

HST 203: U.S. History Sp18 (Escobar Meta 41002 43590)

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Forum 2 Taxation

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Taxation

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 3:41 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Taxation topic.

To make a new POST, always click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post. (Don't reply to your own posts in an attempt to make a new post.)

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Taxation

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Rousseau would have been proud of the 20th century



by William Perdomo - Thursday, April 19, 2018, 4:45 PM

Overall, do you find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with President Coolidge's position on taxation?

Like any other organism, government seeks to perpetuate itself at the expense of the people it is supposed to serve impartially. In his book, *Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics*, Woodrow Wilson likened government to a body whose organs must work in unison where they subordinate themselves to the seat of the will so that the body can survive as a whole. What he was arguing is a classic Left Wing concept of the Sovereign that was first articulated in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's the *Social Contract*. In that work, Rousseau began with an interesting line that should be familiar to those who have read Marx and Engles: "man was born free; but everywhere he is in chains!" Rousseau harkened back to a mythical pre-history (no doubt inspired by the story of the Garden of Eden) where mankind was a "noble savage," and wanting for nothing while needing little never endeavored to take it upon himself to exploit his neighbor because, as we all know from history, human beings are always satisfied with what they have and never covet what others own. With this fallacy of human nature in mind, Rousseau went on to build on it by assuming man's essence to be inherently good and that man himself, in a state of nature, was innately perfect. It was only when civilization came along, with its nasty concepts of private property, that man took on the chains of being part of society and thus polluted his perfect, and superlative, nature. Rousseau sums it up nicely in this quote that is quite lengthy, but succinct in terms of his articulation of this view:

"The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say this is mine and found people simple enough to believe him was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared, had some one pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: "Do not listen to this imposter. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one!"

In the *Social Contract*, the seminal work 18th century, and one that inspired the French Revolution as it became the Little Red Book of the time that was trumpeted by young radical revolutionaries, Rousseau concluded that a society must be one where people, not elected officials or monarchs, must be the executive authority in all matters. Since individualism was highly distrusted in this world view, since individualism leads to private property, authority, and then kingship or oligarchy, then there must be

private property, authority, and then kingship or oligarchy, then there must be essentially a kind of dictator (think Robespierre or Lenin; the guys who are always cloaking their viscousness under a mask of “the people.”) who is blessed in all his executive decisions because his actions are not his, but that of the people. Essentially, unity is the goal; not separateness in the form of individual liberty.

I mention all of this because it undergirds everything Wilson wrote, for he himself was not only distrustful of the individual citizen, but also disgusted at the disjointed, impartial, impersonal nature of the lack of direct action that occurs due to separation of powers in the US Constitution. Earlier in the course of this term, we have seen in the lectures evidence of the Progressive prejudice towards various communities because of their lack of education, intelligence, and the prevalence of their foreign religions that did not coalesce to create the ideal citizen in their eyes. Progressives like Wilson were not interested in a society where each group brought their own best to the table because what they believed to be so was not inline with the society American Progressives were trying to create and the morals they wished everyone to adhere to. Rather reminds me of a line from CS Lewis’ the Problem of Pain where he impugned these sorts of people for being moral as long as they are not being annoyed. Basically, for government to function, it must be sovereign, and for it to be the sovereign all other wills, including those of various ethnic, religious, groups; and especially that of the individual, must bend the knee to the absolute needs of government which, in its ideal state, personifies the ever changing, organic needs of society. A piece of musty, old parchment be damned!

But, like any organism, government must feed to survive to perpetuate itself. When it becomes self-aware, as it has, then its own continuity, not the desires of the cattle it preys on, becomes its priority. Sustenance comes in the form of tax money that is deducted from the labor, which is derived by expending the most precious, non-renewable, resource human beings possess: time. President Coolidge says as much when he says:

“Such a sum is difficult to comprehend. It represents all the pay of five million wage earners receiving five dollars a day, working 300 days in the year. If the government should add 100 million dollars of expense, it would represent four days more work of these wage earners. These are some of the reasons why I want to cut down public expense. I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government -- and more for themselves.”

And what did, and does, government do with this money? It employs workers who

themselves, like any other member of a large corporation, wants better pay, better benefits, and shorter hours for less work. It engorges itself on the lives of foreign peoples in wasteful, expensive wars to enrich its partners who gain immunity from the market and the Law as a result. It preaches a set of rules for all while doing everything it can to inoculate itself from the often destructive effects its policies inflict on the population.

I don't see how this submission to government is merited when they produce next to no services- and when they do, it's always inefficient and wasteful, not to mention that they deliver nothing of value in terms of products for the people who actually pay more than a third of their income in exchange for the security of.... What exactly? To be demonized for success? To be blamed for every wrong in society? To be told they have some kind of privilege, and that their individual lives are nothing but caricatures to dangle by demagogues to entertain envious masses for votes?

To me, the 20th century was the gradual establishment of the Sovereign Rousseau wrote about where a few Platonic masterminds take from some to give to others in the form of bribes so that they happily conform to making themselves, via colleges and public schools, as John Dewey envisioned, into just the kind of "citizens" who would gladly subordinate their own wants, needs, and wills into the specious and spurious notion of "the state," that horrible god where we now derive all value. What can I say other than Nietzsche called it when he, with a bit dread, declared that "God is dead."

Sum of ratings: **3 (1)**

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President Coolidge and Taxation

by [Peyton Tooze](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 4:03 PM

I find myself somewhat disagreeing with President Coolidge's position on taxation. He supports a laissez faire type of tax theory which would lower a person's taxes and lower government expenditures, this type of low tax with top earners only paying 25% income tax. "The Revenue Act of 1926 slashed the high income and estate taxes that progressives had pushed through congress during the First World War." (textbook ch.24, pg.789) These progressive laws had strengthened organized labor and improved conditions of women and children in the workplace and this act invalidated it. This left the welfare of the country to depend on, not the government but, the people. Reducing the the government's intervention on the economy could very well have led to The Great Depression which started a year after his second term ended. This ended up with the tax rates during The Great Depression to rise back up, this time to "63% for top earners." (Bradford Tax Institute) Many seem to find Coolidge's laissez faire government theory a good thing. It stopped a lot of unnecessary government spending and lowered the country's debt at the time. "Coolidge finished his second term with the lowest

misery index (unemployment plus inflation) of any president in the last one hundred years.”(coolidgefoundation.org) I personally believe that the government needs to be more hands-on than President Coolidge’s hands-off way of running things for the fact that it depends on “the people’s willingness to work hard, to be honest, and to live within their means.” This to me seems too unregulated and destined for failure.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Overall, do you find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with President Coolidge’s position on taxation?

by [Marissa Luther](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 9:40 PM

Overall, I do agree that with Coolidge’s position. In theory, I would love for everyone to pay less in taxes, and keep more of their money. My only issues are that I see a lot of value in the programs that federal aid (that comes from federal taxes) funds. When Coolidge says he wants to cut down government expenses (2:06), I think of everything I use funded by tax money, and I like those things! So while I wish people were paying less, I wish that the government was paying for things I see value in, and less in politician’s wages.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Conclusion on tax history

by [Reed Battaglia](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 10:38 PM

From looking at these graphs and videos, I have come to the conclusion that the top 1% are taxed the most in the 2010 graph. It seems if you work hard and make a lot of money you get taxed an unreal amount. Now I get when people say, well you make a lot of money so what’s “20.1%”(4th graph pg3). Well if you think about it, how would you feel if you work really hard and the government came and said great now that you did so great so we are going to take 20% or 30% of your income on federal taxes. Now I do not know about anyone else but that would piss me off. I personally think that the flat tax idea is the best idea. Why should someone who doesn’t work hard and just sit around get taxed way less than someone who works hard and makes a lot of money? To me, we are all equal and should be treated equal. Since we are all equal, we should all be taxed the same amount.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

**Re: Conclusion on tax history**by [Marissa Luther](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 11:21 PM

That's definitely a common approach to this issue. But the top 1% of earners today, and in 2010 make more money than they could ever spend in a lifetime. Taking thirty percent of my income now would cause me great economical strife, and I probably wouldn't be able to support myself financially at all. However a billionaire would suffer way less.

Also, you say that "someone who doesn't work hard and just sit[s] around" should get taxed more. However, those taxes are income taxes, and those people aren't sitting around, they are working. It's being taken out of their paycheck.

According to the chart, in 2010, the average person in the top 1% made \$1,434,900 a year and paid 29.4%. But, the 96th to 98%'s average was only \$286,400. That's over 1 million dollars difference a year. So, the top 1% can definitely afford to pay the 30%, but, since there is such a drastic change between the top two brackets, maybe we need to consider lowering the tax amount for the second top bracket, because there is more of a chance of them spending that money, and actually using it.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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**Taxation fluctuation**by [Jordan Lopez](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:52 PM

When examining the charts above I do see an increase in tax percentage go up as there is an increase in taxable earning. When examining the Wikipedia chart you can see that there is a fluctuation in tax percentages usually around war time and tax breaks. Increase tax percentages during wartime and decrease during tax breaks. During Bush's tax cuts in 2003 the tax rate was 35% and by the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 the tax rate was 39.6% which means taxes increased after a tax cut. When you examine the chart of the history of tax rates it looks like a stock chart. There are numerous of increases and decreases, however I do notice during World War 2 there was a high peak where taxes reached over 90% and taxes never fell below 70 percent following the decades after. It wasn't until around the Regan tax era that you find the percentage dropping from around 70% to around 50%. I feel numerous effects play a role and as Calvin Coolidge says in his video, "If the government should add 100 million dollars of expense, it would represent four days more work of these wage earners". Take away the factor of inflation and you will find that the government is

spending more with higher military budgets to new programs and so on. So reading this charts I do compare them to the stock market because we don't know what lies ahead. Influence of Government spending could be things such as war to what Political party hold the most influence in Congress to the Presidency. I'm curious to see in the future the fluctuating curvature of the tax percentage rate.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Does the Three Brothers Video Have a Strong Political Bias?

by [Sam Reposa](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:54 PM

The Example of the Three Brothers is a very interesting, heavily biased political commentary on our tax system. While on a simple level, the video helped me understand how different income groups are taxed, I had a few problems with the analogy—the main one being that it assumes everyone has the same IQ, skills, and opportunities, when in reality, that's not quite the case (video, 0:12). I feel like the creators of this video don't agree with our current progressive income tax system, and they don't think the rich should be taxed higher than people who have incomes and make choices similar to Tom and Dick. Harry made more money than Tom and Dick because he worked harder for that money, and he made different choices than Tom and Dick; therefore, I agree that he shouldn't be taxed more than the formers. However, not every rich person in our country gets rich the same way Harry does, and we don't all have the same skills, IQ, and opportunities as each other—so, is this video really an ethical, or accurate representation/analogy of our tax system? For some reason, I feel like I'm being deceived.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Does the Three Brothers Video Have a Strong Political Bias?

by [Marissa Luther](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 11:36 PM

I really agreed with you! I definitely learned from the video, but most of the richest people were born wealthier than a lot of people. Not to mention that working 60 hours a week seems pretty unhealthy for most people. It definitely seemed like the video makers had a political bias, and were trying to push an agenda. And it was effective, because I connected with the richest brother, and didn't want him to pay more than his share. I'd also like to know how they all bought houses in the same neighborhood, even though Tom made only \$20,000 annually.

Also, the street project was something the brothers chose to do together. Most of the tax money everyone pays goes to things citizens don't want to pay for. And

when the video makes a point about now everyone has the "exact same benefits" (About 3 minutes in). Not everyone benefits the same from tax money, but it's still necessary to pay it.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

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Three Brothers

by [Jacob Spriggs](#) - Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:55 PM

The Three Brothers video was very interesting to watch and I liked the way it made our countries income tax easier to understand how the tax is divided between the three classes. Although it is truthful, it is obvious that this is coming from a biased perspective of someone who disagrees with how much the people who make the most money have to pay. It also makes sense why the majority of U.S. citizens are okay with the federal income tax.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

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Three Brothers Video and Taxation

by [Peyton Tooze](#) - Monday, April 23, 2018, 11:50 AM

Watching the Three Brothers video helped my understanding of the current progressive tax code. The one who worked 60 hours per week (Harry) did so by choice to better his life and increase savings for retirement, had to pay 80% of the neighborhood expenditures. Compared to his other brothers who paid 20% and 0%. This showed that the extra effort put in by Harry, which resulted in more income, ultimately haunted him when it came to paying for their neighborhood expenditures. It doesn't seem fair to me just like it doesn't seem fair to Harry. Of course, because Tom and Dick had the majority vote, Tom and Dick agreed on the way to pay for the expenditures that cost them the least amount of money. (Not something I would do to my brother) Although it doesn't seem fair they had a good point that this was fair because this is how the government taxes people. This leads me to question just how fair our tax system actually is. If I'm making enough money and not saving for retirement and working part-time like Tom, what is my incentive to make more if I'm just going to have to pay more to taxes? Dick had the seemingly most reasonable offer with all three paying 12% of their income so each could reap the same benefits from the neighborhood improvements. The tax bracket system is seeming very unfair from the top earners that pay 39.6% of their income to taxes yet reap the same government benefits such as roads and parks. Overall, the Three Brothers video was an eye-opener.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3

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**Re: Three Brothers Video and Taxation**by [Vanessa Heilmann](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 12:08 AM

In reading this quote from your response, “this leads me to question just how fair our tax system actually is”, it makes me realize there are a lot of us that aren’t educated enough about our tax system. Honestly this forum opened up my eyes a lot. I think it’s very important for us to educate ourselves and learn as much as we can about where our tax dollar is going. We can however see the public services that are tax dollar has helped create. Think about our state parks, the tax dollars that have gone into making them safer and more enjoyable for public use, not to mention all the others. I think a big part of our tax dollars are right in front of us everyday.

Also, coming from working a pretty high salary job for the first time ever, I realized how much more money I was getting taken out of my paycheck. Yes it was a shock at first. But in reality you still are making more money. More money to enjoy life with, or pay debts off, or buy that new truck you’ve always wanted. That's the incentive to work harder. Of course people can choose whatever amount of work they want, but when you say “what is my incentive to make more if I’m just going to have to pay more to taxes?”, to me sounds unassertive. If you don’t desire those things, than sure, live your life like you want to, but you can’t expect to have your whole front yard redone and not pay for it like Tom. (The three brother’s movie) That’s the incentive to work harder.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Keep Breaking Windows**by [William Perdomo](#) - Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 1:54 PM

One of the interesting points Coolidge makes is the following:

This means that the farmer is doomed to provide a certain amount of money out of the sale of his produce, no matter how low the price, to pay his taxes. The manufacturer, the professional man, the clerk, must do the same from their income. The wage earner, often at a higher rate when compared to his earning, makes his contribution, perhaps not directly but indirectly, in the advanced cost of everything he buys.

The expenses of government reach everybody.

Taxes take from everyone a part of his earnings and force everyone to work for a certain part of his time for the government.

The main problem I have with taxation in general, aside from the coercion required to extract resources from private citizens who have no such power, is the perception that only the government can do a positive good in the economy whereas those in the free market are only in it for themselves and will just hoard every penny they make like a greedy Norse Dragon. If the government does not step in and tax the wealthy, or anyone they consider such, then everyone at the “bottom” will lose out in some way. I find this patently false and history has bore it out. There’s a weird assumption that the economy is a zero-sum game, and I blame the prevalence of Marxist theory for this, that if one person has a dollar then that automatically assumes someone else had to lose one. In short, the source of wealth is measured in currency rather than in useful things. There’s no concept of creating wealth. Fiat currency is just that, paper; but machines; crops; computers, and all the skills that are required to proliferate and maintain them create their own value. The amount of currency required for an iPhone for example is merely the value society has placed, via the market, on that particular product. Without the incentive of accruing wealth then there would be no inventions; and no inventions means no innovations; no innovations, then no value; and if there is no value then there is no growth as a result of market resources flowing into the proliferation of the firm that created the product in question, or the services everyone desires. Without all of the the above, then no jobs; and no jobs means no wages, thus wealth proliferation among those who would directly benefit from the growth of a particular company never occurs which means no new tax payers and no new high income earners who may, if the incentives are right, create their own wealth in their own field of expertise. This “invisible hand of the market” as Adam Smith would name it in his book, the Wealth of Nations, is a property that emerges out of the free exchange of individuals. It’s the only thing that can possible encourage the best; while discouraging the worst in a free society. Obviously, if the government is in bed, as it often is these days, with one or more industries then they quickly acquire inoculation from the “invisible hand” and are free to gouge, cheat, and censor (see Facebook, Google, Twitter) their customers while being exempted from all regulation because they have resources political campaigns would like to utilize in the future.

This delicate phenomena of nature (the invisible hand) is destroyed when the bungling, clumsy, often corrupt, hand of the government gets involved and attempts to pick winners and losers using the broad jack-hammer of taxation. Frederick Bastiat, a 17th century economic philosopher, in his book, The Law, put forth what he called “the broken window theory,” which was an allegory for how government intervention

actually hurts the market and those who benefit from it, and I don't mean the rich, but everyone who has to transact on some level. The essence of the treatise uses a storeowner and his son, the latter of which breaks one of the storefront windows. In order to fix the window, the storeowner must call a glazer to install a new pane of glass that costs him five francs (this was written in the 17th century remember), which is a good thing because he's keeping the glazer industry in business. However, by paying the glazer five francs to fix a window that should never have been broken in the first place, the storeowner is depriving everyone else in his community those five francs. It could have gone to the theater owner to see a play (and subsequently everyone involved in the production); to the owner of the local delicatessen for a treat (now he can afford to hire more people since he has more customers); the bookstore for a new book which would serve to make the author, as well as the book store owner, richer which means more authors writing more books for people to enjoy. The idea here is that the child who broke the window is the government because in order to keep other people employed, such as the glazers, then they must run around breaking windows because how would the glazers get work otherwise! In this Bastiat introduces another concept called, "what is seen; and what is unseen," and this basically illustrates that short term solutions do not accrue to a resolution of long term problems, but we take them as solutions because we can see the immediate benefits, and thus our need for prompt gratification is satisfied. Sure, we broke your windows but what's five francs to you when it keeps the glazers in business? Do you want to the glazers to be out of work, you unfeeling fiend? No, however, in order to keep that one group of people employed, who may be a constituent of the Mayor since they're getting all these government set-asides, they must be subsidized at the expense of the storeowner's productivity. What we see is glazers working to fix windows that the government is breaking for them to fix (taxation) without seeing the long term effect (the unseen) of countless other industries not receiving the benefits of wealth that would normally be due them because of the quality of their products or the effectiveness of their services. In short, excessive taxation short circuits the free market's ability to pick true winners and losers, meaning, that those who make shoddy merchandise or provide dishonest, even criminal, levels of service will be starved of resources while those who do the opposite will have it directed their way. To sum up, if I am a storeowner who is living in constant fear that my son (the government) is going to smash up my windows, then I will by necessity have to constantly keep five, ten, fifteen, twenty francs in reserve(taxation) that would normally get transacted away in the community. Since I am hoarding money due to uncertainty that means someone else isn't getting it for writing a good book; making a fine treat; or putting on a good play- thus more of those things are not created and less jobs are available for those who would participate in creating them. Obviously this is an allegory but multiply the shop owner by a hundred-million and try to extrapolate the effect that would have on the economy if everyone was afraid of marauding boys running around breaking windows...

Going back to Coolidge, if the worker is working half of his time for government in the form of taxed wages then that means he's not working for someone else, i.e., himself, or the community at large. His productivity is being broken in two and he is instead both subsidizing the government, which produces nothing other than force, or he is aiding the government to subsidize industries or people who are diametrically opposed to his interests. He is not investing that lost income in his own talent to create his own company or to manufacture his own product; and if he is not dynamic or intuitive enough to create something of his own, then his resources are not directed, through his own free will, to a person, a group of people, or a firm who does. In short, everyone loses out...except the glazers.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

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The three brothers video, a skewed impression of progressive tax

by [Vanessa Heilmann](#) - Wednesday, April 25, 2018, 3:14 PM

In the Three Brothers video clip, when I first watched it I said wow, that's not fair. Why should the brother have to pay more for improvements that all three brothers are enjoying equally. "They were raised in the same home, with the same parents, had the same IQ, same skills and same opportunities." (The Three Brothers video clip) Of course that sounds unfair, but when I look at the whole picture, I think this video is reducing that everyone's the same. To me it's the Republican point of view, we all have the same opportunity. In the video, Tom, the low income brother says, "But my wife and I want to enjoy ourselves now, not 20 years from now", that is an extreme judgement on the lower class. I think it's a small percentage of people who really are looking at it like that. In reality the majority of people who have a high income or are wealthier had the privilege of receiving a great education, or their parents were rich, but rarely everyone else has had these equal opportunities. When you look at it on the surface it seems unfair, but it really isn't a level playing field, it discounts privileges that a lot of the "top percent" have had. It is assuming that people have a choice about making less money cause they don't want to, "they're lazy or choose not to work as much". But in reality that is not the case for most low income people.

When you look at the whole picture and what it takes to live a baseline life, it takes food, water, shelter, healthcare and schooling. So the people who barely make enough to survive, for them to get hit with a tax bill could make the difference of putting food on the table, having health insurance, or paying rent even. When you barely make enough to survive the tax burden could be catastrophic. Where as if you are in the middle class it could affect your life a little more, maybe you don't get that vacation you wanted, or you can't buy the fancy extras in your life, but still could have all the necessities. For a wealthy person that's not going to change their life much at all. They

necessities. For a wealthy person that's not gonna change their life much at all. They still can live the quality of life that they choose. It may affect their wealth increasing substantially more but won't effect then dyer basics in life.

In having a Progressive tax this allows the government to bring in the most revenue possible because they can increase the amount on the people who can afford to pay it. It's a benefit to the government because they bring in more revenue, but it also is a benefit to the people. The more you have, the less paying a portion affects your life. In paying less the poor and middle class can still survive, live a somewhat comfortable life, while still paying taxes and being apart of the economy. They don't have to pay a disproportionate share that they can't afford. It can improve the spending power of lower income earners to potentially stimulate the market more. It also protects the taxpayer at hard times. If someone is hurt and making less money they won't go into debt even more because they have to pay these high taxes. It prevents political and social instability by limiting the gap between the classes. Lastly, it allows for the government to provide some assistance for social welfare programs. In Conclusion, I feel that the three brothers video is portraying an invalid impression of the progressive tax code.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Three Brothers not telling the whole story

by [Hayley Allen](#) - Thursday, April 26, 2018, 3:58 PM

The Three Brother video illustrates how income tax is divided up based off incomes however I don't think it accurately portrays the lower income-brother. Whether someone decides to save all their money or spend it more freely, the income tax should not take the same percent as someone who is making 3x, 4x, or 20x more. If a person were making over a million dollars then the larger percent of income tax taken would still leave them with enough money left over to live a comfortable life. I understand that it looks unfair for someone who may be working harder than another but they should still not take the same percent otherwise that would be all their money.

The example of the Three Brothers does influence how I understand the income tax by giving me a visual of how the percentages are divided up. I don't think it influences my views on saving, spending or personal choice because how people choose to use their money is their choice. If people were taught more extensive planning and organization of budgeting and spending then maybe people wouldn't spend as much as they do and possibly save more. Though I know how difficult it can be to even think long-term

and possibly save more. Though I know how difficult it can be to even think long term when one is living paycheck to paycheck. Also there are so many other factors that one has to pay for such as student loans, medical bills, or other expenses that makes them unable to save their money. Therefore the three brothers story makes the lower-income brother look careless with his money however there is not enough information to understand his full situation.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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Imagine a life public services.....

by [Vanessa Heilmann](#) - Thursday, April 26, 2018, 11:38 PM

Coolidge is saying the working people should work less for the government and keep their dollars by working more for themselves. That “the expenses of the government reach everybody.” I agree that everyone pays into the government systems, but for good reason. I think people take for granted what a lot of our tax dollars go to. Without taxes we wouldn’t have police, fire stations, ambulances, public schools, sidewalks, paved roads, sewage, and countless more public services that we depend on daily. I myself am guilty of taking those for granted. I mean really, imagine a life without all those services. To not have the ability to pick up the phone and call your local fire department when your home is burning to the ground, sure we’ll just depend on our neighbors to put it out. Oh wait, I live in rural Eugene and the roads aren’t paved out here so no one can drive, and there’s not even public transportation. I’m sure you get the point, we would not be the civilized nation we are today. I disagree when he says, “Until we can re-establish a condition under which the earnings of the people can be kept by the people, we are bound to suffer a very severe and distinct curtailment of our liberty” (Coolidge video clip). I feel the opposite, to me those are freedoms that we have! Cutting the public expense so people could pay less would result in those services diminishing. I’m proud of the fact that I can contribute to our civilization. I think of it as paying our part of the bargain in this social contract called life! I can appreciate him wanting the people to be able to hold on to their money more, but I think it is a naive way to look at our system, and I think we would fail without it. As Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “Taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society.” (Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1902 to 1932, and as Acting Chief Justice of the United States from January–February 1930.) (Timescolonist.com) That is the statement I hold to be true.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

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**Agreeing or Disagreeing with President Coolidge**by [Reed Battaglia](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 4:44 PM

I agree with President Coolidge's position on taxation. I think he made a very important point in the beginning of his speech when he said that all people need to pay taxes and it doesn't matter what your profession is. Everyone has to pay equal taxes as citizens of America. I agree with his claim at time 2:15 in his speech when he said that we should work less for the government and more for ourselves and receive rewards. I agree, i think that we owe some money to the government, but I also believe that we deserve to treat ourselves after working hard. Another claim that he made at time 3:05 was also very significant. He said that taxes are a must and they come first and everyone has to pay them. I believe that all people are equal and we should not discriminate. Every person in America deserves equal taxation because we are all trying our best to earn money to support ourselves and our families.

Sum of ratings: **1 (1)**

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Three Brothers**by [Reed Battaglia](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 4:45 PM

After watching the Three Brothers video, it just continues to make me think that if you make a lot of money in this country, you will get have to give up a large amount of your money to the government. I still stand with my belief that taxation should be equal for every person. It would be unfair if I worked hard and made a lot of money each year, and someone who worked less than I did doesn't have to give up as much money. I understand the need for taxes. I am not against taxation, I am against the idea that people are being treated unequally when it comes to taxes. In the video, the two brothers didn't like how they all had to pay equally to clean the street and put fences up. The brother and his wife who had been working many hours and saving a little each month got caught up and had to pay a large amount, while the other brother paid a small amount and the other brother paid none. I don't understand why the brother who paid nothing still got to live there and reap the benefits. Respectfully speaking, I don't think that it is fair to reward someone who does not work that much and then take money from someone who is more hard-working and does all they can to make a living. Ultimately, this video has helped strengthen my belief that taxation should be equal for all.

Sum of ratings: **1 (1)**

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Internet News source for taxation**



by [Reed Battaglia](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 5:39 PM

After reading the article, "Tax cuts work because you do a better job than government spending your money", I discovered that the author, Diane Black, shares the same taxation beliefs as President Coolidge. Fox news is known as a conservative group of people. She started the article off with mentioning, "By now, you've heard "fairer, flatter, simpler" repeated over and over. It was our goal with the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to reform an outdated tax code that – over the last three decades – had become absurdly complicated and no longer worked for our economy."(foxnewsarticles). This excerpt from her article shows how she shares the same beliefs that President Coolidge does. He believed that taxation should be fair for every person living in America, and so does Diane Black. In this article, Diane Black explains about state tax rather than talking about federal tax like President Coolidge did. She focuses on the state tax of Tennessee. The reason that state tax in Tennessee is going up is because they are building new projects like buildings and new public parks. The home tax in Tennessee also went up "3.5%", which is astonishing to me. She also makes the nationwide claim that "our nation's largest employer, Walmart, raised wages by \$2 for hourly employees working full time, along with cash bonuses and new benefits" (Black). This will benefit Walmart workers because it will cause a ripple effect. In other words, these workers are going to be able to save a little more money and will be able to buy more things which will help our country's states that have sales tax. People will buy more things which means more taxes, and this will bring more money to the state. Overall, Diane Black of Fox News is for equal taxation.

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Coolidge and Optimism

by [Sam Reposa](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 10:53 PM

It is very clear in President Calvin Coolidge's speech that he has a very conservative laissez faire, "invisible hand" approach when it comes to economics, the marketplace, and taxes. Coolidge makes his conservative appeal clear when he says "I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government -- and more for themselves" (Video, 2:07). I think they idea of paying less taxes is great; however, my concern when it comes to paying less taxes, is I'm not sure where else our country is going to get the money. At first, the idea of giving less of my earnings back to the government sounds rather appealing, but when I think of the bigger picture—that being, the country's major deficit, I also have to think about how I am doing my part as a citizen of this country.

Coolidge makes taxes sound like the end of the world when he says “Until we can reestablish a condition under which the earnings of the people can be kept by the people, we are bound to suffer a very severe and distinct curtailment of our liberty” (Video, 2:22). As much pain as paying my taxes brought to my bank account, I think calling taxes a “severe and distinct curtailment to our liberty” is just a little dramatic. The way I was raised to understand taxes, is that they’re a small price to pay, to have the privilege of living in this country. While one might argue: is it really a privilege to live in the country, today due to our economy, and administration? To that I would argue, yes: although it can seem sometimes like our freedom, liberty, and privacy are at risk. In comparison to many other places in the world, we are still very much a free country.

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An explanation and protest to taxation

by [Vanessa Heilmann](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 11:07 PM

“Throughout history, every organized society had some form of government. In free societies, the goals of government have been to protect individual freedoms and to promote the well-being of society as a whole.”

“Two good examples are national defense and state or local police protection. Everyone benefits from these services, and the most practical way to pay for them is through taxes, instead of a system of service fees. Other examples are the management of our natural resources, such as our water supply or publicly-owned land, and the construction of hospitals or highways. Taxes are collected to pay for planning these services and to finance construction or maintenance.”

(www.treasury.gov) That is a statement from the US department of treasury, yes it’s a government site, but I thought it’d be interesting to see their explanation of where our tax dollars go to. As in one of my posts I had explained the importance to me of playing my part in helping these public services get funded. Their explanation seemed to validate my views in my original post, “Imagine a life without public services.”

An extremely different view I found on (www.theguardian.com) was an English and History professor from Stony Brook University in Long Island who decided under Trump’s presidency he will not pay his taxes this year. He says “Trump is the dealbreaker.” “My tax money will be going towards putting up a wall on the Mexican border instead of helping sick people. It will contribute to the destruction of the environment and maybe more nuclear weapons. I think there will be a redistribution of wealth from the middle class to the wealthy elite and Trump’s campaign for the working man and woman was an absolute fraud. If you pay taxes you are implicated in the system,” As much as I don’t support “Trump’s Wall” I think this is a very anarchist way

of acting out against our system. I don't believe that it is the way to make a stand against Trump's actions. I think it's ignorant to assume that is where all our tax dollars would be going to, and believe it to be somewhat of a cop out. He is following the actions "of one of his heroes, Henry David Thoreau, who refused to pay tax that would fund wars and slavery and was jailed for it in 1846. Of course people can protest in whichever way they want, but I disagree that this is the best course of action.

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The interesting changes in taxation throughout the decades

by [Vanessa Heilmann](#) - Friday, April 27, 2018, 11:40 PM

In looking at the Wikipedia Income tax page, there is a lot of interesting information. The "History of income tax rates adjusted for inflation chart" intrigued me the most. Looking at the first bracket from 1913-1917 it didn't change much, but the top bracket jumped exponentially by 60% in 1918. The amount of brackets also increased significantly from 1913-1918. In 1916 the Progressive tax started to come into play and shortly after in 1917 WWI had to be financed. In 1922 it dropped enormously in both top and first brackets, but the number of brackets didn't drop much. Then in 1923 Coolidge came into office and the rates and brackets lowered a small amount. Throughout these years a lot of major changes have happened to these tax rates. It shows that the finances of the wars all played a major part in the increase of the amount of brackets and the top bracket especially. The other factor that looks pretty common when fluctuations occurred was dependent on the different President in office and their different views on taxation. What interests me the most is how significant the drop from 1952 to 2013 and all the fluctuations between. I think there are a lot of other factors such as inflation that come into play as well. Our income tax rates today are pretty low to what it was back then, but other taxes have gone way up (first Graph) which helps play a part in paying for social security. It is really quite fascinating to see each time period and to pinpoint what factors came into play.

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