



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

November 29, 2011

The Honorable Mike Enzi
U.S. Senate
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
U.S. Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Enzi and Senator Alexander:

I am writing to congratulate you on the introduction of the Marketplace Fairness Act and offer my support for its timely passage.

Fifteen years ago, when e-commerce was still a nascent industry, it made sense to exempt startups like Amazon.com from collecting and remitting sales taxes in states where they had no facilities. As chairman of the Republican Party, I was there when discussions surrounding the Internet commerce tax moratorium took place, and this was only to last until e-commerce had truly taken root. I supported this effort then, because I believed this budding industry needed every opportunity to thrive and grow. Looking back, I think it's clear we made the right call as America is home to the largest and most dynamic e-commerce companies in the world.

In the early days of the Internet, the complexities of collecting sales taxes across thousands of state and local tax jurisdictions were major obstacles. The technology simply didn't exist to expect startups to comply with the various tax compliance rules in every part of the country. But today, e-commerce has grown, and there is simply no longer a compelling reason for government to continue giving online retailers special treatment over small businesses who reside on the Main Streets across Mississippi and the country. The time to level the playing field is now, as there are no effective barriers to complying with states' tax laws.

As Governor of Mississippi, I value the important role that our Main Street retailers play in our communities. Failure to level the playing field threatens to, and in fact has, run many of them out of business, taking with them jobs and the sizable contribution they make to not just our community culture, but to the organizations who have long benefited from their charitable involvement.

States should not be deprived of their right to establish and collect taxes as they see fit. I've stood for lower taxes and smaller government my entire career in public life, but I've also stood for the authority of states to devise their own tax laws without being overridden by the federal government for no existing purpose.

Ltr. to The Honorable Mike Enzi
The Honorable Lamar Alexander
November 29, 2011
Page Two

Finally, government shouldn't be picking winners and losers. In this area, at least, the Marketplace Fairness Act will end that practice, and that's something conservatives should be proud to support.

I again applaud you for addressing this important issue and I look forward to working with you to end the special treatment for online retailers and give everyone the opportunity to compete fairly.

Sincerely,



Haley Barbour