



American Contempt for Liberty (Hoover Institution Press Publication)

Walter E. Williams

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Throughout history, personal liberty, free markets, and peaceable, voluntary exchanges have been roundly denounced by tyrants and often greeted with suspicion by the general public. Unfortunately, Americans have increasingly accepted the tyrannical ideas of reduced private property rights and reduced rights to profits, and have become enamored with restrictions on personal liberty and control by government. In this latest collection of essays selected from his syndicated newspaper columns, Walter E. Williams takes on a range of controversial issues surrounding race, education, the environment, the Constitution, health care, foreign policy, and more. Skewering the self-righteous and self-important forces throughout society, he makes the case for what he calls the "the moral superiority of personal liberty and its main ingredient—limited government." With his usual straightforward insights and honesty, Williams reveals the loss of liberty in nearly every important aspect of our lives, the massive decline in our values, and the moral tragedy that has befallen Americans today: our belief that it is acceptable for the government to forcibly use one American to serve the purposes of another.

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From Reader Review American Contempt for Liberty (Hoover Institution Press Publication) for online ebook

mary vermont says

Must Read

He is so right on and i love his humor.

This was my interdiction to his writing for sure it won't be the last!

Should be required reading for all Americans

James says

While I respect some of what Professor Williams mentioned, this was a very hard read for a lot of reasons. For every point he made that was right, like that free healthcare isn't free because people who don't work are getting theirs from those who do work, there are two times when he would claim that things like wheelchair ramps in public places are a violation of the Constitution and shouldn't be allowed.

He also places a lot of the blame for the failing economy on farmers and ranchers. Why? They're an easy target. If you read his book, agriculture is a bunch of selfish criminals and socialists who could feed the world if they weren't so wrapped up in stealing from the government. How about the auto industry? The bailouts were stealing from the American People, he claims, but not a word about how the executives took the money and ran with it. No, the problem is that those companies should have been made to close their doors and the workers forced out on the street because after all, Professor Williams mentions several times that he drives cars built by Lexus, a company that builds their cars in Japanese factories. So if we can't buy an American made product, so what? It doesn't affect him.

He has an article about women in the military, specifically in the battlefield. He believes that allowing women to be in combat positions, we are weakening our forces because women "aren't as physically capable" and a hindrance because if they get pregnant, now they need to be evacuated which uses resources better used elsewhere. Here's a thought, Mr Williams, perhaps if our soldiers are instructed to either keep their pants zipped or use protection, that won't be a problem. There have been several armies that had women on the front lines. In World War II, many of the best snipers of the war were Russian women. He says that women do not sign up for the draft. This is an ignorant lie. They are not required to, but some women do sign up for the draft. Please at least make some effort to join the twentieth century before we're too far into the twenty-first.

He goes on many lengthy rants about how the government shouldn't have the right to force us to wear seatbelts, make laws banning smoking in certain places, how the FDA will sit on helpful medicines while thousands die and how taxes are misused. But then he goes on to say that it's the obligation of the US to go into Iran and make sure they don't have nuclear weapons and how it was partially the fault of the US that Nazi Germany rose and killed millions. That we should have been over in Europe during the depression forcing them not to write their laws and the groundwork for Hitler to rise to power. Really? We are supposed to go and demand other countries do what we want, but just as long as we don't do anything here that might be construed as interference in people's lives?

There are some points that he makes that are correct. Don't get me wrong. One of them is the abysmal state of the education system in the US. Students are graduated with a high school diploma that says they know things that they don't, then colleges just pass them through without actually teaching them anything but hate.

He points out that many colleges hire people who have been convicted of terrorism and that many classes now are based on crucifying the US for our history and imagined slights to other countries or races. How historically it was merchants and slavers from the Middle East and Africa who actually sold slaves to other countries, but that they are not having to be forced to make reparations.

He does make some valid arguments, but he buries them in so much bad logic and false economic or moral dogma that he undermines it to the point of disputing a lot of what I think he was trying to say.

Ietrio says

From the sunny Guatemala comes a doctor honoris causa, an academic bureaucrat who doubles as Sunday school ventriloquist:

"What would the founders think about the US Supreme Court's 2005 Kelo v. City of New London decision where the court sanctioned the taking of private property of one American to hand over to another American? John Adams explained: [bla bla]"

I think they were dead a few years before 2005. But Williams is also able to channel John Adams with a clear response. And somehow John Adams is quite aware of the City of New London. I am not. Shame on me!

Or "How to Control Congress." Easy!

"The bottom line is that Americans need a constitutional amendment limiting congressional spending to some fraction, say 20 percent, of the GDP. That limit could be exceeded only if the president declared a state of emergency along with a two-thirds vote of approval in both houses of Congress. Each year of a declared state of emergency would require another two-thirds vote in each house."

Yea, but how? Through magic! Williams has no idea. But he rants and his ignorance comes along with Lenin type of solutions.

"Immorality in government lies at the heart of our nation's problems."

He's a preacher too.

Too bad Guatemala is so corrupted. But wait till this guy solves ALL the problems the States have. Only then he'll make Guatemala clean. Right?

Susan says

Excellent Concepts and Thought Provoking

However, it was a compilation of many dated essays spanning several years and, as such, there was quite a bit of redundancy.

Jacob O'connor says

Are problems best solved by government? Walter Williams offered a provocative answer. He observes that the most contentious issues, the ones that most divide Americans are those that were "solved" through politics. This strikes me as true. You don't find protests about Microsoft vs. Apple. There are no demonstrations about Chevy or Ford, and the most vehement Nintendo fan-boy is content to let XBox aficionados live in peace. The reason is obvious upon reflection. Each of the above has a free market means to express himself. Don't like Microsoft? Buy Apple. You can fire Chevy by driving Ford. But If you're opposed to abortion, you're stuck with the ruling from on high. Want stricter gun laws? You have to lobby. Maybe we should leave less up to government.

This is a collection of articles from Williams' column. Usually that would annoy me, but Williams is so wise that I'd read his crossword puzzles.

Sylvester Kuo says

I love Walter E. Williams and Thomas Sowell, but Williams is just not as good a writer as Sowell. American Contempt for Liberty is a collection of columns he wrote in recent years regarding the Constitution, Politics, Race, Education, Environment and so on. It wasn't a bad read except there wasn't anything I haven't heard from the columns, whatever Williams wrote, Sowell have written better. Though I do find his work on recent events helpful for future readers who did not experience the problems we experienced today.

Some of the articles were quite repetitive, the editor should have weaved them out not with a chronological manner, but a thematic manner.

Brian says

Walter Williams is an American economist, commentator, and academic. He is the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics at George Mason University, as well as a syndicated columnist. He was a favorite fill-in for Rush Limbaugh and a possible Vice President candidate to Ron Paul had he won the nomination. Mr. Williams is an 80 year old black man with a mostly libertarian bent to him, which if nothing else puts him in rare air.

This book is a lengthy compilation of articles(since 2009) he has written. In these various pieces you get a broad examination of issues that affect us all in mostly negative ways. As an Economist he has a very rational way of looking at the problems and offers solutions that are not sympathetic to cry babies and lay-a-bouts. He does not find much to agree with on the left, and certainly has no qualms with throwing stones at the republicans also. He isn't afraid to shatter myths, setting the record straight on issues where he feels like the level of absurdity has run amuck.

I found many of his critiques laudable and are likely to expand your thinking on the issues we face. A wise use of time reading this, these are fairly short articles so its easy to read in segments. The negative of the book is that there are many articles that recite other articles you just finished, sometimes verbatim in part. Great book to offer someone who is not informed.

Kagan2017 says

Williams is right of course, for most things he says. But the book gets very repetitive. It looks like a collection of articles. Good content sure, but it gets a bit old from repetition.

Will says

A collection of columns by the prominent black conservative. Nice to have them in one place. Inevitably, there is much repetition.
