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## Taxes and who does not have to pay them

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The conservative party has strong beliefs in small government, lower taxes, and fewer regulations, what many call the Republican three-legged stool. They have been successful in their accomplishments; in that, they have reduced regulations and taxes. The conundrum is that when in office, they have not reduced government spending. While they have held the presidency 24 of the last 40 years, their record of deficits is inconsistent with what they say. Under every Republican president, including Ronald Reagan, our national debt has grown — a lot.

Conversely, under the two Democratic presidents, the national debt has been reduced. During the last two years under President Clinton, we were paying down the national debt. Under President Obama, the national debt he inherited was skyrocketing, but before he left, it was in decline. The "tax and spend liberals" have held the presidency for 16 years, and they decreased the deficits they inherited, while the "conservative Republicans" have increased the deficits.

While the Republicans did increase the debt, they were successful in lowering taxes, one of their strongest beliefs. Of course, their success is also a problem. In 2018, the first year of the Trump tax reduction act, almost 100 of the Fortune 500 companies "effectively paid no federal taxes." Additionally, 60 of the same companies earned \$79 billion in the same year. How do you make \$79 billion in profits and have no tax liability?

In 2018, with the new corporate tax rate, Amazon and Netflix, because of their profits, should have paid \$16.4 billion (21 percent) in taxes, but they paid nothing. While not paying taxes, they received \$4.3 billion in tax rebates. To make this clear, Fortune 500 companies that are profitable pay no taxes and are given tax rebates. I would guess that the more you do not pay, the higher the rebate; at least, it seems that way.

In addition to their success of reducing the corporate tax rate or eliminating the taxes altogether, conservatives, and others, added corporate welfare, otherwise known as corporate subsidies. Corporate subsidies have been around for years. General Motors, Boeing, and Intel have all been recipients of billions of dollars of subsidies. The fossil fuel industry receives around \$20 billion in subsidies each year. The CATO Institute, a very conservative organization, estimates that "the U.S. Government spends around \$100 billion annually on corporate welfare."

The question should be, how do tax breaks result in no taxes for billionaires and corporations, and at the same time, the corporations are entitled to subsidies? The answer is simple, tax breaks for friends and family, called wealthy people and corporations, that result in contributions to campaigns. The conservatives are willing to compromise on spending with the Democrats, provided the tax rates do not change. Compromising tax rates might reduce contributions to their campaigns.

Recently, conservatives complained that an additional \$300 per week for unemployment was making people lazy. \$100 billion in corporate welfare is not on the table, corporate tax rates are not on the table, but your \$300 unemployment check is on the table. There is a difference between \$100 billion and the \$300; the difference is that you will pay taxes on the unemployment check.