



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on June 3, 2015

Intellectual Dishonesty

President Barack Obama's stance, expressed in his 2014 State of the Union address, is that the debate is settled and climate change is a fact. Obama is by no means unique in that view. Former Vice President Al Gore declared that "the science is settled." This "settled science" vision about climate is held by many, including those in academia. To call any science settled is sheer idiocy. Had mankind acted as though any science could possibly be settled, we'd be living in caves, as opposed to having the standard of living we enjoy today. That higher standard of living stems from challenges to what might have been seen as "scientific fact."



According to mathematician Samuel Arbesman's book, *The Half-Life of Facts: Why Everything We Know Has an Expiration Date*, many ideas taken as facts today will be shown to be wrong as early as five years from now. Arbesman argues that a study published in a physics journal will lose half its value in 10 years.

Many academics know that to call any science settled is nonsense. But their leftist political sentiments and lack of academic integrity prevent them from criticizing public officials and the media for misleading a gullible public about global warming.

The concept of white privilege, along with diversity and multiculturalism, is part of today's campus craze. Millions of dollars are spent on conferences and other forums teaching students about the horrors of white privilege. A Vanderbilt University sociology professor said white privilege is to blame for the Baltimore riots and looting.

I wonder how one goes about determining whether a person is privileged. White privilege can't be based on median income. Why? It turns out that Asian-American households had the highest median income (\$68,636) in 2012. Median income for white households was \$57,000. Maybe our academic elite should condemn Asian privilege instead of white privilege. But there's another problem. My income puts me in America's top 5 percent. If those who condemn white privilege could not see my dark brown skin color, they would also condemn me for white privilege. The bottom line to this campus nonsense is that "privilege" has become the new word for "personal achievement."

President Obama has often said the wealthiest Americans must make sacrifices to better the lives of poor people. At Georgetown University's May 12 poverty summit, Obama said, "If we can't ask from society's lottery winners to just make that modest investment, then really this conversation is for show." Let's look at this "lottery winner" nonsense.

A lottery is defined by Oxford Dictionaries as "a process or thing whose success or outcome is governed by chance." The question before us is whether wealth is something that is obtained by chance. Did Bill Gates acquire his wealth by luck or chance? Or did he produce something that benefited his fellow man,



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causing people to voluntarily reach in their pockets to pay?

Gayle Cook and her late husband, William Cook, founded a medical device company using a spare bedroom in their apartment as a factory. Their company specializes in stents and antibiotic catheters. Now Gayle Cook has a net worth in the billions of dollars. Was she a winner in the lottery of life, or did she have to do something like serve her fellow man?

Are those who work hard, take risks, make life better for others and become wealthy in the process the people who should be held up to ridicule and scorn? And should we make mascots out of social parasites?

Obama talked about asking “from society’s lottery winners to just make that modest investment.” Congress doesn’t ask people for money. Through intimidation, threats and coercion, it takes people’s earnings. If people don’t comply, the agents of Congress will imprison them.

Most instructive for us is that Obama’s remarks were made at a university. Not a single professor has said anything about his suggestion that people accumulate great wealth by winning life’s lottery. That is just more evidence about the level of corruption among today’s academics.

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