

SNP spin on income tax rates 'astonishing'

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The Scottish Conservatives have accused the SNP government of “blatant spin” after ministers today described their decision not to pass on tax cuts to thousands of Scottish workers as a sign of “fairness and equality”.

In a press release heralding new Scottish rates of income tax, finance secretary Derek Mackay also claimed that his decision – which will drag more workers into the higher rate of income tax – would make Scotland “an attractive place to live and work”.

This is despite the fact that business leaders have warned that higher rates in Scotland could create a “dangerous precedent” for the Scottish economy.

Following pressure from the Scottish Greens, the SNP government decided last month to freeze the higher rate of income tax at £43,000.

By contrast, in the rest of the UK, the threshold for the higher rate will rise this week to £45,000.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Even for the nationalists, this blatant attempt to spin the SNP’s tax plans is astonishing.

“The truth is that, later this week, tens of thousands of families elsewhere in the UK will get a long overdue tax break.

“But, thanks to the actions of this SNP government, families in Scotland earning the exact same in their pay packet will be denied it.

“Instead, many police officers, teachers and senior nurses will continue to be dragged into the higher rate of tax.

“Derek Mackay’s claim that this provides ‘fairness and equality’ for people in Scotland suggests the SNP has finally gone through the looking glass.

“Nicola Sturgeon’s decision to make Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK is utterly unnecessary and unjustified.

“The fact that her government is resorting to spin in order to hide the fact

suggests she knows it too.”

The full Scottish Government release is here from today is here:

<https://news.gov.scot/news/scottish-income-tax>

Scottish Chambers of Commerce reaction to the SNP budget is

here: <http://www.scottishchambers.org.uk/press-policy/press-releases/2016/12/882>