

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

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Rights, Rights, Rights
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, May 24, 2019, 5:30 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Rights, Rights, Rights 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 pictures and questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Rights, Rights, Rights

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Do we even know what rights are?
by [Anna McNutt](#) - Saturday, May 25, 2019, 8:34 PM

The video by Walter Williams explaining the difference between rights and wishes was very helpful. I think we often throw the word "right" around without really knowing what it means, I definitely have. The healthcare example was perfect. We've all heard someone said "Health care is a right." However, according to Williams, a right is "something that exists simultaneously between people." (Walter Williams video :30) Like he explained, health care isn't a right because someone else has to get involved and help pay for it. So, something can't be made a right, it either is or it isn't.

The college example was also eye opening.



Williams would be way more willing to agree with the the image on the right. You see, we can have any opinion we want on topics like these, and we can voice them. That is our right. Saying that college should be tuition free is a simple opinion. But, saying that education is a right, is actually just incorrect. Again, it forces someone else to help pay for it, which means it is in fact not a right.

Because rights are such a key part of our country and our history we can't just make up our own definition of the word. Like I said it seems to be thrown around and twisted to fit someones own beliefs. I personally don't blame anyone who has done this, me included, because this isn't normally explained. We don't have a universal definition of "rights" that we learn in school or anywhere. Definitions and facts should be things that we're all on the same page about, but that doesn't seem to be the case. If **every** American could watch Williams video maybe that could help clear some things up...

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Part one: Who gave us the right anyway.

by [Adam Moore](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:35 AM

Our rights are granted to us by God and it is the governments job to ensure the protection of these rights. Our government is supposed to get its power from the governed, that is the beauty of the system we have. I agree with Walter Williams short talk; some things that we say are rights today just are not, yet they would be nice to have. As a society we need to be more careful when we throw around the word right, so that we do not get our priorities mixed up. In reference to the two images for the part one response, I believe Williams would say the image on the right is more accurate regarding rights.

Since Rights are given to use by God everyone has rights as defined by Williams and our nation’s Founding Fathers, whether the government protects and upholds them or not. If a government does not protect them, it is the right and responsibility to shrug off such a government. The rights of the people no longer exist only when we forget by what authority we were given them.

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Re: Part one: Who gave us the right anyway.

by [Will Taylor](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 9:06 AM

In response to Adam

I want to start by saying that by no means am I questioning your religion, I'm simply challenging your position on the source of rights. Saying that our rights are granted to us by God, whether religious or not, implies that our rights are granted to us inherently, and that with or with out a government, no matter the kind or size, we will still have those rights. And that I completely disagree with. Rights are freedoms that we have that interfere with no one besides ourselves, and vice versa. The problem is, what's making people respect our rights? The answer is fear. Fear of prison, of punishment, and of death. Without a government, there would be no fear, no punishment, and thus no reason for other people to respect our "rights". And if no one respects the rights that we have, than I say they never existed in the first place.

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@ Will

by [Adam Moore](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 8:45 PM

Will I want to thank you for your response, and how respectful you were when you disagreed with my stance. The Founding Fathers also agreed with my stance as to our rights being endowed to us by God.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness ” (The Declaration of Independence).

A government does have the responsibility to uphold and to defend our rights, but they do not give them to us. Our rights can and have been taken away by governments many times in the past but when this occurs it is the responsibility of the governed to remind our government by whom they derive their power. If there where no government those rights would still belong to us, we would just have to ensure them ourselves.

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Rights and Responsibilities

by [Alexander Marx](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:50 AM

The idea of human rights and their legitimacy cannot be assessed without discussing the means of enforcement for these rights. As the Declaration of Independence states, rights are bestowed upon the people by God, though an ideology such as this is only as effective as the belief of the people. Therefore the enforcement comes shortly after, stating that a government elected by the people will uphold these rights. To me this means that if anything, rights are granted by the government because it provides tangible incentives and consequences to honor these rights, so it then ultimately becomes up to a government to decide what basic “rights” are and what they would like to enforce.

Professor Walter Williams makes a very concise argument as to what exactly a “right” is. Rights seem to be expressed by equality, in that it is only a right if it does not require provision or sacrifice by another. Anything that requires the effort or sacrifice of someone in order to provide another with something isn't inherently a right because it is being taken from someone else. Professor Williams would certainly disagree with the image that states college tuition should be free as being a right, since it requires someone else to pay for it to provide for someone else. The image on the left could be interpreted as a right, providing that it implies one has the opportunity to seek out education without the interference of others. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website seems to support this claim, with their list of rights consisting of opportunities that others may not infringe upon, such as the right to vote and the freedom to worship however you wish. On the other hand, their list of responsibilities require some semblance of action for the benefit of community and government, both local and federal, such as paying taxes obeying laws. Another responsibility is that of respecting the rights, beliefs and opinions of others, which supports the idea of government being the ones providing the rights. They are essentially saying you have the “right” to think how you want and believe what you want, and it is your “responsibility” to honor everyone's rights to their own ideas and beliefs. Without the enforcement of that responsibility, I find it hard to argue that the right would exist in the first place.

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Rights: From One Person to Another

by [Trenton Hough](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 2:52 PM

I don’t think rights are granted by god or the government. I believe rights are granted from one human to another. Rights should be described as the respect to let another person live the life they want and do what they want to do while respecting the rights of others. Walter Edward Williams describes this perfectly with the example of health care and travel. Williams states that being able to travel within the united states is a right, while health care is not a right. Williams goes on to say his right to travel “does not impose an obligation on someone else.” This is the base of a right, to be able to do what a person wants to do. He uses the idea that health care is not a right to support his statement. Health care is not free, and someone must pay for it. If heath care becomes a right then someone would have to pay for it, taking away the ability to do what they want to do with their money. The rights of live, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness fit this definition of a right perfectly. You have the right to these daily while respecting that others have this right too. Some people may argue that the government should not collect taxes as they are taking away our rights. To argue that you have too look at the people that don’t respect the rights of others. We have to pay for the protecting of our rights from bad people, this could come in the form of military or police. There are also taxes to make our life easier to do what we want to do. Paying taxes to fund schools, the highway system, and First Responders make our right to decide our life outcome worth more. Rights are not a luxury; they are the respect we must give one another so we can have rights ourselves.

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Re: Rights: From One Person to Another

by [David Galbreath](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 1:02 PM

I agree with many points of yours but I want to play devil's advocate...

If rights don't come from the Government then what "right" do they have to enforce them? rights vary across the globe because the governments define rights and enforce them, so does that mean governments have the authority to create rights? I believe in individual liberties as well but that seems to be this altruistic value that all of humanity would need to make people govern themselves without awful people taking advantage of the situation.

here's an article that can explain it in more words. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0042366>

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights

by [Will Taylor](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 3:03 PM

Part One: Rights are absolutely given by governments. There's nothing in nature that stops a bear from killing you to protect her cubs, there's nothing natural that would make another human being let you speak your opinion. All of these are rights given to us by a government, or a group of people that have agreed that there are some things that people need to be free, and to feel safe. This was explained very well in the Walter Williams clip, and cleared up what little confusion I had about the definition of "rights". (college tuition should be free is the more accurate understanding).

Part Two: I think that it's appropriate to apply an amendment from 150 ago to current issues. The point of amendments, is to guarantee rights that are or should be granted to everyone. No matter how many laws are written, none of them have power over the amendments, as they are the backbone of the lawmaking system in the first place. And I think that this is a good thing. This way, there are some things that will never be changed based on current culture, ideology swings, or any other form of short term thinking that could potentially change the future of the entire nation. I don't really think there are many up sides to granting citizenship to illegal aliens. They take jobs, taxes, and represent a much larger portion of crime than their numbers should. And the fact that people don't even know what rights are is a big problem. Advocating for so called "rights" like education, health care, and citizenship that put other people in a position of being required to work for something, is incredibly unhealthy and could lead to many problems in the near future.

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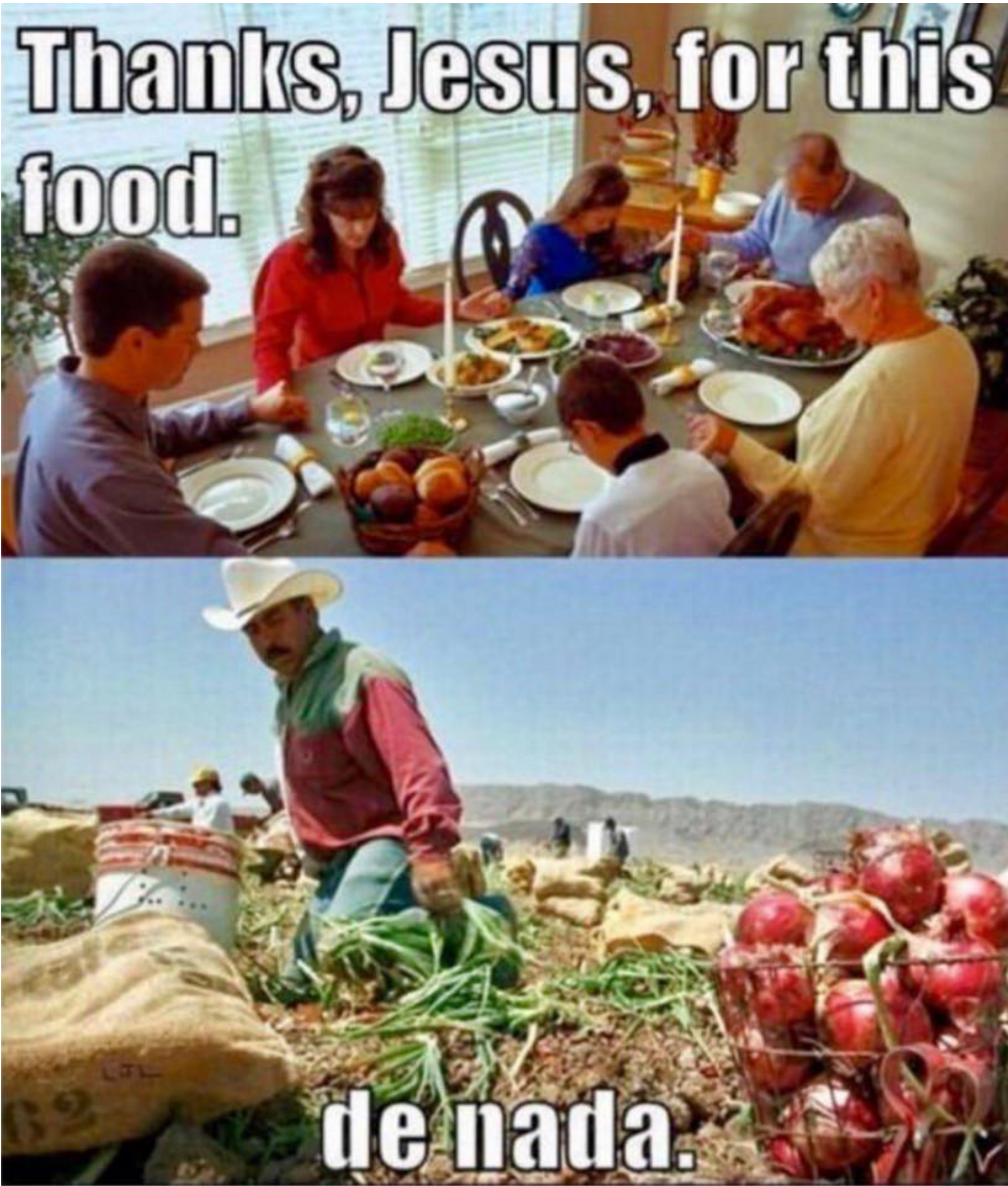
Re: Rights, Rights, Rights

by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 10:25 PM

For Will, replying to part two of your comment:

Wondering about the part where you say that it's good to have fundamental laws so current cultures and ideological swings won't change the future of the Nation ----- weren't those laws written during **their** existent culture though? Why should the time period in which the laws were written dictate over future time periods? I agree that it's not always healthy to get drunk on the moment and laminate current ideals for the future but can't we both agree it's a better idea to let the Constitution evolve as society does? When you say that the point of the amendments is to guarantee rights to everyone, I'm assuming you just mean citizens of the United States, correct?

I also must address the comment about illegal aliens "taking jobs" -- those are jobs normally that many Americans aren't willing to do. I've worked with a number of illegal aliens and they in my experience they are hard-working and non-complaining and tend to do a much better job than the next "legal" man up. Would you rather have an American do a shitty job in our country or an "alien" do a good job? How many lazy Americans "take" our taxes too and don't do contribute? Most of those who immigrate here are in search of a better life than they've been given, and are willing to contribute far more than so so many people who were lucky enough to be born here.



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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights

by [Will Taylor](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:25 AM

That's a very good point about current culture/ideology now and then. I hadn't considered their bias back then. However, I think that it applies a lot less than it might seem. There's no denying that with the introduction of traditional, and now social media, protest, and the strong desire for a radical change has become more common than ever. When the constitution was written, its purpose was to unite and create a nation of the new world, a nation of opportunity, equality (didn't do the best job in this area obviously), and promise. But then in the case of equality, they realized their wrongs, and fixed that, by adding a new amendment, guaranteeing equality to everyone no matter their skin color. That's the main reason I think that the constitution should remain to "dictate over future time periods", because while they were thinking optimistically about the future of a nation, a lot of these "rights" people are advocating for nowadays, are ridiculous things like making hate speech illegal, or to remove our second amendment right to bear arms. And That's more what I was thinking of when I said "there are some things that will never be changed based on current culture, ideology swings, or any other form of short term thinking that could potentially change the future of the entire nation." (This was a pretty tough argument for me to word, a tl:dr if you will, would be

that thinking wasn't as radical when it was written, and the purpose behind it was to create a fair and equal new world of opportunity, so while I think that it's fine to reform, I don't think our rights should ever be taken away, or drastically changed.)

As for the second part of your response. It doesn't matter how hard working they are, they're illegal. I have no problem with people coming into our county legally, buy there's no reason for people to be advocating for illegal immigrant's rights, because they aren't even citizens. Walking across the border does not make you a citizen. It's pretty simple, either become a citizen. Again, I have no problem with people coming into our county legally, but when they come in illegally, preform crime at a rate much higher than their numbers should, and then aren't held in our prisons because they aren't citizens, so they're deported or released only to come back and do it again, then I've got a problem. Rather than protesting and demanding rights for illegals, people should be trying to help illegals acquire legal citizenship.

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights
by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 12:50 PM

In response to Will,

Thanks for giving a thoughtful and expansive response. I can agree with a lot of what you've said, and am working on stopping myself from getting carried away into current events arguments in this forum haha. So, I think you raise a lot of fine and fair points, and though I still slightly disagree with you from a metaphysical standpoint regarding immigration, I won't argue here. What I will say, if it's fair, is that just because laws are in place doesn't necessarily make them fair or correct (remember, a large portion of America used to be Mexico before we fought and stole it). So, I won't base my opinion/stance on an issue around law. That's all I will say about that.

Where I agree with you in large part is these "false rights" people feel entitled to, and how ridiculous and spoiled some can sound and behave. I don't believe this narrative I've been hearing from the boomers lately though that the millennial generation being ultra entitled. Entitlement is nothing new, and almost everyone I know has a sense of entitlement in some form or fashion. Old, middle-aged, or young. I feel rights are what we all get based on reasonable standards of living that won't interfere with others, and wishes are more like commands on others based on individual values. We all, at one point or another, will petition for the wishes we deem fit for us. For example I would love universal healthcare, because I don't feel like paying out the ass for a general check-up. Some boomers or older generations might call me lazy or entitled for this--and Williams is right: this is a wish, not a right--yet looking at the overwhelming price of healthcare what logical reason do I have to not raise the middle finger to private over-priced health insurance industry?

I guess what I'm getting at is that I agree that many wishes are ridiculous, yet I feel many are sound and reasonable, and there are certain Amendments that defy common sense. Progressive crowds have always pushed to reform, and though there is a clear black line between a right and a wish, wishes still must be respected and understood before they're written off as general entitlement.

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"Rights" are Free
by [Amanda Francis](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 3:54 PM

Walter Williams states, "A right is something that exists simultaneously among people. A right does not confer any obligation on another" (0:30), and I agree with him more than I thought I would. Williams goes on to say that he wishes every American had healthcare just as he wishes every American had a nice car (2:35). This is where the debate of right vs. wish continues because someone's life doesn't depend on a nice car but not having healthcare could mean life or death. If the Declaration of Independence ensures that "unalienable rights", such as "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness", is protected, what qualifies? I do think that there are certain standards or privileges that should exist in the United States such as access to affordable housing, access to affordable college, and access to affordable health care including mental health and addiction counseling, but I would not consider these

things a right, because how do we pay for it? Governmental rights are what's listed in the constitution such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, etc., and something that exists not at the financial expense of someone else. I think the majority of Americans would wish that every citizen had access to affordable housing, healthcare, and college if they didn't have to worry about footing the bill. Unfortunately, it comes down to a money issue.

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights
by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 6:26 PM

Did Professor Walter Williams briefly explain the differences between rights and those who often wrongly call "Rights" in the video (Walter Williams explains What is a Right?), Professor Walter Williams, begins his explanation by "you know I think a lot of people believe that it is a right that is a Right, that is others nonsense "For him, people have a bad definition of the right word. from my point of view, I think that his definition of the word Right makes sense to me. Law by its words is something that exists between humans, but that does not constrain the rights of others. A right must not oblige or diminish the right of another person to act in favor of others. It is something that everyone has but does not impose constraints on someone else. For example, I have the right to travel from state to state. it does not force anyone, but it forces me to pay for my own plane ticket and travel. This does not force anyone else to pay for my plane tickets.

Professor Walter Williams, nowadays many are confusing the "right" and the "wish." To wish to have something, which forces the right of someone else, is not a right but a "wish". "

In these words, I think that the definition of law is to be explained.

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rights begin when the government steps in
by [Jack Swisher](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 7:29 PM

To start off, Walter Williams would consider the Education is a right shirt to be more understanding of rights. These shirts are very similar to the examples that Williams gives in the video. Traveling, you will pay for his plane ticket, as well as the hotel room, that's the understanding that if you didn't earn it, someone else makes up for it. Same principle with school, if you earn the money (work, scholarships) you deserve the right to spend that money on an education if that is what you wish to achieve. Compared to going to school by other people paying taxes to fund your tuition, and that money being from what they earned. I think that humans only have rights when protected and upheld by the government. It is clear in the USCIS article, that in order to enjoy these rights, you must take care of the other responsibilities. Examples, rights: Freedom to express yourself. Freedom to worship as you wish. Right to a prompt, fair trial by jury. Responsibilities: Support and defend the Constitution. Stay informed of the issues affecting your community, Participate in the democratic process. Here is another example, The Civil Rights Act of 1964. "Strengthened federal remedies, monitored by a new equal employment opportunity commision (EEOC), against racially inspired job discrimination. The act also prohibited racial discrimination in all public accommodations connected to interstate commerce, such as motels and restaurants." (page 953) This is a great example of how the government having to step in and make acts to finally give people freedom.

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights
by [Jessie Shafer](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 8:25 PM

Professor Walter Williams made it much more clear as to what rights and wishes are. When he said "that is utter nonsense" (0:23), I was very confused as to why someone would say it is nonsense for Americans to have healthcare. The it made sense. Americans wish for many things. We wish for healthcare, we wish for food in our cupboards, we wish for everyone to have a chance at a decent life. But those are not rights. Professor Williams made it very clear as to the difference between rights and wishes. If he was to look at the attached pictures in the directions, he would call the t-shirt that says "education is a right" as nonsense. Teaching people puts others out, meaning we need the teachers to do the teaching. A right is something that doesn't make someone do a job. Now, I myself agree with the poster that says "college should be tuition free". It's still not a right, but it is definitely true. College should be tuition free. It is for people to learn new skills that benefit the community, the economy, and even the people. Taxes are already used to help schools, so now we have to pay twice for the same thing.

When we talk rights with other people, they have a tendency to say loudly "that's my/our right!". Or when you watch a video of someone dealing with a situation that involves the police, they are always shouting that phrase at the closest police officer. Rights only really exist when they are being g questioned, or violated.

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Importance of adaptation
by [Maddie Neale](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 10:36 PM

Our original constitution itself is not being constantly revised and changed to adapt to modern times, but we have the bill of rights, which is made up of amendments that add on to the contents of the constitution, which does adapt and change to fit technological and cultural advances of our society. The fact that we have made so many amendments to the constitution does tend to shine a spotlight on the fact that we, as a country, have changed so much since the drafting of the constitution. Without the constitution our country would not be in the position it is in today and many people would not have the same liberties they are privileged to have today.

The issue about granting rights to those who are not legally citizens is a tricky one because although they aren't technically American citizens, the fact is that they are still human beings, and all human beings deserve the same rights. And illegal immigrants are automatically granted basic human rights when they enter the U.S, but nobody should get special, different rights because of where they were born or live/lived. As someone who has great-grandparents and grandparents who have immigrated from other countries, I am well aware of the long, hard process of gaining citizenship in the U.S, so I understand the reasoning behind illegally living in the U.S. However if we were to just grant everyone rights then, in consequence, many people might start to feel less obligated to gain citizenship.

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Rights or Privilege?
by [Maclain O'Leary](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:02 PM

I believe the term "rights" is more complex than a single definition. As a Catholic, I believe there are rights that are granted by God. The right to choose who you worship, the right to equality, the right of free will. These are things we did inherit from God. However, I do also believe there are rights that are created by human construct. Take the **Miranda rights** for example, "right to an attorney, right to remain silent, etc." These are things that the government has created that gives certain rights to people.

Now, looking further into the images, things like Education, and free tuituion, these are not "rights". I truly believe that education is a privilege. I believe that countries without a modern educational system do deserve it, however, it is not a right. The United States had to work hard to establish what we know as the educational system today. And free tuition? No. I do not believe that is a right. I believe I work 40 hours a week to put myself through school so I can have a better future. That hard work makes me appreciate the opportunity I have more, and if that were given away for free, there would be much less of an appreciation for it.

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Government given rights
by [Anthony Nguyen](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:47 PM

Every person should possess the basic rights stated in the Declaration of Independence. Though all humans should possess these rights, ultimately they're given to people by their government, not God. Walter Williams discusses the difference between rights and wishes, stating that the right to health care is not a right, but a wish. He states "I wish every American had a nice car, a nice house, and a good job, but it's not a right."(Video) meaning that things that we believe we should have can be easily mistaken as a right. Williams would most likely agree more with the right photo which stats that "college should be tuition free." Though it would be nice for college to be free, according to Williams this is only a wish. Where as the left photo states that "Education is a right" which is not true. In reality humans only have rights when their governments allow them to. We can look no further than our own country to see this to be true. We have the freedom of speech, but we have seen this right taken away from us, an example of this in Eugene v Debs who was arrested for giving an Anti War speech during World War I. Though all humans should always have such basic rights, this isn't always the case, therefore the only rights we truly have are given to us by our government.

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Re: Government given rights

by [Anna McNutt](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 6:07 PM

I really liked your post because it was true and realistic. You're right, our rights are given to us by our government. Whether someone is religious or not, God is not handing out and enforcing our rights, the government is. And like you said those rights have been taken away, like in War Time. Anyone too socialist, or even thought to be communist, imprisoned or deported, or even killed. Japanese, put in internment camps.

The video with Walter Williams explained rights vs wishes very clearly, however it still boils down to our government. Yes, he defined what "rights" are, but again if our government wanted to make something else a right they could. A definition is not going to stop them. The video seemed very focused on what we shouldn't define as a right, but what should we define as a right?

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Re: Government given rights

by [Nicolette D Erazo](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:00 PM

Your quote "whether someone is religious or not, God is not handing out and enforcing our right, the government is," caught my attention. Not everyone follows a God or religion and our rights have been granted and also revoked by the government throughout history, as seen in World War II, when our freedom of speech was restricts, so it would seem that the government is in control of our rights. And if not enforced, I think the idea of having these rights would be lost because there would probably little respect of the concepts that we believe we are entitled to.

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Re: Government given rights

by [Nicolette D Erazo](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:00 PM

Your quote "Whether someone is religious or not, God is not handing out and enforcing our right, the government is," caught my attention. Not everyone follows a God or religion and our rights have been granted and also revoked by the government throughout history, as seen in World War II, when our freedom of speech was restricts, so it would seem that the government is in control of our rights. And if not enforced, I think the idea of having these rights would be lost because there would probably little respect of the concepts that we believe we are entitled to.

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God given rights

by [Tiffanie Chapman](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:47 PM

I believe rights are granted by God but the government has the responsibility to uphold those rights that were given. Professor Walter Williams was very clear on what is a right and what is not. Based off the two pictures given, the image on the left where it is the black t-shirt that says "education is a right" is the image that Professor Williams would most agree with. Williams defines a right as, "something that exists simultaneously among people. A right does not confer any obligations on another," and having an education is something that can "exist" among everyone. You using your own brain can create your own desire to educate without creating an "obligation" to another. Yes, we can get technical and talk about the obligations of teachers and schools and etc., and all the tools that back up your education, but at the base of your own intelligence, it begins with yourself and your own brain, creating your own thoughts. Now the image on the right where it states. "college should be tuition free" completely disagrees with his definition.This is where he states people who think this is a right starts to "impose obligation on another." Who will pay for this free tuition? Who will pay the professors? Someone has to pay. Williams would define free tuition as what he says is a "wish". Free college is a nice, pretty picture and something in a perfect world would be great, but we don't live in a perfect world and this is something that is not an earned right.

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Re: God given rights

by [David Galbreath](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:31 PM

I hope to not come across as rude, but I disagree with you. I don't think Williams would agree with the T-shirt because of those technicalities. In the video, he says a right should not impose on others and well a free education would impose on everyone's taxes, all the teachers and administrators. On the other hand, saying "college should be tuition free" would align - in my opinion - with Williams ideologies more. Free tuition would cause no obligation or work on anyone. It would call for a rather large system change with schools but really no one will directly be impacted excepts students.

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Re: God given rights

by [Anna McNutt](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:46 PM

I agree with your first point. I believe like you said, Williams would not agree with the shirt that says "Education is a right." Education costs money, teachers and staff are involved. It brings others into the picture with means it does not align with his definition of a right.

I think that he would agree with the "college should be tuition free" saying only because it is an opinion and does not use the word right. I don't agree that free tuition would cause no obligation or work on anyone. Free tuition isn't really free. Someone has to pay the teachers, buy the books, staff the college, build it. The money would most likely come from tax payers. So I think that free tuition would hinder others.

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights

by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 11:55 AM

Are rights granted by God or by governments?
After reading several points of view, I understand that each person has their point of view and is free to think what they want. But, from a conciliatory point of view, Right is a privilege granted by God. Because I think everyone was created by a supreme God. human beings have derived their rights and duties from the Holy Bible. it is said a man is born free and will do what he wants for his own well being, it said also in the Bible, God had set each human free and gave us the choice to decide whatever is good or bad for ourselves. The government has been established to reassure that human rights are respected. But nowadays we see that man, often no longer really has access to the Right that the Great God has granted to everyone, because the government that had a primary role "put a system in place to reassure and make sure each person the rights is respected " now tend to impose or create certain laws and Right. So now some people have seen the Government as the system that grants each man rights. most of the declarations of human rights, or duties, are based on the Right that is listed in the Bible. What drives me to this conclusion: God is the one who granted the right to every human

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I wish they were god given

by [Jack Swisher](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 5:05 PM

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." If this was the case with citizens in america, I would agree that rights are granted by god. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are all rights that would be given by god, but unfortunately, not all people were given these rights in the 1950's era. This is why I think that rights are granted by the government, and here is why. The first reason is, Brown Vs. Board of education. If rights were granted by god, then there would be no reason for segregation in schools. "Chief justice Warren declaring that states could not segregate public schools on the basis of race without violating the constitutional right of african american students to equal protection of the law." (page 939) But, the government had to step in and grant these rights to the students. Next is the southern manifesto, this was signed by 100 congress members that "condemned the supreme court's desegregation rulings as a clear abuse of judicial power." If rights were granted by god, then all blacks would have equal access to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But, the government steps in to interfere with rights. Finally, the American indian policy. Termination and relocation was the program that Eisenhower administration was going to use for American indians. "Termination called for an

end to the status of indians as wards of the United states, and a grant all of the rights and privileges pertaining to american citizenship." (page 943) This is great, but the government should have never had had to do this in the first place. The relocation program encouraged indians to go to cities and find work. This led to several tribes being terminated, and land being lost that was once the natives. Here is yet another example of the government having to grant these people rights, rather than them having their god given rights their whole lives.

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What truly is a right?
by [Cristian Alamo](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 5:06 PM

We look at both options of the shirt and the statement. "Education is a right" meaning that we as Americans must fund education to make sure that everyone can obtain education. According to Walter Williams that is not a right. A right cannot impose something on a group of people (in this situation higher taxation for greater education). However the statement "College should be tuition free" means that a group of people wishes that college could be free to attended. When Williams states "what have we have done before?" is a valid question. Has social security made our lives much easier and better? Yes. But America survived without social security for about 100+ years before it was put in place. The word "right" is thrown around much more than before and while I believe there are rights that aren't acknowledged by the US government that should be rights. While I disagree with the second amendment, I acknowledge there are rights in the constitution protecting me. Without the US government protecting these rights, I don't think they would exist. But many times the government infringes on our rights and it is our duty to point out and challenge the government whenever we can.

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Rights vs Wishes, and do humans possess rights?
by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 10:01 PM

I feel that Professor Williams' short talk clarified the difference between rights and what other people mistakenly call rights. He explains that while there are rights guaranteed by our Consitution, there is a difference between these rights and wishes. Williams defines a right as "something that exists simultaneously among people. A right does not confer any obligation on another" (Williams video, 0:30 minute mark). What he's saying here is that the rights we are guaranteed as Americans in the Constitution do not trample or infringe upon other citizens. The freedoms we are guaranteed do not require other people to act, and they do not "impose an obligation on somebody else" (Williams video, 1:15). He uses the example of healthcare. Some people say healthcare "is a right". Professor Williams disagrees because providing healthcare to someone costs money. The money has to come from somewhere, which then imposes an obligation on another to provide that money, making it not a right, but instead a wish. Professor Williams says that if we used that same thought process (healthcare being a right) and applied it to the first amendment right of free speech, that would "impose an obligation on others to buy me a studio, to buy me a microphone" (Williams video, 2:12). Rights do not equal wishes. When evaluating the two pictures, with one saying "education is a right", and the other saying "college should be tuition-free", I believe that Williams would consider the picture saying "college should be tuition free" to have a better understanding of actual rights. "Should be" is a wish, and there's nothing wrong with a wish. But saying "education is a right" is inaccurate, as it is not considered a right according to our Constitution.

The question "does any human actually possess any of these things called "rights" or do they only exist when protected and upheld by governmental enforcement?" is an interesting and thought-provoking question to me. I would have to say that humans don't possess rights. Just as we have created cultures, societies, governments, etc, I believe we have also created the idea of rights. I would have to agree that they only exist when protected and upheld by governmental enforcement. You aren't born knowing you have rights, you learn later on what specific rights you are entitled to based on where you live, your gender, your skin color, etc, depending on what specific time in history you are born in. Rights are subject to change and evolve, based on governments. So while it would be awesome if humans actually possessed rights without the influence of government, I think they would not exist without a government upholding them

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights



by [Daniel Zavala](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 10:22 PM

As much as people would like to believe they have inherent rights as human beings, the simple truth is that we only have those rights so long as a governmental body feels the need to respect them. Rights are little more than a human construct, and if a government feel the need to, it can easily decide to take away the rights of its people (unless they have a way to defend themselves, of course).

Concerning the question of Professor Williams, it is abundantly clear that he has a very clear idea of what qualifies as a right (according to the constitution). Considering the two images, I actually think that he would agree more with the statement on the right. Not because I am suggesting to know his opinion on free education, but because I do know that the shirt's message (that education is a right) if factually incorrect. Education is not stated to be a right anywhere in the constitution. Therefore, while the message on the right is purely an opinion, that means that it is at least not objectively incorrect as the shirt on the left is.

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Rights vs. Privileges
by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 10:32 PM

I feel that Walter Williams makes a fine point in clarifying the difference between a right and a privilege by pointing out that a right is "something that does not impose an obligation on somebody else." His example of health care as a privilege commonly mistaken for a right is good, because the cost of healthcare is a burden to all tax-payers. Healthcare being a right is contradictory because of the "care" in the word "healthcare." Sadly, your health does not have the right to be cared for. I think Williams would agree that the picture with the phrase "college should be tuition free" shows a better understanding of rights than the basic statement "education is a right." Education is a privilege, in which we enjoy from the will of others to teach.

Rights to me are clearly granted by government and not god. I have a right to live, and to speak, and god is not here to protect those rights for us. Instead, we have police and other forms of government to ensure that others do not infringe on our rights. They might come from a moral place, but we have a physical body to ensure that these rights are protected. If we had no governing body--there would be chaos, and the entire concept behind these invisible rights would be thrown out the window.

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Re: Rights vs. Privileges
by [Maddie Neale](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 6:17 PM

I completely agree with your post,

I think the fact that Walter Williams clarified that a right can only be considered one if it doesn't give others a burden to bear is key point on this topic. Free speech? Doesn't cost a dime, neither does the right to practice whatever religion you see fit. However when people bring things like free education, free healthcare they never seem to bring up one key point; Who is paying for all that "free" healthcare and education. It is a good idea in theory but it doesn't qualify as a right. I can assure you the supplies and necessary machinery didn't suddenly become free to buy and operate because we passed a free healthcare act. The bill would fall on the taxpayers and other people would ultimately lose money because of it. Therefore this "right" cannot actually be considered one because of the ultimate burden it would put on others.

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Old Amendments, Immigration, & Civil Rights
by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 4:11 PM

It's hard for me to compare the issue of illegal immigration and the historic civil rights era because the issue of civil rights revolves problems for actual citizens of the United States, whereas illegal immigration is an international issue. Not that it doesn't effect our country internally, but illegal immigrants do not have civil rights in America-- regardless of any personal opinion of the concept. "Civil rights" is defined as, "relating to ordinary citizens and their concerns, as distinct from military or ecclesiastical matters." I can see where civil rights could be confused with the issue of illegal immigration from a human rights standpoint, since I think very few of us genuinely enjoy watching

those seeking a better life be battered and bruised--yet as we see in the 14th Amendment, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of **citizens** of the United States." Key word: citizens.

I feel the constitution *is* a living document today for the most-part, because I can't see any gaping holes in our country where it's laws aren't being enacted. The thing is: it's been around long enough now that sort of like the Bible it is open for interpretation. People, lawyers, gov. figures etc., have found ways around the Amendments and often the Constitution is only useful if one fully knows/understands their "rights." The 4th Amendment (search and seizure) is one that quickly comes to mind that I feel is often breached by law enforcement. If someone doesn't know their rights, are they still **always** granted those rights? I find it interesting that it is not mandatory for K-12 schools to teach students their rights as citizens. What does that say about America?

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Re: Old Amendments, Immigration, & Civil Rights
by [David Galbreath](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:39 PM

I agree with the point that the major variable in the comparison is the fact that in the 60s we Civil Rights was talking about U.S. citizens and today we are talking about people who hope to become citizens. That being said I feel the language in the constitution can contradict itself. "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Since the constitution is a living document the language should be cleaned up to stay with the times.

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1 problem
by [David Galbreath](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 11:38 PM

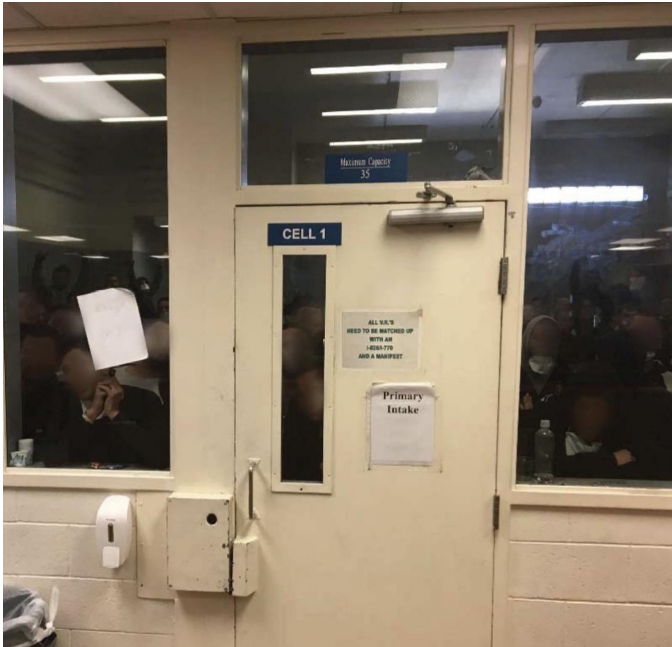
in the 4 minute speech, Williams makes many great definitions of rights I agree that a right cant demand or obligate someone else's time or skills for one person. However, I don't agree with his statement that we must look back to the days before the programs. with that logic, I could easily find a problem with the constitutions and just think 'well, before the constitution we never had this mess." I feel if somethings broken we fix it, not just throw it away. maybe he wasn't entirely implying that we should throw away food stamps, but I don't like that he seems to imply the programs just showed up without reason.

Rights aren't granted by anyone, my personal opinion is that anything act that is a victimless crime or does not involve other people should be a right you hold as an individual. That rule accompanied by the well-stated constitution and bill of rights makes the most sense to me, I appreciate that the bill of rights was written by a committee of well-respected men a couple of hundred years ago. However, times have changed, no men of color were consulted, no women were consulted. if we are going to have a document that attempts to describe each inalienable right of the population shouldn't the entire collective be represented?

To compare the civil rights of the '60s to today's immigration issue is differing on one main point, today we are talking about people without citizenship and the civil rights acts were concerning citizens. My heart goes out to the immigrants of today because they are - in my opinion - being taken advantage of. "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal

protection of the laws." now tell me, does this look like that line is being upheld? 950 bodies were packed into a

holding facility in El Paso that could only legally hold 125 people at max capacity.



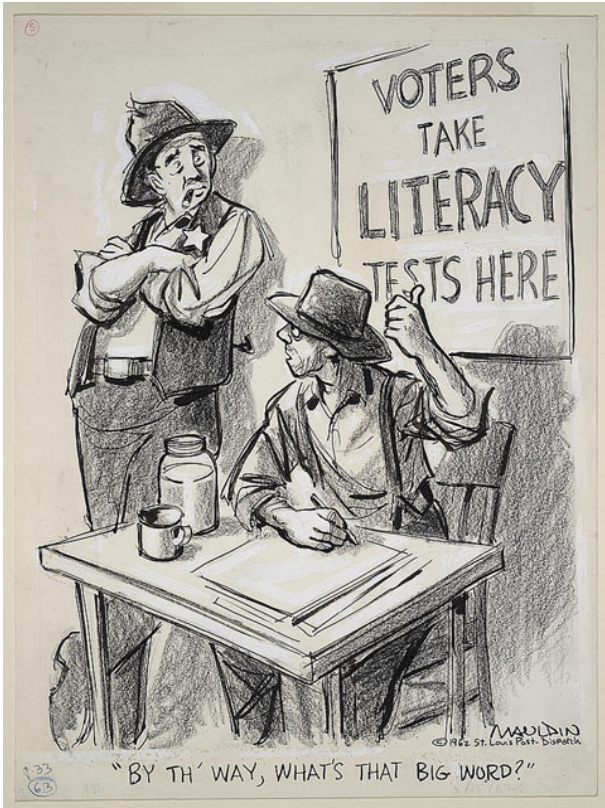
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Literacy tests

by [Jack Swisher](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 1:33 PM



This image here is based upon the outrageous literacy tests that black citizens had to take in the south in order to vote. Here it shows a white man taking the test, and he cannot even read and comprehend the word, literacy. What would happen here is the white man who cannot read well, would easily pass and the black man that took the same test most likely would fail. What this image shows to me, is that no matter if a black person was smarter, as smart, right or wrong, they were going to fail. "There was little room for befuddlement. The test was to be taken in 10 minutes flat, and a single wrong answer meant a failing grade." This was from Rebecca Onion, from slate.com talking about the literacy tests in Louisiana. Onion says more about the tests, she says that the test really has nothing to do with citizenship, it is designed to put the applicant through mental contortions. She also adds that the questions are confusingly worded and sometimes seem like they don't have an answer. The worst part, a white registrar (the sheriff in this image) would be the ultimate judge if the questions were right or wrong. White people really did all they could to put a barrier in front of the chance of black people voting.

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Re: Literacy tests



by [Anna McNutt](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:35 PM

In my junior year of high school my history teacher had us all take one of these literacy tests. None of us passed. None of us were even close to passing. It was very eye opening to me. The test was given only to inhibit blacks from voting. They had the right to vote, legally, but this test stopped them. We've seen this before. "Separate but Equal" was considered fair and just. So things were duplicated, but they were not equal. When a law was put in place to desegregate schools in a "timely matter," people took their sweet time to get it done. We seem to be good at finding loop holes. The literacy tests were one of these loop holes. Blacks could vote, but only if they passed one of these ridiculous, almost impossible, tests that had little to nothing to do with voting.

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Millions for immigration.

by [Trenton Hough](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 3:47 PM

The political cartoon of the homeless United States veteran standing outside the store window is where I get my opinion of immigration to the United States from. I understand that this county was built on immigration and we need immigrants to make the country run the way it does, but the immigration is causing a lot of negative effects. The news reporter in the cartoon says, "Helping the caravan people should be a priority", and I have a big problem with this. Coming to this country to live without citizenship is illegal. If we look at the caravan people as criminals, because they are breaking the law, then I see no reason why we shouldn't throw them in jail with other non-law obeying people. The cost to deal with the illegal immigration problem in our country is very expensive. From housing and feeding the border crossers, to deporting them from there original country adds up to a lot of taxpayers' dollars. Even extreme and absurd tactics like President Trump's wall would cost the government to much money. The cartoon also shows there are bigger problems within our borders. People that are U.S. citizens, veterans or not, are spending their life on the streets with no money or family. I think if we are going to spends millions if not billions of tax dollars on a problem it should be within or borders. I know immigrants are a big part of our booming economy, so I believe the policy written almost 150 years ago should be revised to fit the ever-changing world we live in.

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Williams Makes Some Good Arguments.

by [Zach Edmiston](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 4:05 PM

I believe that rights are in essence a human created concept, and therefore is not created by god, regardless of your religion or beliefs; and therefore it is up to the individual government to grant the proper moral rights to their people in accordance with the general world consensus in order to not be ridiculed by their neighbors. This is an extremely hard topic for me to write about because while there is definitive lines drawn generally with morality among nations that should be held up by governments, however we see plenty of outliers and deviations to this example. As mentioned, governments can also give and take away the rights of their people, and that gives any particular government a significant amount of power over the people, leaving a large potential for a government to take advantage of a population of people. I believe that religion (generally) draws a good moral compass for a people and a government in the modern day despite someone's belief in it, while in the past of many countries (including the US) have used the excuse of religion to commit atrocities among different peoples, which makes it difficult to draw a line in the modern day and time.

Professor Williams brings many different perspectives to the table, some of which I agree with, and some that I do not. At the 0:27-0:41 mark, he addresses a similar point to what I feel I was getting to in my first paragraph, of general moral consensuses. He also brings a valuable opinion to the table about rights not bringing and obligation to others, which he elaborates further. Immediately after, he mentions free speech and travel do not impose obligation on other people, which I believe can be drawn to many other concepts as well. Our right to live without being assaulted or harassed doesn't pose any obligation upon others whereas concepts such as food stamps and healthcare can be argued against (though I don't necessarily argue against it.) because they cost taxpayer money and require regulation by the government. At the 1:50-2:23 mark, he addresses some examples of how he believes the government is pressing some of these rights, and describes the difference between rights and wishes. At 2:52-3:10 of the video, Williams addresses the concept of giving government privilege of deciding what rights people have, and the tendency for people to continue to push for more rights despite the consequences it would impose on the general population. He closes with the example of the Irish landing on the beach of New York as their food

stamp program, which is clever, but I feel still fails to address the main issue of hunger in general, and simply dodges the question I feel. It creates an interesting dichotomy of how much the government should both regulate the people and provide for them.

Williams would agree more with the first picture, because I think it is satirizing the concept of education being a right, which I think he would agree with completely. As I mentioned before, I think that rights are a human generated concept, but they are necessary for any modern civilization to operate properly; however Williams has some good points about the argument regarding whether rights that inflict obligation upon others should really be considered rights.

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Walter E Williams Is Right About Rights

by [Eli Free](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 8:52 PM

"My right to free speech does not impose obligation on another," (Video 0:49) here Walter Williams is laying the foundation of what he believes as the classification of rights. His definition is that a right is something we all have that does not require an obligation from another. For example, if I believed in God, there is no requirement needed to be met by anyone else other than me, thus equaling the right of religion. But, "The right to free healthcare, that's not a right, that imposes obligation on someone else," (Video 1:20) I completely agree with his definition of what a right is. A right is something anyone can do without requiring something from someone else. He would agree with "College education should be free" because it is not stating it as a right, its just simply wishing education was free and that everyone could have it. The t-shirt is saying that "Education is a right," which goes against his definition of a right, which imposes the duty of paying for that education in some way by some one. Ultimately, rights are granted by the government. In some places you don't have the right to speak freely, or worship a different god. Rights are basically made up rules that most humans have agreed to live by. Specific rights didn't exist long ago, you lived for the purpose of reproducing and caring for your offspring, and then you died. Rights will forever change because they are something that was created, meaning they can be destroyed just as easily.

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Williams is for "College should be tuition free"

by [Nicolette D Erazo](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 9:18 PM

"A right does not confer any obligation on another," according to Walter Williams. One of his examples of this was that "our right to travel does not impose any obligation on another person" and that we share these rights simultaneously. Traveling does not directly effect another person and we can engage in this without placing expectations on others in a way that would take away their right to the same thing, according to Williams. We aren't expecting others to pay for our travel ticket, because if that was the case, then this right would turn into a "wish". Relating this idea to the two images of the shirts discussing education "rights" have me believing that Williams would agree with the statement "College should be tuition free" because saying that "Education is a right" would imply that your right to go to school, whether able to afford it or not, is placing an obligation on someone else to cover your expenses. Saying that "College should be tuition tree" is an opinion and a wish, stating that a situation should be a certain way.

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights

by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 9:29 PM

Should the 14th Amendment apply to situations that occurred nearly 150 years after its adoption in very specific situations?

I think that can be applied, but you must also understand the purpose of the amendment. It has been used to recognize black slaves as US citizens. it says in the document article 2 material. (In Brown v. Board of Education 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren and the Court of Justice put an end to the idea of "separate but equal"). it may be the role of the meeting. Gather all peoples, whatever your background, your skin color and take out the injustice between populations. Which gives the same right to everyone. But the problem of our time is a problem that exists

in the eyes of the 14th amendment, discriminations, separations based on the color of the skin, or the origin. people no longer respect the rights of another race. Because you're Mexican or different from my color, they'll treat you like a second-class citizen. you are judged and misunderstood.

I think the 14th yield is the same from 1868 until today. and this has been put in place to put an end to discrimination between citizens and immigrants. So I think it can be applied to situations that happened almost 150 years after its adoption, in very specific situations.

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Re: Rights, Rights, Rights
by [Tiffanie Chapman](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:01 PM

I understand your point of view but I would say that I respectfully disagree. Since we are looking at the constitutional rights and not the "universal human rights" then I would state that you can't apply the 14th amendment to the issues that are happening today. Illegal immigration can't compare to the treatment of African Americans back in the 50's and 60's. Illegal Immigrants do not have constitutional rights like African Americans had a right to attain. The 14th amendment states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States," the civil rights movement was valid due to the fact that all African Americans were born here in the United States. Illegal immigrants are here illegally, which means they have no constitutional rights because they were not born here or have been naturalized as a U.S. citizen.

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Rights require no obligations
by [Nicolette D Erazo](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:07 PM

Williams did a great job of identifying exactly what a right is. He stated in the video that " a right does not impose an obligation on another". With this information, it could be said that a right leaves no requirements for someone else or imposes on their own rights. Wallace talks about how people assume free health care is a right, when in reality, free health care requires someone else to fulfill the obligation to pay for your expense in the long run. A right does not have this expectation, its only requirements come from your own person.

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Immigrant Rights
by [Anthony Nguyen](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:54 PM

Citizen rights and human rights are different--all humans deserve basic human rights afforded to us by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but only citizens of a certain country should be able to enjoy that country's citizen rights. I believe the US should treat illegal immigrants with human rights, but not necessarily citizen rights, at least until they begin the process of legal citizenship. There are positives and negative to giving illegal immigrants citizen rights. There is no point in even having a border if we treat illegal immigrants as citizens and we cannot simply have open borders to all because it would hurt our country and its citizens if so many immigrants came flooding here. However, our country also represents opportunity and provides a chance to those from struggling countries to have a better life for them, their children and their family, so I understand the motivations for moving here and I do believe that people who want American citizenship deserve a chance to live here as they can help better our country too. I hope that we can strike an appropriate balance between these two opposing interests.

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God vs. Government
by [Robert Whitney](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:54 PM

Just by taking a quick look at our term this year, you will see that in just about everything we have studied there is mention of a God. I believe that rights are granted by "God" and upheld by the government. From our Declaration of Independence, to our pledge of allegiance, to the way we inaugurate our presidents, there is mention of a God, a Christian God. Considering most, if not all of our authors of early American documents (Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, etc.) were Christians, it is not hard to believe that they built our laws with consideration of how God would feel about them.

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