

Walter Williams: Economist of Liberty

Suggested Videos

Walter Williams: Suffer No Fools (Free to Choose Network, 2015)

<https://youtu.be/YZGvQcxoAPg>

(54 minutes, 50 seconds)

“Good Intentions” with Walter Williams (Free to Choose Network, 1985)

<https://youtu.be/L5TS8QUJWXo>

(27 minutes, 44 seconds)

U.S. Constitution Connections

(John W. Hammond Institute for Free Enterprise, 2019)

<https://youtu.be/ga9sOh0BwLc>

(27 minutes, 30 seconds)

Can Taxation Be Immoral? (Heritage Foundation, 2015)

<https://youtu.be/xARsG7Ss9E8>

(4 minutes)

How Minimum Wage Laws Discriminate

(Young America's Foundation, 2021)

<https://youtu.be/HEP5oOFaESo>

(5 minutes, 10 seconds)

Walter E. Williams, Free Market Scholar and Iconoclast, RIP

(ReasonTV, 2020)

<https://youtu.be/GwpNqQn8Lyo>

(3 minutes, 58 seconds)

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Video Discussion Questions

Walter Williams: Suffer No Fools

What value did Williams's work provide to his students and collaborators? What qualities do those who were interviewed for this documentary appreciate and admire in him?

"Good Intentions" with Walter Williams

How have social conditions like employment, family structure, and crime rates in low-income neighborhoods changed since 1985? What remains the same?

What drives support for charter schools and private schools in low-income neighborhoods? Why do some people and organizations oppose these alternatives to conventional public schools? What are the strengths of each side's arguments?

U.S. Constitution Connections

What is socialism? Why does Williams object to it? What's the difference between the "democratic socialism" practiced, ostensibly, in some northern European countries, and socialism as practiced in, for instance, the former Soviet Union?

In this conversation, Williams expresses pessimism about the future of liberty in America. Do you agree with Williams when he argues that freedom is diminishing in the U.S.? Or are you more optimistic? Back up your answer with specific examples from recent news.

Williams argues that the family is under attack in America today, especially from government and the welfare system. What does it mean for "the family" to be "breaking down"? Do you see this happening around you, or do you think Williams is exaggerating the scale of the problem? Where do threats to the family come from?

Can Taxation Be Immoral?

"Reaching into one's own pockets to help one's fellow man in need is praiseworthy and laudable," says Williams, but "reaching into someone else's pocket to help ... is despicable." What's the difference between these two approaches, both in terms of their moral justification and their actual consequences for the people who receive this help?

Do you agree with Williams that taxation for such purposes is a form of theft?

How Minimum Wage Laws Discriminate

Williams says we must judge public policies by their *effects*, not their *intentions*. Why does he believe this is so important? What are the bad effects, in Williams's analysis, of the good intentions behind minimum wage laws? Why do so many people support a minimum wage?

Walter Williams, Free Market Scholar and Economist, RIP

"Liberty," says Williams, "is the rare state of affairs in mankind's history. Arbitrary abuse and control by others is the standard dish, even now." What did he mean by this? Why might "arbitrary control" be "normal" in human history? What conditions help make societies free?