

Answering Question #4

4. How much of our income do Americans believe is appropriate for government to take in taxes? _____%

Based on our pilot survey, Americans generally feel that government should take about 12% of our income for taxes. But have you considered what high taxation really is?

In lectures given across the nation, former U.S. Congressman Bob McEwen explains taxation in terms of freedom and slavery. Let's say that a man named Joe has a job that pays him \$50,000 per year. If he keeps 100% of that money, he has 100% freedom in that year to purchase whatever he wants up to \$50,000. Because he is frugal, he can take care of his basic needs, take a family vacation, and even save a little for a rainy day.

But if the government takes 50% of that money, Joe has only \$25,000 per year left and it becomes difficult for him to pay for his home, his car, and put food on the table. His freedom to purchase has been diminished, and a family vacation is now defined as a picnic in the backyard. Saving some money for a rainy day is out of the question.

But what if government takes 60% of Joe's earnings in taxes? His usable income is now \$20,000 per year and his freedom to purchase is reduced to the point that he can't get by, so he applies for government assistance in the form of food stamps and housing subsidies. Then he learns that if he makes too much money he is taxed more and can no longer qualify for subsidies, so he is careful not to work too much. He is better off financially to be less productive and receive money from government programs. He has become dependent upon government.

You get the point. The more of our money that the government takes in taxes, the less freedom we have. When someone takes nearly all of what we produce, and only allows us to have basic needs to survive, they make us dependent, not independent. That is not freedom; that is called slavery.

Reasonable people understand that some government is necessary and thus some level of taxation is necessary and appropriate. But as citizens in a free society, we should only ask government to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, and we should expect the benefit of that service to be worth the tax money that we contribute. In other words, government works for us, we don't work for government. But when government assumes it can tax more and more, and does not need to be accountable to produce equal benefits, we are on the road to tyranny and slavery.