# HST 203: U.S. History Sp19 (Escobar)



## Forum 2

## Taxation

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The Role of the U.S. in the World ▶

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**Taxation**

by Joe Escobar - Friday, April 19, 2019, 11:48 AM

This thread is for discussions on the Taxation topic.

To make your POSTS, 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.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the part number, the source, or the questions you are addressing.  Do NOT simply leave it RE: Taxation

Sum of ratings: -

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**The Progressive Tax Code**

by Matthew Berry - Sunday, April 21, 2019, 1:45 PM

**I thoroughly enjoyed the video of the Three Brothers.  I think it is a fairly close representation of the reality of life.  Everyone is given an option in how they want to live their lives. This does present the issue that it can seem extremely unfair when you are paying higher taxes due to the fact that you have made wise choices in your life.  choosing to work harder, educate yourself, and build a career that pays better. It can be frustrating when you see that others are not trying nearly as hard yet a still reaping the rewards of those that have done better for themselves.**

**Obviously, it is a huge difference in lifestyle when you have a household of two income earners compared to a household with one earner who in the case of the Three Brothers works only half time.  As Tom brought out in the video, "You can work and save all that you want, but me and my wife and I want to enjoy ourselves now not 25 years from now" (see Three Brothers Video clip @ 2:20).  His values and priorities are completely different than Harry's.  The fact is that because of Harry and his wife's decision to work hard and save, when they retire, they are going to have the freedom to enjoy the fruits of there labor.  They are also setting their children up for a successful start, and will be able to financially help their children later on in life.  Unlike Tom who isn't saving or working enough to even be able to collect enough from social security to pay for anything once retired.  In the example below I calculated the retirement benefits using the Social Security Benefits Calculator (see ssa.gov benefits calculator); however, this is an approximate amount based on single earner annual income.  This is just to give you an idea of the difference in the amount that the brothers will receive once they are old enough to retire.**

**Example: if all the brothers retired at 62 years of age this would be their approximate monthly SSI Benefit amount.**

**Tom makes $25,000.00 annually his retirement benefit will be $754.00 a month**

**Dick makes $75,000.00 annually his retirement benefit will be $1,435.00 a month**

**Harry makes $150,000.00 annually his retirement benefit will be $2,093.00 a month**

**You can see Harry will receive almost 3 times the amount in retirement as his brother tom, not to mention all of the money he will have in saving, and the returns from his bonds and so on.**

**I think that the biggest problem that arises with the Progressive Tax Code are the households that fall into being at the very bottom of the next higher tax bracket. Look at the chart I included below to see what I mean. (nerdwallet.com Federal Income Tax Rates)**

**2018-2019 Federal Income Tax Brackets and New Tax Rates**

| Tax rate | Taxable income bracket | Tax owed |
|---|---|---|
| **10%** | $0 to $9,525 | 10% of taxable income |
| **12%** | $9,526 to $38,700 | $952.50 plus 12% of the amount over $9,525 |
| **22%** | $38,701 to $82,500 | $4,453.50 plus 22% of the amount over $38,700 |
| **24%** | $82,501 to $157,500 | $14,089.50 plus 24% of the amount over $82,500 |
| **32%** | $157,501 to $200,000 | $32,089.50 plus 32% of the amount over $157,500 |
| **35%** | $200,001 to $500,000 | $45,689.50 plus 35% of the amount over $200,000 |
| **37%** | $500,001 or more | $150,689.50 plus 37% of the amount over $500,000 |

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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**3 Brother Tax Video: Help? Hurt? Influence?**

by Cameron Lindsey - Sunday, April 21, 2019, 2:42 PM

This video is interesting because it focuses on three people who happen to have the same job, work for the same wage, and have identical domestic situations. If these three brothers accurately represented the United States, then I would argue that it isn't fair that one family works less, and therefor not only has to pay less and in fact doesn't have to pay anything at all for the neighborhood renovations. However, this video suggests that everyone is working on an even playing field, and that a person's wage automatically reflects the amount of hours they have worked. Seeing that this simply isn't how things work, I wouldn't say that this helps my view of taxation in a healthy way.

Here's a different scenario: Say the wealthiest brother made some nice moves in the stock market and was able to purchase a nice beachside hotel. He pays people to manage and keep the hotel in shape, only has to do a little work himself, and profits $150k/year. The middle brother works construction for 40 hours/week and brings home $70k/year. The third brother works for a grocery store for 60 hours/week at minimum wage and brings home 30K/year. Let's suppose all 3 brothers have families: The wealthy brother is working the least, and living the most comfortably. The middle brother is working hard, and is able to sustain a decent middle-class lifestyle. The last brother is constantly working, while doing a necessary job (I'd hope we'd all agree we need grocery store clerks) is buried in debt due to inflation vs. lack of wage increase, and can barely provide for his children. Would it be fair for the wealthiest brother to demand equal contribution for the neighborhood renovations then? After he'd been able to relax for the entire year and still bring home double what the middle brother did? Should all three brothers have an equal tax rate on their incomes in this situation? I don't think the poorer 2 brothers could even afford to renovate the neighborhood. I think this would be a better example of why we have the progressive tax code in place because it is more realistic than our first example.

Some will say well gee, the poorer two brothers should have been smart and invested money too. Yet in reality, we NEED construction workers, grocery store clerks, etc. I guess we could call these "variables" in an experiment but it's important to pay attention to details and not look at things so black/white. If it really were just up to us how much we wanted to work, and we were all able to make the same wage doing the same job, then yea I'd say the progressive tax code is crap. But because this video misrepresents the majority of America, I do not find it helpful.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**The 3 Brothers: maybe rich isn't the way to go**
by Anna McNutt - Sunday, April 21, 2019, 3:16 PM

Before watching the video of the three brothers, I had just figured that the tax system made sense. The rich pay more because they have more and the poorer pay less, but it’s more than that.

When trying to divide the bill for repairs, the rich brother suggested they all pay an equal amount, splitting the bill in 3 even parts. This plan seems unfair for the other two, especially the poorest brother because that is a much bigger percentage of his income. When the middle brother suggested they each pay 18%, I thought that was fair. They would all be giving an equal percentage relative to their income. When the last brother gave his suggestion, that is just like the US tax system, again it seemed unfair to me. The richest brother would have to pay about 80% of the bill, and the poorest one would pay nothing. (3 brothers video)

The fact that one of them would pay nothing for something they were all equally benefiting from seems crazy. In this situation, the richer brother simply worked harder than his brothers to have that money, and now he was being punished for that work. So in the grand scheme of things, those multi millionaires that we expect to pay 80% of the bill are in a way being punished for their work. This almost makes me not want to be too rich because a huge portion of my money will be taken away.

I think that it’s easy to look at someone with millions of dollars and expect them to share because they couldn’t possibly need all of it. However, they did earn that money.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: The 3 Brothers: maybe rich isn't the way to go**
by David Galbreath - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 10:31 PM

I agree with much of what you said, but I have a problem with the video's hypothetical situation. Why do they act as if there is a bill that totals a finite cost? the way I see it, the tax system is simply taking our money to pay for services, city maintenance, roads, and parks, etc.  I don't know about you, but no one has ever handed me a bill for the people to divide up equally.

I see the point the video is trying to make. However, I feel its wrong. a flat tax, (that was suggested by the second brother I believe), an even 12 percent, makes sense because on paper everyone is taking an equal hit and their problem will be solved. And I am not sorry about this, but I feel zero sympathies for the brother making 25,000 a year. He is making a comfortable salary to live but if the neighborhood is too expensive he can either A) move. or B) find a way to gain income.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: The 3 Brothers: maybe rich isn't the way to go**
by Anna McNutt - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 11:44 PM

I definitely get your point. It does make sense to take an equal percentage of money from each person, because its just equal. However, as I look more into the tax system I get why we do what we do just a little more. I think that after a certain point a fixed percentage isn't "equal" anymore. What I mean by this is, 12% of $40,000 is $4,800. But 12% of $10,000,000 is $1,200,000. Obviously these percentages are the same, my point is that for someone making a pretty good salary, $4800 is a decent chunk of money to be taken away. To a multi millionaire, that 1.2 million being taken away won't hurt them. It was brought up in class I believe that Bill Gates was for high taxes on the rich like himself. Maybe if they all felt this way, the tax system would be less complicated and controversial.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**More notes on the video:**
by Cameron Lindsey - Sunday, April 21, 2019, 4:25 PM

In case anyone is curious about the origin of the 3 brothers video: it was made by PragerU, an American right-wing nonprofit funded by multi multi millionaires and fracking billionaires. All the info is here: (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PragerU) Just thought I'd add this in case anyone is curious whether a video like this is backing some sort of agenda.

I'd also like to point out that according to our current federal income tax rates, the "rich" ($150k/year) brother would actually pay 22% and the poor brother would pay 12% according to the IRS tax breakdown
==> https://www.efile.com/tax-rate/federal-income-tax-rates/

Does anyone really feel like a real estate investor who makes $5mil a year is working 50x harder than a lawyer who makes $100k/year? Are salaries a direct result of time/energy/importance? Is everyone, like these brothers, truly equal? Do we all have the same IQ, abilities, & circumstances? If no, then why should we have a flat tax rate?

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Maximillian Prentice - Tuesday, April 23, 2019, 4:59 PM

Cameron,

Thank you for posting this! It is important to factor in bias when interpreting information and really paints a clear picture as to why the clip described graduated tax rates as it did. It is easy to see the relationship between lowered tax rates and Republican presidencies on the table showing taxes rates throughout history and I feel this has a strong connection with the makers of the video. Of course the billionaire oil-tycoons would advocate for lower taxes! It is also interesting to think about the fact that the rich folks/big businessmen are the ones that have the real pull in the government.

Thank again for extra insight into the video.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Cameron Lindsey - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 12:21 PM

Maximillian,

Yeah of course! It's always important to know the background information. Those poor billionaires ☹

Sum of ratings:0 (1) 0

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Will Taylor - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 5:02 PM

*"...then why should we have a flat tax rate?*

Because if we tried to take into account everyone's differences, the world would fall into chaos. Yes, a real estate investor making 5 mil a year probably doesn't work 50 times harder than a lawyer making 50k a year. Then how come the lawyer didn't go into real estate? And on that note, why didn't the real estate investor become an entrepreneur of his own corporate retail agency making 100 million a year? Well, most likely because they either didn't want to, or more likely they thought they couldn't do it. Whether it be because of a lacking skill set, the luck involved, or even if they thought that their skin color, gender, or sexual orientation would keep them from obtaining their goal. But why shouldn't we? Well then let's have women pay 22% less for everything, let's

have all contraception be free for African Americans, and let's have  college tuition to any school be free for children with single mothers. The point is, we can't account for everyone's differences, and if we tried to, then we'd only make things worse.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Cameron Lindsey - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 10:21 PM

In response to Will...

You say accounting for everyone's differences will "only make things worse" but you don't really give any examples for why that would be. Accounting for peoples differences is exactly what we should be doing, seeing that everyone is different and lives under different circumstances, and this is why we have a progressive tax code in the first place. I don't even like the term "progressive tax code" because it's been more or less the same for the last 20 years given a few %'s. But, thats another matter. Anyway, we aren't even talking about "everyone's differences," we're talking about general tax brackets, each representing giant sums of people.

Looking further at my example: The lawyer is the lawyer because people are passionate about things beyond income, and they shouldn't be held to the same fiscal standards as someone who just uses money to make more money, aka the majority of the top 5%. The real estate investor was just an example (and maybe a bad one) of someone who earns figures astronomically. Money makes money, but only past a point where one has more than enough to live comfortably. Those who have made enough to sit on their ass and watch their accounts grow should be taxed at higher rates. Once again: circumstances--they matter.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Will Taylor - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 8:57 AM

In response to Cameron,

I thought I made the example clear, but I guess it didn't get my point across. I mentioned that if we did try to take everyones differences into account, I said "let's have women pay 22% less for everything, let's have all contraception be free for African Americans, and let's have college tuition to any school be free for children with single mothers." What I was trying to convey with this example, is that the only way to look at peoples difference is in groups, not as individuals. It would be next to impossible for the government to evaluate the differences of every person in, and coming in to the U.S. So it would have to be done in groups (which is already being done. ie. tax brackets). These groups would probably be like in my example, women, colored people, single moms, and other such categories. Then why not your sexual orientation, why not attractiveness, why not whether or not you have a dog named Doug with laryngitis who needs $500 medication every month? The point being, people could keep claiming disadvantages, no matter how insignificant, and what we'd be left with, is the left's ladder of marginalization, where anyone can claim to be anything. This is the main reason I believe differences should be kept out of government, economics, capitalism, and taxes.

Looking at your second point. Of course people are passionate about what they do, and that plays a large role in what they end up becoming. Again, I tried to imply this in my original response, but I guess I wasn't making things very clear. In my response, I say "...why didn't the real estate investor become an entrepreneur of his own corporate retail agency making 100 million a year? Well, most likely because they either didn't want to, or more likely they thought they couldn't do it. Notice, "didn't want to", and "couldn't do it". What I was trying to get across with these examples is that people are passionate for certain fields, and don't care for other, possibly higher earning ones. However even if you are passionate about something, that doesn't necessarily mean you'll be successful for it. That's just the way capitalism works. You can work your damndest as the owner of a company selling sex toys for ferrets, but you're

probably not going to make all that much. So while yes, circumstances do matter, no, I don't think that the fiery ferrets should earn as much as the real estate investor, or the lawyer, or anyone else for that matter.

Thanks for the feedback, and I hope we can continue this productive conversation

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Cameron Lindsey - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 1:25 PM

In response to Will:

Thanks for being more clear, although your original message was plenty clear and I misunderstood your point. Anyway, I 100% agree that things would become far too complicated if we incorporated everyone's specific differences in the tax code, and I suppose that is why we have deductions. My overall point is that I can agree with a progressive tax code *due* to differences in circumstances, because a flat rate wouldn't be fair for the less fortunate.

I also understand that a business owner selling sex toys for ferrets may work very hard and still not earn as much as a lawyer, investor, etc., and I'm fine with that. What I'm saying is: they shouldn't have to pay the same tax rate as the investor. I haven't argued that these individuals should be earning more than they are.

p.s. Interesting example with the sex toys for ferrets. Kinda out there, but effective nonetheless.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by Will Taylor - Friday, April 26, 2019, 6:13 PM

I'm glad I was able to clarify my points, sorry for the miscommunication. Glad we were able to find some common ground.

Sum of ratings:0 (1) 0

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**Re: More notes on the video:**
by David Galbreath - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 10:40 PM

my defense for a flat tax is simple. if we all take the same hit in income where is the inequality?

we are not grading how hard or purposeful someone is with the amount of income they make, but should we all be charged equally if we are all equally apart of society? I guess I feel the problem is in the hoarding of money. a flat tax rate means fewer rules the tax plan is simple. pay "12 percent" and the deal is done. but with the complect tax code we have today that separates us by wealth there are many ways for expensive lawyers to find loopholes.

Also, A+ on looking for the promoters of the video. You're right you can almost hear the snobbiness angle the narrator had when doing voices for the lower class. doesnt make the information a lie, but its good to know what they WANT you to tink.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**The Two Sides of Taxation**
by Eli Free - Monday, April 22, 2019, 4:37 PM

"One of the greatest favors that can be bestowed on the American people, is economy in government" (Coolidge video 3:50), here we can assess that Coolidge clearly is speaking on the behalf of people of whom would like to see less taxation. He is practically saying that less government spending would equal lesser taxation and thus, being a lead advocate on less taxation.

In society today, there are many different opinions on taxation and the way that it works. With one side of the fence saying that taxes are horrible and we spend way too much money on things we don't need (military is a popular one of which), and the other side supporting taxation and how it benefits our country (ie. roads, schools, law enforcement). That is one moral dilemma that is present when bringing up taxation, there's also the raw number side of it.

There's rich, and there is poor. Here in America there is the very very rich, and the very very poor. Both sides of this spectrum also bring up different opinions on taxes today. The rich often complain that they are paying too much, which is supported by the fact that the chart showing the history of tax rates displayed the fact that in 1913 the rate of tax for the highest percentage of owners was a mere 7%, whereas in 2013 it launched to a much higher 39%. The rich often argue that lower earners should pay more tax while lower earners argue that the higher earners should pay more tax. A surprising advocate for more taxation of the wealthy is one of the richest men in the world, Bill Gates. In an interview with Jimmy Kimmel, Gates expressed his belief of a higher tax rate for the rich, that there is a certain point where you can get to be too rich and that that money may as well be spent somewhere more beneficial. We shall see how these coming years dictate how tax payers will have to adhere to the government's stipulations and taxation related changes.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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**Re: Taxation - Fox News Poll: What bugs voters most about taxes? Rich not paying enough**
by Will Taylor - Monday, April 22, 2019, 5:31 PM

I think that nowadays, to really get a good look at something in the news, you need to look at a few, diverse sources. So I looked at CNN, NBC, and Fox news, for opinions on taxes. Unfortunately, the only one that had a story (that I could find) on just taxes in general was Fox news. So quotes and references should be taken with a grain of salt, due to a lack of perspectives. The headline of the story is "Fox News Poll: What bugs voters most about taxes? Rich not paying enough". Overall, I felt like it was a pretty copy paste story, not really adding much to the conversation, more just listing already known facts, like people think the rich should pay more, and they did not cite Coolidge's speech. There was one statistic though, that caught my eye, and surprised me. According to the poll, 37% thought that the amount they paid in taxes was "just right", and 3% said they paid too little. Now of course, we don't know what bracket they were from, or how much they paid, but 40% of a poll (again, taken with a grain of salt, we don't know who or how many) is still a lot of people to be happy with a tax percentage thats quadrupled (at least) since when they were first implemented. Now personally, I don't have to pay taxes yet, so I don't have as personal of an experience with taxes as most people, but I can say, that I'm by no means looking forward to it. I think that taxes are far too high, and that progressive tax is pretty dumb. And do the rich pay their fair share? I say absolutely, I think that they pay far more than anyone else, and far more than what they should.

https://www.foxnews.com/politics/fox-news-poll-what-bugs-voters-most-about-taxes-rich-not-paying-enough

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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**Re: Taxation - Fox News Poll: What bugs voters most about taxes? Rich not paying enough**
by Anna McNutt - Tuesday, April 23, 2019, 8:07 PM

I really love your idea of looking at a wide **spectrum** of sources, that seems to be very important to get a full story. After reading and learning more about the tax system I too agree that the rich are paying their fair share. Like Prof Escobar said in class, even if the top 1% paid ALL of their earnings, it wouldn't be enough to fix, or even touch our debt. (in class discussion) I think that wanting the rich to pay more and more taxes is just a way to try to ease the pain of increasing other taxes. The thing is, most of us aren't that rich and so we wouldn't be affected. It seems to be an "out of sight, out of mind" attitude. This may be a stretch but it reminds me of when a country will just print more money to ease their debt. It isn't really solving the problem, but it's doing something.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Taxation - Fox News Poll: What bugs voters most about taxes? Rich not paying enough**
by David Galbreath - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 10:23 PM

I like your thoughts on Fox News' article. Keep in mind just because Foz news leans right doesn't mean they are always lying to you. as a journalism student, I have been wanting to get to the bottom of what 'fake news' is. What has been the case - especially in Fox's case - is that they aren't lying, it's just easy to not tell the whole story. Taxes are high yes, but not nearly as high as they have been. Bernie Sanders even said, "I'm not that much of a socialist, compared to Eisenhower." (https://youtu.be/gdtPZq5cItQ)

The fact is, in times of need the upper class will be taxed a considerable amount and I think this chart will show that.

18-Jan-19

**Historical Highest Marginal Income Tax Rates**

| Year | Top Marginal Rate | Year | Top Marginal Rate | Year | Top Marginal Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1913 | 7.00% | 1948 | 82.13% | 1983 | 50.00% |
| 1914 | 7.00% | 1949 | 82.13% | 1984 | 50.00% |
| 1915 | 7.00% | 1950 | 84.36% | 1985 | 50.00% |
| 1916 | 15.00% | 1951 | 91.00% | 1986 | 50.00% |
| 1917 | 67.00% | 1952 | 92.00% | 1987 | 38.50% |
| 1918 | 77.00% | 1953 | 92.00% | 1988 | 28.00% |
| 1919 | 73.00% | 1954 | 91.00% | 1989 | 28.00% |
| 1920 | 73.00% | 1955 | 91.00% | 1990 | 28.00% |
| 1921 | 73.00% | 1956 | 91.00% | 1991 | 31.00% |
| 1922 | 58.00% | 1957 | 91.00% | 1992 | 31.00% |
| 1923 | 43.50% | 1958 | 91.00% | 1993 | 39.60% |
| 1924 | 46.00% | 1959 | 91.00% | 1994 | 39.60% |
| 1925 | 25.00% | 1960 | 91.00% | 1995 | 39.60% |
| 1926 | 25.00% | 1961 | 91.00% | 1996 | 39.60% |
| 1927 | 25.00% | 1962 | 91.00% | 1997 | 39.60% |
| 1928 | 25.00% | 1963 | 91.00% | 1998 | 39.60% |
| 1929 | 24.00% | 1964 | 77.00% | 1999 | 39.60% |
| 1930 | 25.00% | 1965 | 70.00% | 2000 | 39.60% |
| 1931 | 25.00% | 1966 | 70.00% | 2001 | 39.10% |
| 1932 | 63.00% | 1967 | 70.00% | 2002 | 38.60% |
| 1933 | 63.00% | 1968 | 75.25% | 2003 | 35.00% |
| 1934 | 63.00% | 1969 | 77.00% | 2004 | 35.00% |
| 1935 | 63.00% | 1970 | 71.75% | 2005 | 35.00% |
| 1936 | 79.00% | 1971 | 70.00% | 2006 | 35.00% |
| 1937 | 79.00% | 1972 | 70.00% | 2007 | 35.00% |
| 1938 | 79.00% | 1973 | 70.00% | 2008 | 35.00% |
| 1939 | 79.00% | 1974 | 70.00% | 2009 | 35.00% |
| 1940 | 81.10% | 1975 | 70.00% | 2010 | 35.00% |
| 1941 | 81.00% | 1976 | 70.00% | 2011 | 35.00% |
| 1942 | 88.00% | 1977 | 70.00% | 2012 | 35.00% |
| 1943 | 88.00% | 1978 | 70.00% | 2013 | 39.60% |
| 1944 | 94.00% | 1979 | 70.00% | 2014 | 39.60% |
| 1945 | 94.00% | 1980 | 70.00% | 2015 | 39.60% |
| 1946 | 86.45% | 1981 | 69.13% | 2016 | 39.60% |
| 1947 | 86.45% | 1982 | 50.00% | 2017 | 39.60% |
| | | | | 2018 | 37.00% |

**Note:** This table contains a number of simplifications and ignores a number of factors, such as a maximum tax on earned income of 50 percent when the top rate was 70 percent and the current increase in rates due to income-related reductions in value of itemized deductions. Perhaps most importantly, it ignores the large increase in percentage of returns that were subject to this top rate.

**Sources:** Eugene Steuerle, The Urban Institute; Joseph Pechman, Federal Tax Policy; Joint Committee on Taxation, Summary of Conference Agreement on the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, JCX-54-03, May 22, 2003; IRS Revenue Procedures, various years.

Taxation is, in my opinion, a necessary evil. However, I think the largest problem with it is the mismanagement of it.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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**Re: Taxation**

by Benjamin Kootnekoff - Monday, April 22, 2019, 7:56 PM

I agree with Calvin Coolidge when he says "I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government -- and more for themselves. I want them to have the rewards of their own industry. This is the chief meaning of freedom." I believe people should work for a secure life, rather than to pay what they owe the government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Taxation**

by Robert Whitney - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 3:47 PM

I think that President Coolidge was really on to something when he said that. It is crazy to think that a president could've been that way. Every president in recent memory has wanted their own project that involves huge amounts of tax payer money (Bush with the wars in the middle east, Obama with Obamacare, Trump with the wall). It would be a great refresher to have a president that wanted their citizens to have their own money, more economic freedom, less reliance on the government, and more freedom from the government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**War Increases Taxes**

by Nicolette D Erazo - Monday, April 22, 2019, 8:53 PM

The most obvious observation I can see from the graphs, especially the 'History of Income Taxes Adjusted For Inflation Chart', is that when a war occurs, the taxes increase. This can be seen, for example, during World War I financing. As seen in the chart and quoted in our textbook, " To help pay the bills, the government slapped the rich with a 67 percent income tax and a 25 percent inheritance tax" (Pg. 757). Additionally in World War II, the chart labeled U.S. Government Revenue states that "the spending had went up to 45 billion dollars." The taxation, in order to fund these wars, is clearly represented in the charts as a sharp spike in percentages and revenue shows up.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: War Increases Taxes**

by David Galbreath - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 10:53 PM

But does that make it right? because what I am hearing the rich pay for wars. I dont support wars and most likely never will, so personally, I would be LIVID if I had to pay 67 percent of my income to pay for bodies to die and government gain.

I dont understand why it's common to punish the wealthy when all they did was seek personal gain. We all have the same opportunities in this country and the fact that I am choosing to be poor and earn a Journalism degree is MY prerogative. If someone wants to create a service that eventually took over the world and the reap the benefits of large wealth, well I feel that is capitalism at its finest.

I've said it time and time again, It's accountability that seems to be the problem. Billionaires are hoarding money and dodging taxes. https://www.accounting-degree.org/accounting-tricks/ this article just scratches the surface of loopholes the rich take advantage of. if we want real equality, why dont we as lower tax bracket citizens have similar loopholes to take advantage of?

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**The Three Brothers and Us**

by Maximillian Prentice - Monday, April 22, 2019, 9:05 PM

The video of the Three Brothers gave me an opportunity to observe graduated tax rates from the outside and not as a participant in the system. As an observer, the system seems ridiculous. Why should a family's hard work be met with nothing but a higher bill come April, 15th? The idea of taking more from someone who simply earned more seems unfair and, on-paper, seems like something I would oppose.

As someone who pays federal taxes and participates in graduated tax rates, I am fully behind it. I would give up being in a low tax bracket, and paying less, for being in the top 1% of income in America. I think President Coolidge summed it up well by saying taxes, "represent all the pay of the 5-million wage earners, receiving 5 dollars a day and working 300 days in the year" (1:42, Coolidge taxes speech). He is not referring to the millionaires of today or the wealthy businessmen of the time; I feel like he is speaking for the average U.S. citizen with little extra to give. I think one thing that everyone can agree on is that we don't like paying taxes, regardless of rates, and as people continue to amass greater wealth it only makes sense to me to continue seeing those taxes rise. My mind goes to the "Gospel of Wealth" or the idea that once a mass amount of money is obtained, philanthropy becomes a responsibility. And although taxation doesn't really count as philanthropy, I feel like the idea still rings true.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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**Re: The Three Brothers and Us**

by Brayden Lane - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 9:20 PM

With the opening paragraph I agree fully in which why should someone who works harder be taxed more than someone who takes the money from people earning less. If anything its less of an incentive to work harder and earn more money in the world. The problem to me is looking at it in its simple form on the surface in which people who earn more lose more but when its all said and done they earn more than people in lower tax brackets. However if you tax everybody the same its still the same amount of money if you do progressive tax codes, the only person its hurting is the lower wage earning households. Whether its there fault or not should lower wage earning people pay the same amount of taxes? I personally feel as if they should including me right now since I'm in the low tax bracket. Being taxed a universal amount to everyone should be an incentive to move up in the world and earn more money.

I think the quote you choose from the video is perfect though in Calvin Coolidge's tax speech. He isn't referring to the richest of the rich but the simple everyday American who can spare a few bucks a day to keep the country safe and moving forward. I would also like for you to explain the Gospel of wealth quote more and why you believe in the things you said. Overall there is pieces I do and don't agree with but a very will typed out post.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Calvin Coolidge and taxes**

by Brayden Lane - Monday, April 22, 2019, 9:06 PM

Calvin Coolidge starts off by talking about how the farmer, manufacturer and every professional working class man should pay the same percentage of taxes no matter how low the income. To me I understand sometimes its not fair but I personally think its the best way to tax. No working class man or woman should have to pay a higher percentage of there income just because they make more money and are well off. Its a part of the "American Dream" in which anybody can be who they want to be and not everybody is the same. However Calvin Coolidge later goes on to say how he wants more Americans to keep the wages they earned to themselves and not pay them to the government. Which to me is totally contradictory, It is hard to tell if he means somewhere down the road he hopes for a tax reduction or what. Lastly he goes on to say the surplus of money will be given to food and clothes and shelter and will be provided. To me it seems like instead of using the surplus of money for those items I could keep it myself and spend it how I feel I need to. Overall I feel as if taxes are something that need to be in place in order to have a proper functioning society

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Taxation**

by David Pineda - Monday, April 22, 2019, 9:55 PM

The pattern of the income taxation in the early 1900 is easy to see. all the graphs spiked up at major events in the history of the United States., world war 1, the Great Depression, and world war 2 were all spikes. however both warlord war 2 and the depressions spikes eventually went down rapidly. Mean while after the world war 2 spike it didn't not go down until the government introduced tax reforms to force it to go back down.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Fair and Unfair**

by Kaleah Holmes - Monday, April 22, 2019, 10:11 PM

The Three Brothers video helped my understanding of the progressive tax code. I think it is fair when you look at it as a big picture. Middle or working class people should not have to pay the same amount in taxes as a billionaire. It is unfair when you look at it from one person's point of view. It seems like richer folk are being punished for being successful. The people that work much harder shouldn't be punished because other humans won't get a good job. I think it is not a good system but when you look at it on a graph it makes financial sense.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Fair and Unfair**

by Robert Whitney - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 3:37 PM

After reading your post I am confused about your opinion on the progressive tax. I think that, and it has been defamed many times, all Americans should pay a flat tax. It's only fair. Whether or not you are rich, the same proportion of your money is taken away. That way, the government would have to reform their departments and eliminate waste, people would have more money to spend and boost the economy, and provide more economic freedom to Americans. The three brothers video almost makes me want to not become wealthy as the taxes have gotten higher recently and don't seem to be lowering any time soon. Politicians need to come up with a way to both lower taxes and reduce huge amounts of waste in our government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Fair and Unfair**

by Kaleah Holmes - Friday, April 26, 2019, 10:07 PM

I want to elaborate on my point since my earlier post was a bit vague. I agree with this system because everyone is taken from equally. This means the same percentage is taken from everybody's paycheck (shown in the Three Brothers video). Saying this though I feel it is important to add that I do not one hundred percent agree. If I was a rich person I would not want that much of my paycheck taken by the government. They have more to give though so it is reasonable. This system makes sense because poor and rich people should not pay the same amount in taxes. If the system did that then either the poor would end up with far less money than they already have while the rich people would barely lose anything. The government needs money to fund programs, so taking different amounts but the same number percentage might be as fair a system as we are going to get. I would prefer if someone could find another, and better system that would be sufficient in getting the government the money they need to make their programs (such as homeless shelters, and after school care) available.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Less Taxes, Smaller Government**

by Amanda Francis - Monday, April 22, 2019, 10:27 PM

Calvin Coolidge's speech about taxation stating that, "[He] want[s] the people of America to be able to work less for the government and more for themselves" sounds like a great idea in theory. I think we'd all agree that "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" sounds like a pretty great presidential promise, but with less taxes comes less government. As our textbook explains, Coolidge's laissez-faire approach rolled back some important Progressive Era laws which included protecting women and children in the workplace. Today, too many people rely on government assistance to implement any kind of tax cuts as extreme as Coolidge and as much as I don't enjoy paying taxes, what happens to the people of this country who cannot work for themselves? Coolidge's tax plan assumes that everyone in the country is able-bodied and given the same opportunities as one another which unfortunately isn't the truth.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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**Re: Less Taxes, Smaller Government**

by Anna McNutt - Tuesday, April 23, 2019, 8:21 PM

You bring up a good point that less taxes means less government. Whether we like it or not, the government is important and needs tax money. So although I don't agree with everything, I did enjoy the Coolidge video. One of the things that really stuck out to me was how he described taxes. He said that part of the time you spend working you are "working for the government". (Coolidge on Taxation video 1:06) I had never thought of taxes in this way. We've heard in class the difference between wanting and encouraging someone to do whats right, and then forcing someone to do it. When I first heard this I didn't think today we were really forced to do anything in the US but... Taxes are forced. I don't think they are necessarily bad, like you said we need tax money for organizations to run and to help people who can't support themselves. I do however look at taxes in a slightly different way now. We are working for the government, forced, a few days or more every year.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Less Taxes, Smaller Government**

by Nicolette D Erazo - Friday, April 26, 2019, 9:22 PM

You make an interesting point, that "taxes are forced." I agree with this, because in reality people aren't going to just give up their money, especially if it is a high percentage of their income, and so the idea of making Americans give their money is at play here. Joe gave us an example in class about how officials wanted us to be more environmentally friendly, so they made stores stop using plastic bags for awhile. This is the same idea, because if the people won't willingly conform, then some enforcement, as we have seen many times before, comes from the government.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**The American Government Won't Ever Stop Taking More of Your Money**

by Robert Whitney - Monday, April 22, 2019, 11:22 PM

It was interesting for me to take a look at the graphs for the taxes and income for the United States in the forum materials page. My favorite graph was the one showing how the government revenue has not lowered since WW2. In response to that, there was a graph that showered government debt, and as the revenue increased, so did the debt! What could they possibly need more money for? More roads? Lobster dinners? It's quite interesting to me how the elected officials in this country from the past, present, and future, act like tax payer money is something that can be spent with little regard and can always be replenished. I understand that there are basic functions the government needs to do, but the money it collects and spends far exceeds what it was designed for and did in the early days of its life. I like how President Coolidge said he would like the citizens to work more for themselves, rather than the government. I would imagine that he would be frustrated at the fact that our government is currently TRILLIONS of dollars (not millions and billions like they used back then) in debt, and the fact that a teenager making less than $14,000 per year is giving the government 25% of their income. I'm sure he would find it absurd. Thinking about how much money the government spends makes me feel very, very concerned, yet unmotivated. The political state of our country shames people for wanting even the slightest reduction of budgets and disregards the fact that the government could be optimized as there is an INCREDIBLE amount of waste. Instead I see people proposing new taxes or suggesting raising them without even thinking of whether or not their money is used wisely. Going through public education gave me a great example of how our money is wasted, despite education being a small sliver in the total budget. As a middle school and high school student, I saw hundreds of brand new $1000 Macbooks being bought over well priced, budget laptops like chromebooks and iPads being lended to 6th graders. In the 2015-16 the total Eugene 4j school district population was 17,202 and the total 4j budget was $179.2 million (which ensured the first full school year since 2008!). That brings the average student receiving $10,417.39 for that year of school, which is significantly higher than Lane's costs. Sorry it's so long, taxes are a hot topic for me. thanks.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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**Coming from a Libertarian...**

by David Galbreath - Tuesday, April 23, 2019, 4:42 PM

Taxation is theft. As a libertarian, I truly believe that taxation is theft. now, I don't agree with every ideal of the party but i do agree with most. I understand to have civilized society taxation is necessary. however, i truly believe we are being taxed so much more than we need to be. as we learned taxation (for the class i fit in) was only 1%. with a workforce that is exponentially larger and taxes that only ever seem to rise, I often ask myself if it's worth it. If I do not pay taxes the end result is imprisonment, but i never agreed on this deal. Now, i am okay with paying taxes but I

want to have an itemized receipt as to where my money went. That might sound silly but after reading stories about the Air Force spending 1200 dollars on a coffee mug, I want answers. https://www.businessinsider.com/us-air-force-spent-1280-on-coffee-cup-2018-10

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Coming from a Libertarian...**

by Eli Free - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 5:03 PM

This is an interesting standpoint, "Taxation is theft." I'm curious as to if you'd be fine with taxation going in every form, or if you too would agree that there are certainly productive things are tax dollars are spent on. While yes, our tax dollars don't always go to the most beneficial things (ie. the '$100 hammer' discussion in class), our money funds some of the most necessary functions of our society. Tax dollars pay for our education, law enforcement, health care, etc. Without it, our society would be nowhere near where it is today. And i agree, it is frustrating not knowing where my money is going, I am okay with the fact that I at least know a good portion of it is going into the infrastructure of America and bettering our society as a whole. Definitely not a perfect system by any means, but our current policies are, in my mind, much better than no policies.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Coming from a Libertarian...**

by David Galbreath - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 11:30 PM

while I agree with you that tax dollars go into important social structures like public schools and law enforcement. I have no problem giving taxes if that's where I knew it was going. for one administrator positions at schools are at a record high number and statistically proven to not improve student test scores or graduation rates. the "administrators" are paid largely from taxes. So, I guess my point is; I am willing to pay for things we need. schools, law enforcement, roads, hospitals, the list goes on. However, it frustrates me that I will be arrested for not paying taxes because I disagree with the handling of my money.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: Coming from a Libertarian...**

by Kaleah Holmes - Friday, April 26, 2019, 10:40 PM

Your point is interesting and I partly agree. Taxation is a necessary theft I feel like. Government does so many helpful things for the people, for example making school lunches free for some children, however they do not always spend tax money efficiently in my opinion. My little sister told me how at her school somebody removed a tile from the ceiling and dead rats fell out of the hole. It makes me sad that schools do not have enough money to check for rodents in the building. Not enough money is going to schools, if they had enough money I would not have heard that awful story about the rats, and yet there is a giant sculpture by the highway that has no purpose. Yes art is nice and I want pretty things to look at but before money goes toward art, shouldn't we make sure there aren't infestations in schools? Schools should be more important than random giant red statues. This is the same as the extremely over priced tools (for example the $100 hammer) we talked about in class this week. These things are, in my opinion, ridiculous. Why is the government buying and creating these unnecessary items while my sister has dead rats falling out of the ceiling at her school? Taxation is needed but often the money is not used for the more important things. I understand that government employees not throwing money on whatever they want in the moment but still, rats in a school is not okay.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: 3 brothers taxes**

by Trenton Hough - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 5:44 PM

Watching the Progressive Tax Example of the 3 Brothers explained to me why wealthy people don’t like it, but it also explains why the average American doesn’t want to change the way taxes are done. The video uses the 30,000$ bill to explain the way the government does taxes. After all the work is done the three brothers have to figure out a way to pay the bill. The wealthy brother, who works the most and saves his money, wants to split the bill evenly between them all. This makes the most sense to him as they all are receiving the same benefits. Just like the real would, rich people worked hard for there money and want to pay the same amount everyone. From the rich persons point of view this makes sense, but not so much for the poor person. The poor person must stretch every penny earned to

make ends meet. If taxes were divides evenly between citizens, then the poor person wound not have enough money to supply his needs. In the video the middle brother expresses an idea to each pay the same percent of their income. This was a good idea and would work in the video and in our government if it weren't for the third brother or the lowest earner. In the video the brother who makes the least amount of money says that he shouldn't pay anything. This is because he believes the highest making brother should pay the most percent and then the next highest maker would pay the rest. This benefit both the lowest earner and the middle earner, while hurting the highest earner. The bottom 50% and the middle earners like this because it allows them to pay much less than the other two options. The middle earner would pay more if it was a set percent of their income, therefor the middle earner keeps his mouth shut and sides with the poor. This type of tax system allows the middle and bottom earners to make out the best. Because the middle earners are paying less than they would if it was based on percent of income they agree with the bottom earners because they know they will not be paying for them, the wealthy people will. I think this is the reason it is so hard for tax reform to happen. If we change the way we do taxes it will hurt more people in the lower income brackets, which is most of Americans.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**The Three brothers**

by Brayden Lane - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 11:30 PM

I found the three brothers video was a simple yet helpful video on the progressive tax code and taxes in general. Personally I don't like the progressive tax code after watching the video. Its simple yet an effective video allowing me to understand more the breakdown of taxes. After watching I came to the personal realization and thought that there should be a universal percentage of taxes taken out of everyone's pay checks. It seems that the most fair and just way to tax is that. Not everybody gets the same opportunity in America but it seems as if were all one nation together one group shouldn't have a higher tax percentage than the other. In the video it was a 12% tax in an idea to pay for the expenses, it covered all expenses and used the same amount of money as the progressive tax code idea to get the job done. If the amount of money is the same either way one single person shouldn't be paying more than another. As a college student its a hard thought knowing that the more money I start to make after working hard all these years the more money I have to spend on taxes. Its hard for me to come to the thought of one class paying more than another class but it also seems to me the money saved and used by a hard working upper class will just be put back into the economy if there was a non progressive tax code.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Calvin Coolidge taxes speech.**

by Trenton Hough - Friday, April 26, 2019, 8:57 PM

President Calvin Coolidge gave a speech About the taxes Americans must pay. Coolidge goes on to say "I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government -- and more for themselves. I want them to have the rewards of their own industry. This is the chief meaning of freedom." (Speech on taxes...) This part of the speech caught my eye because he's explaining to the American people that he wants to cut down on taxes but there is no way that you can cut them completely out. For the government to work the way it does some one has to pay for it, and it's not cheap. The America people rely on many services that we take for granted each day. Stoplights must work, schools must run on time, and people have to be safe to do what they want with their lives and dreams. All these things and more cost a whole lot of money that has to come from somewhere. I agree taxes suck and you don't always think you are getting everything out of it, but you really are. When people complain about how taxes have gone up so much over the years, I always stop and think to my self how much the world has changed. 100 years ago, we didn't have the road system we do today, we dint have as many schools trying to give kids the best education the teachers can offer, and we definitely didn't need the airports and air security we have today. I agree taxes suck, but without them we wouldn't be able to live the comfortable lives we do today.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**Re: three Brothers Interpretation**

by Nicolette D Erazo - Friday, April 26, 2019, 9:01 PM

I found the Three Brothers Video informative on the idea of progressive tax code because it visualized how this system works in our country today. The wealthy brother wanted to divide the cost up equally, while the others felt that because the wealthy brother made more, he should pay more. This did not sit well with the wealthy brother, as it does not sit well with the wealthy in our country. The fact that the wealthy have to pay a substantially larger amount that the middle or lower class makes sense since their income is much higher, however I don't know how happy I would be if I was one of the upper class, just as the wealthy brother was not satisfied.

Sum of ratings:0 (1) 0

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**Re: three Brothers Interpretation**

by Nicolette D Erazo - Friday, April 26, 2019, 9:52 PM

After reading some other responses, I don't know that I entirely agree with my own original statement on "the wealthy should pay more because they make more." I am questioning whether it would make more sense if the taxes were set at a strict equal amount to everyone...everyone paying the same dollar amount rather than percentages. As stated in the Three Brothers video,"Why should I have to pay for that?" The wealthy brother made this comment in response to his lower income brother attacking him for not being more generous because he makes more. Rewatching the film allowed me to see his point... why is it expected that someone who makes a lot of income, should be expected to make up for expenses and shortages. If a set amount of money was required form every individual, maybe this wouldn't be an issue.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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**3 Brother Tax Video, Fair?**

by Eli Free - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 3:22 PM

After watching the three brothers try and sort out the issue of paying their $30,000 bill in the most even way possible, I was a bit surprised when they disagreed to all split it evenly. I suppose it sort of caught me off guard in the sense that if each of them would be equally benefitting from the improvements, they each should contribute the equal amount of money. But when the middle brother proposed the idea of each paying the same *percentage* of their income instead of the same flat rate I was definitely gravitating towards that idea much more than the previous. The reason being that, obviously it is going to impact the brother that makes the least amount of money in the most substantial way because he is a little more strapped for cash than that of the brother of whom works 60 hour weeks and makes a much greater amount. The counter argument can definitely be made that it is unfair to the richest brother because of the fact he works much harder than the poorest brother who chooses to only work so little. I thought the 12% each was the most fair proposal of payment and not the third and final choice of the richest brother paying the majority and the middle brother paying the rest while the poorest brother got to benefit from the improvements all while paying absolutely nothing. To me, taxation should be an equal percentage across the board, and if you'd like to have more money then you should work harder to achieve such fortune.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

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