

Arkansas Times

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Kicking the poor around

While Arkansas and five other states might be considered "low tax" states overall, their taxes aren't low for poor and middle-income families, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, a Washington think tank.

ITEP looked at data released earlier this summer by the Census Bureau that identified Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Tennessee, Texas and Washington as low-tax states. ITEP found "a fundamental mismatch" between the states' low-tax status and the effect of their taxes on people living below or near the poverty line. "One of the major reasons for this is that these states have largely unbalanced tax structures," ITEP said. "Florida, Tennessee, Texas and Washington rely heavily on property and sales taxes because they don't have a broad-based personal income tax. Despite having income taxes, Arkansas and Arizona rely heavily on sales taxes, thus making their tax structures balanced on the backs of low- and middle-income taxpayers."