

Bonus Video:

Basic Income: Pros and Cons

Segment Length: 3:46 minutes

Basic Income: Pros and Cons shows two sides of this hot topic that promises to become even hotter.

Description:

Some people argue that a guaranteed basic income is simply a more effective and efficient safety net than what we have now. Others say it fundamentally redefines the role of government and people's obligations to themselves and their families.

But what is the role of government? And what role do incentives play—incentives to work or to not work.

(Like to see two sides presented to encourage critical thinking and great classroom? Check out our Both Sides feature on SITC.org.)

Pair with:

Basic Income: Pros and Cons is a good standalone lesson, but it pairs well with Why Politicians Don't Cut Spending, which is on our 2018 DVD and streamed on SITC.org.

Preview Activity:

Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer the preview questions. After a few minutes, poll the students and ask them to discuss their answers.

If you got an allowance but did not have to earn it through chores, how would that affect you in the short term? In the long term?

Discussion and Analysis:

1. What is a Basic Income, as discussed in the video?
2. Why does Oren Cass say that a Basic Income could be better than welfare? What happens to welfare recipients now who increase their earnings? How does that affect their incentive to earn more?
3. How much did Oren Cass say a Basic Income program would cost? How could the government afford that?
4. What might be the impact on people who continue to work for a living?
5. Would a Basic Income become a political issue, with some politicians advocating more money to people to get their votes? With more citizens receiving money than paying for the program, how would this play out politically?

Post-Viewing Activities:

1. Have students complete the Basic Income: Pros and Cons worksheet.
2. Research and report on current Basic Income proposals in the United States.
3. Research and explain the term: "concentrated benefits and dispersed costs." How might that explain the incentives of politicians and voters?

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Per _____

Teacher _____

Basic Income: Pros and Cons

P = Plus: What are some perceived benefits of a universal basic income?

M = Minus: What are some perceived drawbacks of a universal basic income?

I = Interesting: What are some interesting aspects of a universal basic income?

+ Plusses +	- Minuses -	I

Before today's video and lesson, had you previously heard about a Basic or Universal Basic Income? _____. If yes, what did you hear about it? _____

Would a Basic Income be an incentive or a disincentive for people, or both? _____. Explain: _____

How would a Basic Income be paid for? _____

Based on what you know, would you support a Basic Income program? _____. Why / Why not? _____

Name _____

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Class _____ Per _____

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Basic Income: Pros and Cons

Directions: Read each argument and depending on your view, circle Agree, Disagree, or Unsure for each.

Arguments for a Basic Income

1. A Basic Income program will eliminate poverty.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
2. All people will be able to live with dignity.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
3. A Basic Income program will protect people from unemployment once automation eliminates many low-paid jobs.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
4. It is simpler than the current, expensive social welfare programs. Further, all citizens are paid so there is no need to spend funds to verify eligibility.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
5. It can free people to do things they want to do without worrying about money.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
6. Those who do not need the money can give it to charity.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure

Arguments against a Basic Income

1. Many people will stop working and live a poorer quality of life.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
2. A Basic Income program gives money to citizens who are working and don't need it.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
3. A Basic Income program will discourage people from working. They will pay less in taxes, giving the government less money to spend.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
4. Over time, people will lose their ambition to work, as they see so many others not working.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
5. A Basic Income program will cost more than current social welfare payments and bankrupt the country.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure
6. Those who continue to work will have to pay higher taxes.
Agree / Disagree / Unsure

What lesson(s) did you learn from the exercise above? _____

Adapted from "Should Governments Pay A Basic Income?" (<https://www.esidebates.com/should-governments-pay-a-basic-income/>) We encourage teachers to use the lesson and materials that have been developed on that website, and to explore other lessons there.