



# NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

1920 L Street, NW • Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036  
202.785.0266 • Fax 202.785.0261

WWW.ATR.ORG

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CONTACT: Jonathan Collegio  
202-785-0266

## On Permanent Death Tax Repeal, Sen. Mary Landrieu a Big Question Mark

*Louisiana Senator, who favored tax relief bill last June, may or may not vote to permanently repeal death tax in U.S. Senate this afternoon.*

WASHINGTON — When the time came to vote on President Bush's tax relief bill last June, Sen. Mary Landrieu told Louisiana taxpayers that their tax bills were too high. To their relief, Landrieu voted yes on the President's tax relief package. But the bill has since been broken into its component pieces, and as Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) brings permanent repeal of the death tax to the Senate floor this afternoon, the question looms: Will Senator Landrieu support Louisiana taxpayers this time around?

Some evidence suggests that Landrieu favors an end to the Death Tax, **"Most Louisianians think that the estate tax is onerous and unfair to small businesses and family farms and should be eliminated as soon as possible within the context of overall tax relief. I agree. For that reason, I am a co-sponsor of the Senate Estate Tax Elimination bill sponsored by Senators Kyl and Kerrey which makes the repeal immediate."** In fact, Landrieu complained last year that the Kyl-Kerry bill was better because it made repeal of the Death Tax permanent. Furthermore, she promised that if she could end the Death Tax forever, she would: **"If in the future we have an opportunity to reconsider this issue, I will work very hard for passage of a version closer to the Kyl-Kerrey approach which is more fiscally responsible."** However, tax relief is no longer just an issue about taxes to some in the Senate—it is now an issue about power.

The President's tax plan passed both houses of Congress, and was signed into law by the President on June 7<sup>th</sup> of last year. But due to obscure budgetary rules invoked in the Senate, the tax cuts will expire in ten years, on 1 January 2011. This policy is especially absurd where the inheritance tax is concerned. The tax will fully phase out by 2010, but in the first moments of January 2011, the tax will jump to year 2000 levels. Therefore, folks with similar wealth who die ten seconds apart could give their heirs tax bills that differ in the millions of dollars.

**"Over 70 percent of the American people support an eternal death for the Death Tax,"** said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist. **"But who knows if Tom Daschle can pressure Landrieu against them?...[Landrieu's] rhetoric would suggest that she is a friend of Louisiana taxpayers, but her record may show a different story."** Daschle scored a 10 out of 100 on ATR's congressional scorecard earlier this year.

*Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who support tax simplification and oppose all federal and state tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at [jcollegio@atr.org](mailto:jcollegio@atr.org)*