

Rouzer's Scheme Rewards the Rich

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Congressman David Rouzer says he's a "friend" to small farms and businesses. In his [January 4 report](#), he brags about cosponsoring a bill to repeal the estate tax, claiming it would help small family farmers and small business owners. In fact, they wouldn't get a cent: Rouzer's scheme only benefits the richest families in America, because the tax only applies to a handful of estates worth over [\\$12 million](#)!

The estate tax is an inheritance tax, and the idea goes back to the [Founding Fathers](#). They abolished the aristocracy and thought allowing inheritance to concentrate wealth in a few families would threaten a free republic. Benjamin Franklin called it "a danger to the happiness of mankind."

[North Carolina's 1784 statute](#) said it served "only to raise the wealth and importance of particular families and individuals, giving them an unequal and undue influence in a republic." James Madison feared that concentrated wealth would lead to an "[oligarchy founded on corruption](#)". Thomas Jefferson proposed to "exempt all from taxation [below a certain point](#), and to tax the higher portions of property in geometrical progression as they rise."

In 2020, about [3.4 million Americans died](#). Estates under \$12 million are exempt, so only [3,441](#) even had to file an estate tax form. Of those, only [1,275](#) paid any tax. Rouzer's scheme to abolish the tax would give the wealthiest [0.04%](#) yet another tax cut, a [\\$16 billion reward to the richest Americans](#). It would reduce tax revenues by [\\$269 billion over ten years](#), and bring either larger federal deficits or higher taxes for the rest of us. That's money that could otherwise help small farms and businesses compete against corporate agriculture and the big box stores.

Rouzer is Robin Hood in reverse, taking money from small farms and businesses and giving it to the richest families in America. Our Founding Fathers warned us about the undue influence of great wealth. Rouzer and his scheme show us why.

Kristine Garrity
Calabash

