



## Economic Fairness

Say a person wants to become a taxi owner. He has a driver's license, a car, and accident liability insurance. Is it fair that in New York City, he has to first purchase a taxi license (medallion) that as of October sold for \$1 million? Taxi licenses in Chicago go for \$56,000. In Boston, they are \$285,000, and in Philadelphia, they run \$75,000. Is that fair competition?

In some cities, to own a taxi one must obtain a certificate of "public convenience and necessity." At a Public Utility Commission hearing, incumbent taxi owners show up with their attorneys to protest that another taxi company is not needed, and the application is denied. I'd like to have Obama — or anyone else — tell us whether that's fair competition.



The Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 is a law with racist origins and broad congressional support. During the 1931 legislative debate over the Davis-Bacon Act, which mandates super-minimum (mostly union) wages on federally financed or assisted construction projects, racist intents were obvious. Rep. John Cochran, D-Mo., supported the bill, saying he had "received numerous complaints ... about Southern contractors employing low-paid colored mechanics getting work and bringing the employees from the South." Rep. Clayton Allgood, D-Ala., complained: "Reference has been made to a contractor from Alabama who went to New York with bootleg labor.... That contractor has cheap colored labor that he transports, and he puts them in cabins, and it is labor of that sort that is in competition with white labor throughout the country." Rep. William Upshaw, D-Ga., spoke of the "superabundance or large aggregation of Negro labor." American Federation of Labor President William Green said, "Colored labor is being sought to demoralize wage rates." The Davis-Bacon Act remains law. Modern rhetoric in support of it has changed, but its effects haven't. It continues to discriminate against nonunion construction labor. Most black construction workers are in the nonunion sector. Tragically, both President Obama and almost all black congressmen, doing the bidding of their labor union allies, vote against any measure that would modify or eliminate Davis-Bacon restrictions. Would Obama see the Davis-Bacon Act as fair competition?

Probably the most unfair thing that happens to most blacks is the grossly rotten schools they attend. Often, fraudulent high-school diplomas are conferred that certify they can read, write and compute at the 12th-grade level when in fact they can't perform at the seventh- or eighth-grade level. President Obama's administration strongly opposes educational vouchers, even one as small as the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, with his Office of Management and Budget saying: "Private school vouchers are not an effective way to improve student achievement. The administration strongly opposes expanding (the program) and opening it to new students." The president is against school choice for low-income parents while his own children attend Sidwell Friends, one of the most prestigious private



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schools in D.C. Many members of Congress keep their own children out of D.C. public schools; 44 percent of senators and 36 percent of representatives do, and that includes 35 percent of Congressional Black Caucus members, who tend to vote against school choice. Their actions are dictated by what's good for the National Education Association, not low-income black children. Do you think that's fair? By the way, teachers at public schools are twice as likely as other parents to send their own children to private schools. That ought to tell us something.

*Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University. To find out more about Walter E. Williams and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).*

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