bracket proposed by Sanders, a plateau that hasn't been reached since a watershed 70 percent rate was scaled back in the 1980s. The top tax bracket peaked at 91 percent...

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Just before the nationally televised Democratic debate on January 17, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the main challenger for the presidential nomination to front-runner Hillary Clinton, finally unveiled his much-anticipated tax plan for the country. The main crux of the plan? Higher taxes for virtually everyone, especially the wealthiest taxpayers.

The figure that is likely to grab your attention is 52 percent. That is the top tax

Under Sanders' plan, taxpayers making $250,000 to $500,000 annually would be taxed at a rate of 37 percent. The top rate, 52 percent, would apply to individuals earning $10 million or more a year. Based on recent figures, that is approximately 13,000 U.S. households. In addition, all taxpayers would be hit with a 2.2 percent tax on income and employers would have to cough up a 6.2 percent payroll tax.

Here's the exact breakdown of the proposed tax rate changes released by Sanders' campaign:

- 37 percent on income between $250,000 and $500,000
- 43 percent on income between $500,000 and $2 million
- 48 percent on income between $2 million and $10 million
- 52 percent on income above $10 million.

According to Sanders, a typical family earning $50,000 a year would save almost $6,000 annually. His camp claims that the average family currently pays $4,955 in premiums for private insurance and an additional $1,318 in deductibles, but a family of four earning $50,000 would pay only $466 per year under his program. Sanders added that employers would save almost $10,000 a year in health care costs and that the average annual cost for a worker with a family making $50,000 a year would drop from $12,591 to $3,100.

Besides the changes in the tax rate structure, Sanders would eliminate the preferential tax rates for long-term capital gains and qualified dividends for taxpayers in his new 37 percent tax bracket and above. These items would be taxed at ordinary income rates. Currently, the maximum effective tax rate for these taxpayers is 23.8 percent (a 20 percent tax rate on capital gains and dividends plus a 3.8 percent surtax on net investment income). The Vermont senator would also limit the benefit of itemizing deductions to a 28 percent rate.

Finally, Sanders would cut back the federal estate tax exemption from its current

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