

So much for Tory belief in the "Big Society"

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[The Scotsman](#) has reported:

LORD Laidlaw, the millionaire who bankrolled the Scottish Conservatives, is to give up his seat in the House of Lords in order to maintain his status as a tax exile. Palace of Westminster authorities last night confirmed that the Conservative peer had contacted them to declare he was "not prepared" to comply with new rules which forced peers to become full British residents. Faced with a multi-million-pound bill if he had chosen to do so, the Monaco-based peer has opted to surrender his seat, given to him in 2004.

This man funded the Tories in Scotland.

But hang on, that's not (they say) why he got his peerage. Take this from [the Scotsman from 2003](#):

BY THE time the great Scots-born businessman Andrew Carnegie died in 1919, he had donated almost all his billion pound steel fortune to good causes, setting a precedent for philanthropy which has rarely been matched.

Yesterday, Carnegie's extraordinary generosity was recalled as a modern day entrepreneur, reputed to be Scotland's richest man, signalled his intention to give up to £20 million a year to charity from 2006 onwards.

Who were they talking about. Ahh... the soon to be ennobled Irvine Laidlaw.

It is of course so much easier to give away untaxed money — it accumulates so much faster than that which is taxed.

And it's so easy to buy influence with untaxed money. There's just so much more of it to go round.

And when the question of paying tax comes up — it's so much easier to keep the trimmings and resign the obligations.

So much for Tories' commitment to the Big Society. It's a grand idea when untaxed. Pity that nasty tax has to get in the way of the commitment, eh?