

**Biographical Sketch
of Selected Public Policy Activities**

Robert P. Strauss

June 25, 2010

Prior to coming to Carnegie-Mellon in 1979, I was a member of the economics department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for ten years, and in 1992-4, Visiting Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the University of Rochester.

My academic career has involved several periods of federal service which resulted in the receipt of presidential pens in recognition of my contributions to legislation signed by President Nixon in 1972, and President Ford in 1976.

During 1970-1, I was a Brookings Economic Policy Fellow at the U.S. Treasury Department, and served as assistant to Murray L. Weidenbaum, Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, and then as assistant to Treasury Deputy Secretary Charls S. Walker. In 1972, I received the U.S. Treasury Department's Exceptional Service Award from Treasury Secretary John Connally for the design of the General Revenue Sharing legislation.

Upon invitation of Laurence N. Woodworth in 1975, I joined the Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, U.S. Congress, and served as a staff economist for three years. The Joint Committee was established in 1913 to assist the tax-writing committees of the Congress on all matters relating to the Internal Revenue Code. While at the Joint Committee, I had primary responsibility for: the 1976 renewal of the General Revenue Sharing legislation, the 1975 and 1978 Federal tax legislation enabling New York City's municipal pension funds to purchase City and State securities during the City's fiscal crisis, that portion of the 1976 Tax Reform Act broadening state access to optional Federal collection of state income taxes, all energy savings estimates for the House and Senate and the 1978 residential and industrial energy tax credits in conjunction with President Carter's energy initiatives, and, with Wendell Primus and Randy Weiss, Chairman Ullman's 1978 welfare reform proposal which responded to President Carter's welfare reform proposal. In conjunction with that effort, the refundable Earned Income Tax Credit and the New Jobs Tax Credit were enacted and made materially more efficient.

Since joining the faculty of the Heinz School in 1979, I have been involved in a number of significant state level tax policy projects. During 1979-81, I was Director of Research of the Pennsylvania Tax Commission. From 1983-5, I worked for the West Virginia Tax Study Commission, the Joint Finance Committee of the Legislature and the West Virginia Tax Department, on ways to restructure West Virginia's tax system. That effort culminated in drafting H.B. 1693 which completely restructured West Virginia's business taxes effective 1987. In June, 1987, I received the Distinguished Service Award from the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Tax Executives Institute.

In July, 1987, I completed an 18 month study for the State of Washington Department of Revenue as *National Can* was being decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, and devised a system of personal and business income taxes to replace Washington's structure of sales, excise, and gross receipts taxes.

In August, 1987, I was appointed to the Pennsylvania Local Tax Reform Commission to advise Governor Robert Casey on local tax reform prior to the Special Session of the General Assembly which began November 9, 1987, and which resulted in authorizing legislation in 1988 to reform Pennsylvania's system of local taxation.

In 1997-8 I was a researcher on the DC individual income tax for the DC Tax Reform Commission.

Over the past dozen years I have also been involved in several major studies of the supply and demand of highly qualified teachers for the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. A 1998 monograph resulted in the substantial revision of entry, exit, and program approval standards for Pennsylvania's system of private and public teacher preparation.

My research includes better than 100 scholarly papers, and service on the advisory boards of several Federal statistical agencies, including the Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Division and the Governments Division of the Census Bureau. During 2006-2007, I was a member of the National Academies panel on state and local government statistics whose report was issued in October, 2007. At Carnegie Mellon, I have served as the elected Secretary of the CMU Faculty, Chair of the Faculty Senate Computer Advisory Committee, and Vice-Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on the University Budget. From 1989-95, I was a member of the Revenue Estimating Advisory Committee of the Joint Committee on Taxation, U.S. Congress, and was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Tax Association in October, 1995.

Current research projects include: development of a least regressive, revenue neutral system of national retail sales taxes for each state, the development of federal countercyclical aid formulas to forestall state and local tax increases during a recession, the comparative analysis of marginal employment tax credit tax systems, the general equilibrium analysis of state taxation of internet taxation, a vertical and horizontal equity analysis of presidential individual income tax reform proposals, and the econometric investigation of the relationship between teacher quality and student performance in Pennsylvania.

6/25//2010