Kleinbard

We Are Better Than This

How Government Should Spend Our Money



We Are Better Than This fundamentally reframes budget debates in the United States. Author Edward D. Kleinbard explains how the public's preoccupation with tax policy alone has obscured any understanding of government's ability to complement the private sector through investment and insurance programs that enhance the general welfare and prosperity of our society at large. He argues that when we choose how government should spend and tax, we open a window into our "fiscal soul," because those choices are the means by which we express the values we cherish and the regard in which we hold our fellow citizens. Though these values are being diminished by short-sighted decisions to starve government, strategic government spending can directly make citizens happier, healthier, and even wealthier. Expertly combining the latest economic research with his insider knowledge of the budget process into a simple yet compelling narrative, he unmasks the tax mythologies and false arguments that too often dominate contemporary discourse about budget policies. Large quantities of comparative data are succinctly distilled to situate the United States among its peer countries, so that readers can judge for themselves whether contemporary budget choices really reflect our aspirational fiscal soul. Kleinbard's presentation takes a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing on economics, finance, law, political science and moral philosophy. He uniquely weaves economic research and moral philosophy together by emphasizing our welfare, not just our national income, and by contrasting the actual beliefs of Adam Smith, a great moral philosopher, with the cartoon version of the man presented by proponents of the most extreme forms of private market triumphalism.

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