

A Note Re:
Too Much to Favored Citizens
Too Little to Citizens in Real Need

Americans all too often hear articulate, well-reasoned appeals for tax funds and private donations from citizens described demographically as upper income, education and social class—self-styled “intellectuals”. They are appealing for support for “the arts”—opera, symphonies, theatre, public lectures and exhibits—which they value, but the marketplace does not. Opponents are denigrated as anti-intellectual, ignorant and/or unappreciative of “good” art.

My intellectual credentials will meet almost any criteria: mensa qualification, Ph.D. in economics, eleven academic books and 70+ peer-reviewed scientific treatises published, six patents awarded. And I am upper income and social class. But my tastes do not demonstrate fealty to my “upper” peers: musicals such as *The Fantastiks*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man*, and *Jersey Boys*; songs by Kris Kristofferson, Hank Williams, Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson; novels by Robert Heinlein, W.E.B. Griffin, Harry Turtledove and Vince Flynn.

My tastes are well-supported in the marketplace. But if they were not, I would neither ask nor expect taxpayers and donors to support the creators of that art; nor would those artists seek such support. Why should I, as taxpayer or donor, contribute to the support of products which I hardly ever consume, and the marketplace does not profitably reward?

We in America are most fortunate. We have the highest living standards on earth. And yet, our resources are not unlimited. We must choose among competing needs for those resources. While some argue that the arts are worthy, most citizens would agree that other needs are more compelling.

Too many of our citizens really need tax and private donation support: families ill-feed and -housed, homeless individuals (many who are veterans), people suffering mental or physical disabilities, workers displaced by technology. Few if any of these citizens are upper income, education and social class. By what moral criteria do we as a nation lavishly support the latter while inadequately providing for the former?