

# Libertarianism

- Individuals are not only implements to do social good, but have fundamental individual rights
- The fundamental individual right is independence - we are not available for use to improve the society
- "To live our lives freely, as long as we respect others' right to do the same"
- Libertarians believe that governments do 3 things that are illegitimate:
  - Paternalistic legislation: protecting people from themselves (e.g. forcing people to wear seatbelts)
    - This removes their independence to do as they want
  - Moral legislation: promoting morality (e.g. prevent sexual intimacy between gays and lesbians)
    - This removes their independence to do as they want
  - Taxation to redistribute income (e.g. giving money from the rich to the poor)
    - This is like theft from those who happened to do well
- What makes income distribution just?
  - Justice in acquisition: is the thing that enabled someone to gather wealth something that they got fairly (e.g. wasn't stolen)
  - Justice in transfer: the wealth was gained from the free market (i.e. people's free will to choose to trade)
- Robert Nozick (a libertarian) had an argument against taxation for redistribution:
  - Taxation is like taking a certain portion of their earnings
  - This is equivalent to taking a certain portion of their labor
  - This is like forced labor (or slavery)
  - This violates the principle of self-possession
- Milton Friedman (a libertarian economist) argued for a minimal state (minimize public goods and services)
  - He says it's wrong for the government to force people to save for their retirement
    - People should be able to choose to leave a poor retirement and live rich right now
- Objections to libertarianism:
  - The poor need the money more
  - It's not slavery to tax (because the governed consent to it)
  - Don't the poor owe a debt to the government for their success