

# It's a perfect day to consider other ways of collecting taxes

By Bart Kosko

**H**ERE is one way to finally win the AIDS battle: Give \$10 billion to the first person who finds a cure. If that doesn't work, give \$100 billion. Such a prize would motivate scientists far more than would the pay raise that might come from landing a large research contract. The question is how to pay for such research bounties.

A fuzzy tax form is one way. Just check off the box for the AIDS bounty. A fuzzy tax form is not a flat tax or a higher or lower tax. It is revenue neutral. It lets you say where some of your tax money goes.

Here is how it would work at the state or federal level: Right now you pay taxes and the state spends the money on what it wants. All tax money goes into "general revenues." That need not be all or none. It can be a fuzzy matter of degree.

Suppose just half the money goes to general revenues. Then the other half goes to 10 or more categories like basic research, AIDS research, smart cars, debt relief, help for the homeless or environmental cleanup. You fill in the fuzzy percentages. You may want 20 percent to go to debt relief, 30 percent to build more courthouses and 50 percent to cure AIDS. The percentages must add up to no more than 100 percent.

You could still choose a binary tax form. Just write 0 percent in each category or leave them all blank and let the state spend all your money as it wants. You do that now but not by choice.

A fuzzy tax form would provide a say to those who pay. How could a politician argue against that in public? Each pressure group would want a

## FUZZY TAX FORM

You owe (blank) in tax. Half of that amount will go to general revenues. The other half will go to the social categories of your choice. Enter whole number percentages next to the categories of your choice. All the percentages must equal 100 percent. All tax money will go to general revenues if you leave the categories blank.

AIDS Research	.....
Basic Research	.....
Cancer Research	.....
Debt Relief	.....
Disaster Relief	.....
Environmental Clean-Up	.....
Foreign Aid	.....
Health Insurance	.....
Homeless Food and Shelter	.....
Global Warming Research	.....
Infrastructure Repair	.....
Law Enforcement	.....
National Defense	.....
Public Transportation	.....
Space Research	.....
United Nations	.....
Welfare	.....
Other	.....
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Total (must equal 100 percent)	.....

chance to put the spotlight on their cause and increase the odds that we checked off their box.

The rest of us would have less to complain about since we helped choose where our taxes went. We might also get a cure for AIDS or lung cancer or toxic wastes for our troubles.

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