



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

fff@fff.org www.fff.org

Some Civics Lesson for My Son

by Don Boudreaux

My son, Thomas Macaulay Boudreaux, is seven years old. He's the most precious creature in the world to me. My wife, Karol, and I will never indoctrinate him, but we do and we will teach him as best we can. Here's a list of some of the lessons that he'll get from me as he grows into manhood.

- Even in principle, government is not synonymous with society.
- In practice, government is an enemy of civil society.
- Even popularly elected government does not in any meaningful sense represent his interests or those of civil society.
 - No one can or will represent his interests as well as he, personally, can and will do so (once he's an adult!).
 - People who seek political power are, with exceptions too rare to matter, never to be trusted; at best, such people are vain and officious busybodies.
 - People who actually *achieve* political power are to be trusted even less than those who seek it without success; winning elections requires a measure of deceitfulness and Machiavellian immorality that no decent person comes close to possessing.
 - He owes *no* allegiance to any government, regardless of the design of its flag or the familiarity of the hymns that it sings to itself.
 - If he is ever asked to die for a government that claims a monopoly over his allegiance, he should politely refuse.
 - In fact, government is not in the habit of *asking* for anything; instead, government coercively *demand*s. So, if and when government demands that he soldier for it, he should refuse to do so. He should go to Canada, become a Quaker, fake an obsession with homo-necrophilia — that is, he should do whatever he must to prevent brutes in suits from forcing him to risk his life for their cause.

- Above all, he should be forever skeptical of received wisdoms and truths — but always understand that there *is* much genuine wisdom and many valuable truths in our world; skepticism is indispensable for sorting these relatively few gems from the pack of impostors.

[Don Boudreaux](#) *is head of the economics department at George Mason University.*

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