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OKLAHOMA CHARITIES FEAR TAX CODE PLACES LIMITS ON GIVING

February 19, 2013

By Ashlei King

TULSA, Oklahoma -It's tax season and you are probably writing off some charitable donations. Congress is taking a look at limiting them. What could this mean for organizations that rely heavily on donations?

A lot is still up in the air, but leaders of local organizations say this could have a catastrophic effect on them. They've already fought the state legislature on changing the tax code, and they plan to do the same with Congress.

Emergency Infant Services in Tulsa helps put clothes on more than 14,000 kids per year. It also ensures babies and kids up to five years old gets food, diapers and other basic needs.

"We rely heavily on the generosity of Tulsans and Oklahomans as well," said Tom Taylor of EIS.

Emergency Infant Services is privately funded. Each year, people donate more than \$1 million to the organization.

"The government is not able to help with absolutely everything," Taylor said. "It's just impossible, so we have to rely heavily on the charities and the charities are kind of picking up the slack."

Congress's Ways and Means Committee wants to reform the tax code. This could mean placing a hard cap on the number of charitable donations you can write-off on your taxes.

Tom Taylor is worried this could steer some people away from donating.

"People are going to donate no matter what, but usually if there's that added incentive, especially at the year end. Who doesn't want a little help on their taxes especially helping out somebody at the same time?" said Tom Taylor of Emergency Infant Services.

The Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma is also concerned about a possible change in charitable deductions.

"It scares me a little bit," said Eileen Bradshaw, executive director of the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma.

The food bank helps feed thousands of Oklahomans per week. It does receive some food from the government, but donations make up 73 percent of the budget.

"We really are a product of the community. It's really neighbors feeding neighbors," Bradshaw said.

Eileen Bradshaw strongly believes food bank donors contribute because they truly want to help, but she can't help but wonder how a change in tax code would impact the cash flow.

"If the tax codes change and some of the things aren't deductible, they may have less disposable income to make those gifts," said Eileen Bradshaw, Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma.

The Ways and Means Committee has created 11 separate working groups. These groups will analyze research, review current laws and try to come up with the best tax reform solution.

<http://www.newson6.com/story/21254263/oklahoma-charities-fear-tax-code-change-on-donations>