

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Wicker Points to Bigger Paychecks, Bonuses as Tax Law Goes Into Effect

Treasury Says Pay Increases Will Affect 90 Percent of Workers

Nearly all Americans should see larger paychecks this month, thanks to the tax reform bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump. Because of the law's lower tax rates, employers will no longer withhold as much from employee wages.

February 15 is the deadline for employers to implement the new withholding instructions released by the U.S. Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service. The Treasury Department has estimated that 90 percent of workers will see pay increases.

More Than 335 Companies Are Giving Back to

Employees

Americans' additional take-home pay is not the first sign of the tax law's success. The number of companies who have decided to give bonuses, raise minimum wages, and improve employee benefits continues to climb, already surpassing 335. So far, some three million Americans are getting bonus checks this year. This money could go toward college tuition, a family vacation, or any number of expenses that have been difficult in recent years. The bottom line is that it will be better spent by the workers who earned it than the federal government.

You may have seen the positive local news about the tax law's benefits. Early last month, the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported that BancorpSouth and Renasant would use their tax savings for bonuses and other investments, giving back to the thousands of people they employ in our state and region. Similar stories have also been reported recently by South Mississippi's WLOX and the Hattiesburg American, which highlighted higher wages for Pine Belt workers at Regions, Lifeguard Ambulance, and Pearl River Community College.

These are just a few examples. The impact of tax reform is expansive – affecting all different types of industries and business sizes across the nation. One of the most nationally recognizable companies and our state's largest private employer, Walmart, has announced bonuses, higher starting wages, and expanded parental leave

for its workers. Likewise, just a few days ago, Best Buy told its employees, including some 700 Mississippians, that they would receive a bonus of either \$1,000 or \$500. The company also revealed that it is investing \$20 million in its foundation's work to teach technology skills to underserved teens.

Good News for Job Creation, Lower Energy Bills

Mississippi's small businesses and consumers should reap significant tax relief as well. The National Federation of Independent Business has estimated that the tax savings for America's small businesses will amount to hundreds of billions of dollars. The savings for our energy providers should translate into lower bills for consumers – another win for job growth.

Simply put, the less money our job creators have to send to Washington, the more they can put toward growing business opportunities and hiring new workers. America's economy is best served when its innovative and entrepreneurial minds are not burdened by Washington interference. A tax system that looks out for American workers has been needed for a long time, and the law we passed in Congress seeks to do just that. It is no wonder business optimism has soared in recent months. I hope the boost in paychecks only strengthens this upward trajectory.

Just a Taste

By Jim Thompson





ELIZABETH WYNNE

The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) Visual Arts students recently received awards in the prestigious Regional Scholastic Art Competition hosted by The Mississippi Museum of Art, including an American Visions Award Nomination, twenty-seven Gold Keys (1 portfolio), twenty-three Silver Keys (1 portfolio), and forty-eight Honorable Mentions.

Elizabeth Wynne, a Junior from Pickens, received four Gold Keys, one Silver Key and one Honorable Mention.

The work of the talented young artists receiving American Visions and Gold and Silver Keys will be on display at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson February 20thth – March 25th as part of the exhibition for the Scholastic Art Awards Competition.

The Mississippi Museum of Art hosts the Mississippi Regional Competition each year. Students from middle, junior high, and senior high schools from across the state participate in the competition. Approximately 2,000 entries in a wide variety of categories, are judged by a panel of judges over a course of several days. Jurors look for works that exemplify the Awards' core values: originality, technical skill, and the emergence of personal voice or vision. Those works awarded American Visions and Gold Keys advance to the national competition.

The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) is an eleventh and twelfth grade visual and performing arts residential, public

Where art thou J.H. Salisbury?

There are many great establishments in Holmes County that serve up a fine hamburger steak. I'm a huge fan of them myself. The gravy and caramelized onions on top with a shot of Worcestershire sauce always hits the spot. Now, a lot of folks around here that I have talked to seem to think a hamburger steak and Salisbury steak are synonymous, but I'm here to tell you they are not the same thing.

A hamburger steak is often pure meat and spices and a Salisbury steak is about 2/3 meat and the rest vegetables and binders like bread crumbs or crackers. I grew up on Salisbury steak, which was a highlight of the week when mom would get the pan going and start browning the thick meat patties, adding the can of cream of mushroom soup, then moving it to the oven. I've noticed that a lot of hamburger steak recipes are made with real gravy, as opposed to soup base with Salisbury. Salisbury steaks can have onions and bell peppers in them, but the real difference is texture. Salisbury steaks are delicate and soft from the filler and cooking for awhile. My mom liked to use crushed corn flakes in hers, which gave them a unique flavor.

Now, I know what you are thinking, Salisbury steaks sound a lot like meatloaf. Well, it's close...as close as it is to hamburger steak. Meatloaf is

cooked dry without gravy and shaped into a loaf for slicing. More eggs are often used in meatloaf to bind them together and into a thicker consistency. I didn't think we would make it this deep down the hamburger meat rabbit hole, but here is my mom's recipe for her Salisbury steak:

- Gamma's Salisbury Steak [Frying Pan and Baking Dish] [350 degrees for 45 min.]
- 1 lb. Hamburger
- 1 Egg
- 1 Small Onion [chopped]
- 1/2 Cup Milk
- 1 Cup Corn Flakes [crushed]
- 1 Can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 tsp Salt
- dash Pepper

1. Add all ingredients but flour and form into patties, dredge in flour and brown patties in the skillet.
2. After browning both sides of the Patties [either: Place Patties in a Baking Pan and add Soup to bake at 350 degrees in the oven for 45 minutes] [or: Add the Soup to the Frying Pan with the Patties and 1/4 Cup Milk + 2 TBSP cornstarch mixed together and cook with the pan on low for 20 minutes]

**Jim Thompson is the Director of Library Services for Holmes Community College and vice-president of the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce. Thompson has over 12 years experience working in diverse restaurants across southern Mississippi.*

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Crop	CBOT Month	Delivery Period	Futures Price	EGT Basis	Net Price	Change
Wheat	Mar 18	2018 Feb	4.64	-0.52	4.12	0.15
Wheat	Jul 18	2018 July	4.90	-0.32	4.58	0.15
Milo	Dec 18	2018 Aug-Sep	3.97	-0.26	3.71	0.05
Corn	Mar 18	2018 Feb	3.67	0.10	3.77	0.05
Corn	Sep 18	2018 Aug	3.89	0.03	3.92	0.05
Soybeans Sidon	Nov 18	2018 Aug-Sep	10.14	-0.21	9.93	0.14
Soybeans G'wood	Mar 18	2018 Feb	10.02	-0.07	9.95	0.19
Soybeans G'wood	Nov 18	2018 Aug-Sep	10.14	-0.12	10.02	0.14
Soybeans Minter City	Nov 18	2018 Aug-Sep	10.14	-0.20	9.94	0.14
Rice	Mar 18		12.390			0.065
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DAVE Says

By Dave Ramsey



Quit job for school?

Dear Dave,

My wife and I have \$72,000 in debt from student loans and a car loan. We're trying to pay off our debt using the debt snowball system, and we each make about \$45,000 a year. She's a teacher, and she's planning on going back to school for her master's degree, but she's thinking about quitting her job to do this. She'll be able to make more money with the additional education, and she would only be unemployed for two years. The degree program will cost us \$2,000 out of pocket per semester for two years. Does this sound like a good idea? Chris

Dear Chris,

There's no reason for your wife to quit her job to make this happen. Lots of people — especially teachers — hold down their jobs and go back to school to further their education. I'm

not sure trying to make it on one income when you're that deep in debt is a good idea.

Whatever you do, don't borrow more money to make this happen. Cash flow it, or don't do it. We're talking about \$8,000 total, and you've got \$72,000 in debt hanging over your heads already. My advice would be to wait until you've got the other debt knocked out, then save up and pay cash for school. You could slow down your debt snowball, and use some of that to pay for school, but I'd hate to see you lose the momentum you have when it comes to getting out of debt.

The choice is yours, but don't tack on anymore student loan debt. I know her income will go up with a master's degree, so from that standpoint it's a good thing to do. But if you do a good thing a dumb way, it ends up being dumb!

—Dave

Obituaries



MARY HANNA HUTCHINS

God received the most beautiful person we have ever known into Glory on Thursday, February 8, 2018. She was the most loving, kind and caring mother. She can now rejoice with the angels. Mary Alice Hanna the fifth child, born to Mr. Mag and Mrs. Mable McMurtry Hanna, was born on April 9, 1942, in Conway, MS. She was preceded in death by her parents; three sisters, Dorothy M. Tate (John), Mrs. Mildred C. Gates (Clinton) and Mrs. Carolyn H. Beard (Walter).

Mary Hanna Hutchins graduated from Conway Vocational High School with honors. She continued her education at Jackson State University earning a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Elementary Education. She taught school for thirty years, in the Public School System of Mississippi at Carthage Elementary School and Durant Separate School Elementary. She was a teacher, a friend and the school nurse when school nurses didn't exist. She touched the lives of many children with her caring, kind persona.

Mary was united in matrimony with Kermit W. Hutchins on December 5, 1965. They celebrated 45 years together before Kermit's death on March 21, 2011. To this union, four children were born, Wanda L. Hutchins, Cynthia L. Hutchins, Lamont T. Hutchins and their second child, a son, was born too soon (deceased).

She leaves to cherish her memory: her beloved children, Ms. Wanda L. Hutchins of Durant, MS, Mrs. Cynthia L. Matthews (Lionell) of Erwinville, Louisiana and Mr. Lamont T. Hutchins (Leveta) of Madison, MS; sister Onetia H. Crockett (William) of Mound Bayou, MS; grandchildren, Mr. Kendrick L. Bankhead (April), Bi-

anca Garnett of Tchula, MS, Dylan A. Hutchins of Brandon, MS, Tylan R. Hutchins of Madison, MS; great grandchildren, Kaleb L. Bankhead, Karter L. Bankhead of Ridgeland, MS, London K. Moore and Paris A. Moore; many nieces, nephews, sister-in-laws, brother-in-laws, other extended family members, friends and acquaintances.

Mary Hanna Hutchins' services are entrusted to Winter's Funeral Home, 325 Fenwick St. Kosciusko, MS 39090. Visitation begins Thursday, February 15, 2018. Home Going services will be held on Saturday, February 17, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. at Center Hill M.B. Church, 3207 Conway Rd., Carthage, MS 39051.

ROBERT W. HUNTER, JR.

Robert W. Hunter Jr., the oldest son of both late Robert Sr. and Ann Hunter made his transition on Thursday, February 8, 2018 in a Jackson, Mississippi hospital. Bobby affectionately called "Coach Bobby" passion was in coaching athletes to be their best from High School to College. His love of coaching was his greatest achievement. He leaves to cherish his memory a brother; Karl O.L. Hunter of Durant Mississippi; three nieces; Alesshundra Hunter of New Orleans, Louisiana; McKenzie Hunter of Houston, Texas; Angela Hunter of League City, Texas; three, great nephews; four, great nieces; one aunt, Elaine Trimm of Detroit, Michigan and a host of cousins and friends.

Memorial services will be announced at a later date.

LIZZIE B. TYES

Mrs. Lizzie B. Tyes, 68, of Durant, MS passed away on Sunday, February 4, 2018 of natural causes. Funeral services were held at Durant Baptist Church on Saturday, February 10. Burial was at Wolfcreek Baptist Church in Booneville, MS. Winters Funeral Home in Kosciusko, MS handled the arrangements.

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