

Shapiro on Biden's "Lie" About Taxes

Here's Ben Shapiro commenting on a part of Biden's Congressional Address.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dk6j_M_bge8&t=1810s

"When he says that rich people don't pay their fair share in this country, that is just an abject, disgusting lie. It is a lie. The top 10% of income earners in this country pay *all* net taxes—not *some* of the net taxes—*all* of the net taxes. Because 'net taxes' are defined as what you pay into the government minus what you get back from the government." (2:02:06-2:02:23)

I think it's really weird for Ben to call this claim is a lie: (R) Rich people don't pay their fair share.

'Lie' implies intentional deceit.

But claim R is, at least partly, a moral or philosophical claim about fairness, and there can be honest, sincere disagreement over what constitutes fairness.

Ben seems to assume that we all agree on his standard of fairness, and that people who assert R are lying about whether rich people meet his standard.

But a much more plausible and charitable interpretation is that people who assert R have different standards of fairness than Ben.

There are different and competing views about fairness both within common sense morality and philosophical accounts of distributive justice.

Personally, I think Ben's views about fairness are pretty implausible, but I'll address that later.