

# Surrounded By Controversy, Tax Day Tea Parties Still A Success

by Ashley Murphy

April 15 was a busy day for many Americans. Those of you that earn any type of income at all know what I'm talking about... taxes. It was the official Tax Day for all Americans and if you didn't get them paid then you were quickly filing for an extension. However, this wasn't the only "excitement" for the day. Several Tax Day Tea Party rallies took place around the country on Wednesday, April 15, 2009 playing off of the Boston Tea Party of 1773. The citizens came to protest increased spending and rising taxes. It was encouraged that all American's who pay taxes join a rally, make relevant protest posters, and voice their concerns. TEA stands for Taxed Enough Already.

While there were hundreds of claimed non-partisan "tea party" rallies across the nation with an unbelievably high turnout, many Americans not attending the protests were heavily criticizing them. Many on the liberal front accused attendees of "whining" about losing the election and that this was their way of throwing a large "temper tantrum." Attendees were also later called "crazies," terrorists, and right wing extremists. The mainstream media made it a point to add

that all of the "tea parties" were widely promoted and supported by conservative groups and media, FreedomWorks and Fox News

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ridiculed and disparaged. What is even harder to understand is the way the mainstream media outlets responded. It was made openly aware (not by those in association with the "tea parties") that this was a way to bash Obama and that the "tea parties" were anti-government. While the event was widely conservative, Republicans weren't

the only ones to show up that day. Many Democrats were also in attendance to voice their concerns about the way government is

spending American's tax dollars. Most that came out were showing their concern for what government has become, "big" and that it needs to take a step back. Several protestors also held signs saying "republicans are responsible, too."

In truth, the Republican Party isn't innocent. Democrats and Republicans alike both voted for these massive spending bailouts. First, it was with the Bush administration, now we've added to our country's already outrageous debt with Obama's \$787 billion economic stimulus package. Over the course of the next 10 years, the Congressional Budget Office is predicting what could be the highest debt in the course of this country's existence...\$9.3 trillion.

Across the Tennessee Valley there were 25 tea party rallies. However, that number does not reflect the protests that were not listed or planned ahead on tax-dayteaparty.com. One of those not listed was right

here in Cleveland, Tennessee, on the steps of our courthouse downtown, in which about 200 were in attendance.

In the larger cities, the attendees were in the thousands; Nashville, TN, Memphis, TN, Knoxville, TN, Chattanooga, TN and Atlanta, GA are all cities close to home that drew large crowds. Nashville, had around 3,000 people attend the Tax Day Tea Party held near the Tennessee State Capitol Building. While the numbers vary, we can estimate 3,000 to 4,000 attendees in Memphis, and about 2,000 at Knoxville's Tea Party held at World's Fair Park. About 1,500 protestors



even turned up at the White House in Washington, D.C. on a chilly, rainy day to make their voice heard. They even managed to lock down the White House and temporarily shut down the "tea party" when someone threw a box of tea over the White House fence.

Chattanooga's "Tea Party" was held at Ross's Landing downtown near the Tennessee Aquarium.

The rally drew a crowd of about 2,000 protestors. Organizer Mark West, Bradley County Sheriff Tim Gobble, Hamilton County Commissioner Bill Hullander, UTC professor Dr. Joe Dumas, and a Sarah



Palin look-a-like were just a few of the speakers that voiced there rising concerns and stirred the crowd. Instead of signing petitions, those who attended the rally

John Rich performed his new song "Shuttin' Detroit Down."

During my course of research, I came across several sites claiming that the "tea parties" were flops, stupid, and a waste of time. Several sites even reported that no one showed up and that the national count was estimated at 250,000 people. Whether these rallies were a waste of time or not, citizens of this country contributed their voice and were involved in the politics that run our nation. Just to correct those that said no one showed up and that these rallies were flops: Reports are indicating that there were over 800 protests across America and that's not including the small towns (like Cleveland) that weren't on any lists. The estimate as of April 21, 2009 for attendees nationwide is 750,000 people, but as more cities add their names to the national list, the overall number could go well into the millions. As an ending note, Chattanooga Tax Day Tea Party coordinator Mark West made this comment, "Over the last few weeks, we've been told that we're alone. That no one would go to a Tea Party. We've been called the fringe, nutjobs, extremists, and even terrorists. Look around you. Are you alone? Do you see nutjobs or extremists?"

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