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### Opinion: Pro and Con on Charitable-Deduction Limits

December 17, 2012, 10:43 am

Detailed arguments for and against abolishing or limiting tax breaks for charitable gifts are aired in dueling *Wall Street Journal* pieces by a senior fellow at a prominent libertarian think-tank and the head of the nonprofit umbrella group leading the lobbying effort to preserve the deduction.

Calling for an end to the deduction, Daniel J. Mitchell of Washington's [Cato](#) Institute notes that giving by Americans has remained static for years as a proportion of GDP despite changes in tax policy that have raised or lowered the value of such breaks, and that they disproportionately benefit high earners who least need the benefit.

Diana Aviv, president and CEO of [Independent Sector](#), counters that taxpayers who claim the deduction are responsible for more than three-quarters of all U.S. giving, and she cites surveys in which most wealthy donors say they would cut back on contributing if they did not get a tax break.

Robert J. Shiller, a Yale economics professor, also weighs in for preserving the deduction in a *New York Times* column.

Read more *Chronicle of Philanthropy* coverage of the "fiscal cliff" and the charitable-deduction debate.

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