
BONUS VIDEO: WHY POLITICIANS DON'T CUT SPENDING

Segment Length: 2:19 minutes

Description:

Why Politicians Don't Cut Spending is a good video to spark discussion in an economics, government, or critical thinking class.

Why do politicians never seem to reduce spending? With federal debt at \$20 billion, nearly \$62,000 per citizen, why does federal spending continue to increase? Why Politicians Don't Cut Spending explains the concept of concentrated benefits and dispersed costs, which favors recipients of government payouts at the expense of the average taxpayer.

Preview Activity and Questions:

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.

Why does the government spend so much money? Where does that money come from?
Why don't taxpayers do something about it?

OR

Do you like when the government spends money on you? What about when it spends money on others?

Discussion and Analysis:

1. Can government spend too much money? How much is too much?
2. Why doesn't government just stop spending so much money?
3. What political problems might arise for elected representatives who try to reduce government spending?
4. Explain the term concentrated benefits and dispersed costs?
5. Benjamin Powell connects voting to government spending and explains this in terms of incentives. Why do people have different incentives to vote or not to vote?
6. What can be done to change this? Why happens if we don't?

Post-Viewing Activities:

1. The U.S. Debt Clock (<http://www.usdebtclock.org/>) can help put federal spending in perspective.
2. Research the federal budget. Where does the money go? To whom does it go? Explain the budget in terms of concentrated benefits and dispersed costs.