



## JOE RAND WANTS BILL WEBER'S SENATE SEAT – PART 2

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter



Taxes are what they call a necessary evil. This is another thing that people complain about, especially in the high tax states like Ca and NY. But it is the price we have to pay to get the government services we have become so reliant on.

Along with infrastructure comes taxes. Along with everything comes taxes. New York, California keep battling back & forth who's the highest tax state, & I think right now California's got us beat, but we're not too far behind them in having the highest taxes in the country. The tax structure here in New York is one of the things driving businesses out. This whole, tax the billionaires, tax the billionaires, tax the rich, tax the rich. Well, the rich have the ability to say, OK, you know what, you're going to overtax me. I'm out of here. We're losing population. We're bleeding population. We're like, like 2nd or 3rd in, exodus from the state & 90% of the reasons the taxes.

Let's say, let's say you get in, you have your Democratic majority & stuff. What can you do as a freshman senator to help get the taxes down? He began by agreeing that taxes are high and then skirted around the reducing taxes question and went into talking about housing and the need for affordable housing.

“Well, let me first, I'm going to agree with you that taxes are really high in Rockland County. I'm a property owner. What did I say in this county, & the state, no question, taxes vary, we are a very high state, high tax, high service state, all right. So, stipulate to that we're in agreement. I don't agree with your premise that that's the reason for migration out of out of New York, or at least it's not the primary reason. I believe the primary reason that people leave New York is because of a lack of attainable housing. That people can't afford to live here, not because the taxes are high, although they are, it's because the average price, let's just talk about Rockland County, the average price for a single-family home in Rockland County. Right now, it is almost \$900,000.”

As a former realtor Rand says that to buy a \$900,000 home you need to be able to put down about \$200,000. You need \$200,000 in free cash, & then you need to make about \$200,000 to \$250,000 a year.

Now, there's just not a lot of people in Rockland that can afford that mortgage & have that kind of free cash to buy a home.

So, people just can't afford to buy. f you talk about young people & you talk about the fact that the average rent is up above \$2000 a month, to afford a \$2000 a month rent, \$2000 times 12 is \$24,000. You're, you're basically expected to spend about a third of your income on rent.

“If you're paying \$24,000 a year in rent, you have to be making \$75,000 a year. That's for a one bedroom & that's for probably a one bedroom, might even be a studio, that's one person basically. The fact is, there are not a lot of 25-year-olds who get their first job at \$75,000 a year, so they, they're leaving. People come to me all the time & say my kid just moved away because he doesn't have anywhere to live & that's killing this county, it's killing this state. What we need to do about it is we need to get more attainable housing & we need to create more affordable housing.”

<https://youtu.be/4IYHHu9i7gw>

“We go the other way & we say, well, if you want to put up a unit, you've got to put up like at least one parking space or 1.5 parking spaces for people. That has a negative impact because it takes up a lot of space, reduces the number of units, makes the units more expensive, where there are people that would be willing to rent an apartment without parking if it meant they could get it for \$200 a month cheaper & they'd be willing to walk a couple of blocks to find parking. So, a capital A affordable, lower A affordable, we need all of it, all of the above in New York State because we need to find housing for people.

The taxes are the issue I asked about.

“I'm not saying taxes aren't an issue, but the bigger issue is people don't have anywhere to live. Then they're not going to move.”

But the main question which you diverted from to the housing part of it, but very adroitly, I might add, yes, it was a smooth transition, but let's go back to taxes Let's go back to the main topic here, OK? You weren't answering the question I asked you.

“All right, I'll answer your question now because I took issue with your premise that the people are leaving because of high taxes, & I don't think that's it exactly. I spoke with a lot of people & I have friends that's why, I mean, taxes definitely don't help.”

They don't help, & I'm saying that housing is definitely an issue. Part of the biggest problem is the high taxes that people are paying on the properties, the high-income tax, the high gas taxes, all the taxes that are being put on us & the regulations that businesses, which we'll get into also. But what can you do to help reduce the tax burden on the average constituent in your district?

“Let's talk about the different taxes that make up your tax bill every year, all right? I'll start with the property tax. The property tax, state government doesn't have any part of that, doesn't get a piece of it, doesn't have anything to do with it, & that's probably the most out of line with other states. Like our property taxes are considerably higher than they are in other states, & the reason for that is largely the school tax. School taxes make up the biggest part of it. You have your for the property tax, you have your school, you have your town, & if I've in a village, you have the village tax, & there's a county tax as well. The biggest piece of that, probably more than half is the school district.”

He says that the problem is New York is a high service state and provides lots of services to our residents & to our citizens. They don't do that in other parts of the state.

The question comes down to are all now I say, are all of these services that are provided necessary services or some of them just on someone's wish list?

Let's stick with what, well, well, the question is, for example, are there ways in which we could cut school budgets?

I mean, that's really, that's really between the one thing we can say about schools is that school districts are small, local input matters that those boards come up for election every 2 years that if you want to change the way your school district does its taxes, you can vote & you can, you can make them, you can make start a movement to do that. The problem is that most of those taxes go toward the, the, you see it on the field.

You see it in the instruction. You know, people say, well, there's too many administrators. Well, yeah, it sounds like too many, administrators & so your kid needs a special assistance in some way, & now you need the counselor. Now you need the special assistance. "Let's get back to the state taxes."

Everything you say, everything you say about the, what you, the county taxes is, is exactly right.

The fact the first thing you said was you have nothing to do with that in the state. Let's go to the state.

Let's go to the state.

"Does the state have a high, state income tax? Yes. Is it higher than other states? Yes. Is that the major driver of your yearly taxes? Well, it depends on your income, but when I say we're a high service state, I agree with you that if you're up in Albany, you should really be looking at the budget every year for opportunities to cut back on any spending that is wasteful. We're always going, there's always going to be the old canard of I'm going to go up to Albany, I'm going to find waste, fraud & abuse, & we're going to cut that, & that's going to allow us to cut taxes. There's probably not enough waste, fraud & abuse to move the needle dramatically in terms of property taxes." Rand explained.

<https://youtu.be/vpflDg7CMYQ>

"The heart of why New York is a high service, high tax state, same thing in California, is that we, we do believe in people getting paid fair pay & people being able to retire in dignity. So that's The thing, people, had somebody from a union tell me recently that he was talking to a bunch of union guys & the union guys who are public union employees said taxes are theft.

He's like, taxes are theft. Taxes pay your salary. I mean, people don't make the connection. Taxes pay your salary. You tell people, you say to people, you know, you don't like paying taxes, well, but you like having police protection. You like having a working, whether it's state or federal taxes, you like having a working air control system so you can fly safely. You can drive on the road safely. All of these things get paid for by taxes, & we are a high tax state, but that's the reason we provide high services."

He compared NY to Texas on the topic of public parks, "You go move to Texas. Ask people who live in Texas about their public parks. They don't exist, not like what we have. We have public parks. Those cost money to maintain & to & to obtain. You know, we have, we have subsidized skiing in New York State. You go up to; you go up to Gore Mountain. Gore Mountain is a state facility subsidized by state funding, & it's cheaper to ski at Gore, which is a great mountain than it is to ski in Calaba.

What about those of us who don't ski? Why should I have to pay for everybody else?

"It gets them off the road, less, less traffic."

Wow you're going to help reduce the taxes, but let's move on.

"I don't know if there's anything that can be done. I mean, I'll be honest with you, & anyone that says that they're going to go up there & say, I'm going to reduce taxes from waste, fraud & abuse, they're, they're just playing games. That's not real. But you can hold them back,

you should hold them back by being really careful about budgeting & really being really careful about how you allocate every year when the budget, the budget keeps getting bigger & bigger & bigger.

Yeah, yeah, & it's always going to get bigger because of inflation. It's always big, but it's just union, like with Nyack, union salaries go up every year. You have to raise taxes."

But the, the whole thing comes down to, we're working on a deficit budget where we owe money. I don't remember what the deficit is, but it's in the billions that we're behind in money.

Yeah, we keep raising taxes & nothing happens with the with the deficit.

"Did they raise taxes in the budget? I just haven't seen if there was a recent budget."

"I mean, I know they were talking, they raised, they put it on a pied-à-terre tax. Do you, let me ask you a question. So they put in this pied-à-terre tax which is this mansion in the home, & if you had a 2nd home in New York City that's not your primary residence, it's a tax on the value of that home. I forget the percentage, but if you have a single-family home in Manhattan, the minimum price of a single-family home Manhattan is \$5 million. The average price is probably more like 12 to \$13 million. I'll be honest with you, I'm not going to cry tears over that. I do not like to raise taxes at all. I'm a capitalist. I'm a Democrat, but I'm a business owner. I've paid many taxes in my life."

He says that he doesn't like writing the check for taxes any more than anybody else does. We do need to fund operations.

We need to get funding to come in, which sometimes means to raise taxes. If you're going to raise taxes, a pied-à-terre tax for somebody that's keeping a second home in Manhattan, which takes inventory off the market, which raises housing prices in the city, that they should pay a little bit even though they're not living there. They're getting the benefit of having all the protections that come from being in the city, they should pay a little more. He doesn't have a problem with that, even though he's a real estate person.

"I'd rather listen... when they raise the taxes on the wealthy, I'm lucky enough, I've been fortunate enough in my life that I'm well off. So, when they raise taxes on the wealthy, I'm usually one of the people they raise taxes on. I look upon paying taxes as something I do for the common good. It's about the most patriotic thing that I do every year is pay for the common defense. I pay for the common good. I pay for fund, all these things that we value in our society. So that's a good thing. I would say that to my people on the left. I do not like when, when my colleagues, Democrats or people to the left of that. When they characterize raising taxes as being punishment for the wealthy, like they should pay their fair share, they're evil billionaires, eat the rich, stuff like that, that to me is a is a is not the way we should be going about this."

[https://youtu.be/VGZ5HnIrl\\_A](https://youtu.be/VGZ5HnIrl_A)

"So, you pay a lower tax rate on what is essentially ordinary income. If they fix that, that in the Fed, it's a federal, federal law, that would be billions of dollars to the treasury & the people who make that money generally are extremely well off & it's really not fair that, you know, I work for a living & I, you know, I, I work & I do, I provide services & I get paid for the services & I pay X taxes & you work for a living, you provide services, but because your services are managing other people's money, which when the when the client makes money, that's a capital gain, but somehow when you make money because you're managing there, it's not your money that it's their money that you pay a capital gain. That that's an example of a loophole that's not fair. There's a lot of real estate loopholes that are also not fair."

STORY TO BE CONTINUED IN PART 3