



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 13, 2019

Harris Tweets Fib About Tax Refunds, Gets Another Four Pinocchios

Is Senator Kamala Harris smoking a little too much of the stuff that [she says](#) “gives a lot of people joy?”

On top of the revelation that [Harris partook](#) of the Giggle Weed and “did inhale” during her salad days, we now learn that she doesn’t understand taxes.

For the second time, the pot-puffing [presidential contender received](#) a richly-deserved four Pinocchios from Glenn Kessler, the fact-checker at the *Washington Post*.



The Tweet

Harris’ latest award from Kessler arose from a tweet she published after the IRS divulged that refunds are about eight percent lower than last year’s. That’s about \$170.

Instead of reaching for a bong to get some joy, mellow out, and ponder the news, [Harris reached](#) for the Twitter button: “The average tax refund is down about \$170 compared to last year. Let’s call the President’s tax cut what it is: a middle-class tax hike to line the pockets of already wealthy corporations and the 1%.”

Kessler’s opening salvo? “Boy, talk about a non sequitur that turns out to be nonsensical and misleading.”

For one thing, he wrote, the data the IRS published are based upon one week’s filings. For another, “the size of a refund tells you nothing about a person’s tax bill.”

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[Explained Kessler:](#)

The tax law required the IRS to change tax withholding tables. The IRS encouraged Americans to review and update their W-4 forms to make sure the right amount was being withheld from their paychecks but a survey by H&R Block indicated that 80 percent of Americans failed to do so.

In other words, if you left everything just the same, you can’t expect the same result. The new tax law raised the standard deduction but also eliminated personal and dependent tax exemptions. While the law reduced tax rates, it also capped a deduction for state, local and real estate taxes, which could really mess up a person’s tax situation, especially if they live in a state with high taxes such as California, New York and New Jersey.

But the size of the tax refund has no bearing on whether a person’s taxes rose or fell. A person might end up giving less of their income to the IRS — and still end up with a smaller tax refund.

And, frankly, a smaller refund is good news: The smaller one’s refund, the smaller the “loan to the U.S. government over the course of the year. Ideally, you should end up with no refund or tax due.”



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As well, [Kessler noted](#), tax cuts always benefit the wealthy because they pay the largest share of income taxes: “According to Treasury Department data, the top 20 percent of income earners paid 95.2 percent of individual income taxes in 2017. The top 10 percent paid 81 percent. The top 0.1 percent paid an astonishing 24.1 percent of taxes.”

Kessler drilled deeper into IRS data, but you get the idea. Harris — or one of her tax-illiterate staff members — fired off a tweet to attack Trump as an enemy of the middle class.

That said, Kessler reported, “Ian Sams, a Harris spokesman, said the senator was referring to the ‘long-term effect’ of the tax cut.”

[Concluded Kessler](#), Harris joined “two factoids into a highly misleading package”

Yes, tax refunds are smaller, based on preliminary data. And, yes, in the long run, the Trump tax cut raises taxes on the middle class — if you make the probably unrealistic assumption that Congress will not act to rescue tax cuts for individuals.

But Harris presented these facts without nuance or qualification, making it appear as though the smaller tax refunds were evidence of a tax hike on the middle class. In reality, the size of a tax refund reflects nothing about the size of a tax cut or tax increase — and at least in 2018, the vast majority of middle-class Americans can expect to pay less in taxes as a result of the Trump tax law.

Thus, the four Pinocchios.

The Other Four

At least this time, though, Harris can argue that she simply fouled up the data.

Not the last time, when [she earned](#) four Pinocchios for tweeting, and then pushing, a flat-out lie about U.S. Supreme Justice Brett Kavanaugh’s testimony during his confirmation hearings.

As well, [she famously claimed](#) that immigration authorities behave like members of the Ku Klux Klan, another lie, and [peddled one lie after another](#) during her formal announcement for a presidential run.

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