

# FRIDAY BRIEF

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## House Votes to make Tax Cuts Permanent

As Americans rushed to file their tax returns on Monday, the House of Representatives voted Thursday to make the tax cuts passed in 2001 permanent. The bill passed by the House, the Tax Relief Guarantee Act, seeks to make permanent the provisions of the tax relief bill President Bush sent to Congress last year. Due to Senate budget rules, the majority of the provisions in the legislation will end on December 31, 2010. Proponents of the Tax Relief Guarantee Act state that if this sunset provision is allowed to take effect, it will subject Americans to one of the largest tax increases in U.S. history.

According to numbers from the Congressional Budget Office, estimates are that without making the cuts permanent, taxes paid by American families and businesses will jump from approximately 19% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2010 to 20.5% in 2012. Moreover, taxes will increase by 50% for lower-income families, the child credit will fall by 50%, the marriage penalty will be reinstated, education savings will be taxed, retirement savings will shrink, and the government will continue to impose the estate, or death, tax.

The legislation will now go to the Senate for approval.

## Civil Rights Lawyers to Sue Ashcroft

Civil rights attorneys this week filed a class action lawsuit against Attorney General John Ashcroft and other government officials, alleging widespread abuse of hundreds of Middle Eastern men detained on immigration violations after September 11.

The lawsuit alleges that the plaintiffs have been subjected to unreasonable and excessively harsh conditions. It details that detainees in some cases suffered physical and verbal abuse by their guards, among other abuses. There has been no comment as of yet from the Justice Department or the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The lawsuit asks that a judge issue an order protecting the detainees' due process rights and to appoint a monitor to oversee their treatment.

## Senate Votes Down Alaska Oil-Drilling

The Senate balked Thursday on a major piece of the Administration's energy plan - allowing exploration and drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). An amendment containing the provisions was voted down 54-46. The rest of the energy package continues to be debated.

Supporters argue that ANWR should be opened to allow the United States less reliant on foreign oil supplies and ensure energy security for the country. Lawmakers on Tuesday offered the amendment to the pending Senate energy bill to allow exploration and drilling in a 2,000 acre section of the refuge. The proposal matched language contained in energy legislation passed by the House of Representatives last year to allow drilling in the area.

Once a Senate energy bill is passed, members of the House and Senate will meet to iron out differences in their separate versions of the legislation before the final plan can be sent to the President.