



## **SEN. TIM JOHNSON, THE DEATH TAX, & THE GHOST OF TOM DASCHLE**

Tomorrow, the Senate will vote to repeal the estate tax and South Dakota Sen. Tim Johnson appears headed toward voting against any type of reform, let alone repeal of the estate tax. It's a bit perplexing since Johnson continues to claim he is for reform but will vote against even *considering* the legislation tomorrow.

Even more perplexing is the fact that Johnson represents the same constituents of which 80 percent voted in 2000 to abolish the state estate tax. Moreover, this comes in a state where the issue was used to take down a sitting Senate Minority Leader, Tom Daschle, in 2004. Consider these statements by Sen. Johnson and his staff:

---

### **In 2001 (Fox News)**

**"Bob Martin, spokesman for Rep. Tim Johnson, D-SD, said it didn't surprise him that voters in South Dakota supported repealing the tax "because they voted overwhelmingly to abolish the state's estate tax" earlier this year.**

**He added that Johnson supports an exemption for the first \$4 million for individual estates and \$8 million for small businesses before the estate tax would kick in. "That would effectively eliminate the estate tax for all South Dakotans," he said.**

### **In 2002 (New York Times)**

**"It is an issue that Tim Johnson believes very strongly he needs to win," his chief spokesman, Dan Pfeiffer, said.**

---

So let's sum this up. Tim Johnson acknowledges his constituents overwhelmingly support estate tax repeal, he put forward his own estate tax reform plan, and also understand he needs the issue to win.

But tomorrow, he will vote against even *considering* any type of reform. That means he supports a 55 percent rate with a trivial \$1 million exemption. After all the rhetoric, the light is shining in on Sen. Johnson's true position. One South Dakota Senator lost his job for doing the same thing, it could possibly happen to the second after tomorrows vote.