced because members of Congress want to know whether the president profited from illegal tax shelters, and, most importantly, the full extent of his debts to and investments in foreign governments.

The call for the president to release his tax returns is by no means a fringe movement composed of "professional activists" intent on contesting the 2016 election. Every day we are witness to a fresh round of assaults upon the environment, immigrants, working people, the poor and truth itself.

This is why the upcoming Tax March has galvanized a wide array of community groups, nonprofit organizations and individuals, including some Republicans, all increasingly concerned about issues of fairness and transparency. On April 15, there will be over 110 Tax Marches held throughout the U.S., including Oahu and Kauai.

By joining together in peaceful protest, the residents of Hawaii have the opportunity to lend their collective voice to a movement demanding greater governmental accountability. By taking to the streets, we can encourage elected officials to support HR 186 in its call for transparency. So far, President Trump has been able to flout a

precedent integral to the functioning of democracy by saying, "people don't care." On April 15, let us show him that we do.

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**OFF TODAY:**

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd is off today.

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**Joseph Tanke is helping Hawaii J20+ and others to organize the Oahu Tax March.**

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