



Written by [John Stossel](#) on January 3, 2024

Makers Versus Takers

Are you a MAKER or a TAKER?

Politicians are often takers.

They take our money (and freedom) in the name of achieving goals they rarely achieve.

Elon Musk and Sen. Elizabeth Warren may be the best examples of maker and taker. They're the stars of my video this week.

Warren shouts, "Tax the rich!"

She especially wants to tax Musk, the richest man in the world.

In her eagerness to grab his money, she spun a scandal in the media, claiming Musk paid *no* taxes. She went on TV again and again to tell people that in 2018, "He paid zero!"

It was true. In 2018, Musk paid no federal income tax. But that was only because his pay was entirely in the form of "stock options," and that year, they gave him no income.

But at the very moment Warren launched her "zero-tax" screed, Musk was paying the U.S. government \$12 billion — more tax than anyone has ever paid in history.

Warren didn't mention that.

I wish Musk paid much less tax. It would be better for the world if he spent the \$12 billion himself — rather than giving it to Warren and her cronies.

I say that because Musk, a maker, does so many useful things. That includes things that government is unable to do.

NASA has given up building spaceships. Even NASA bureaucrats now understand that they don't do things very well.

In 2008, NASA administrator Mike Griffin said, "We can't keep doing the same old things as before" and invited private companies to join the space race.

That got results.

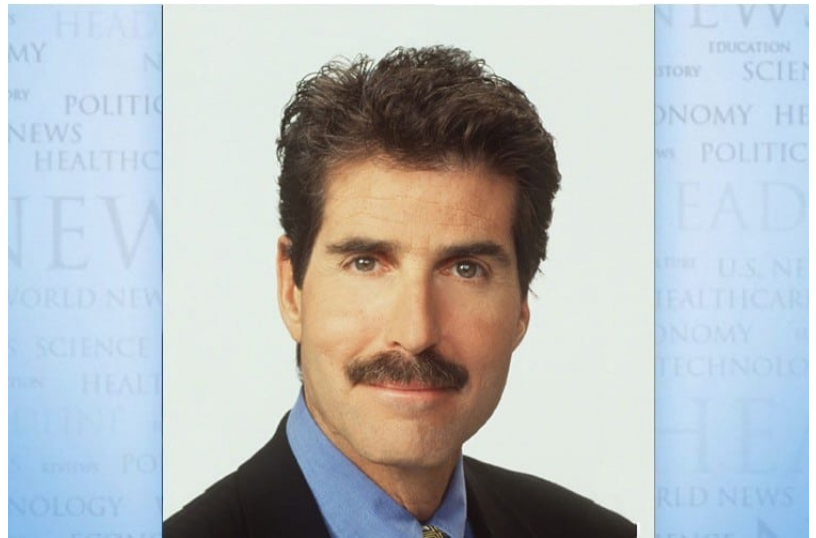
By 2020, Musk had sent astronauts into orbit, something NASA hadn't been able to do for nine years.

Musk lowered the cost of nearly every component of space flight. NASA spent \$1,500 on door latches. Musk's team built the part for \$30 by modifying a latch from bathroom stalls.

Musk developed reusable rockets, which drastically cut costs.

"Reuse the rocket, say, 1,000 times," said Musk. "That would make the capital costs of the rocket per launch only about \$50,000."

Why didn't NASA do that? Because in government, people do what they've always done. Lowering costs



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isn't important. They're spending *other* people's money.

Musk also created Starlink. Starlink satellites now provide low-cost internet service to people all over the world. He's so successful launching satellites that *most* satellites now orbiting earth are Musk's. He's given more poor people access to the internet than any government ever has.

Musk develops the world's most popular electric car, gives poor people internet access, reinvigorates space exploration and creates 110,000 jobs.

So, Warren wants to punish him?

She sent a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission, demanding the government investigate Tesla for "not properly representing shareholders."

Seems like a bizarre accusation, given that Tesla's stock has increased in value by \$790 billion.

Warren didn't like that Musk became CEO of Twitter. She demanded that "conflict of interest" be investigated.

But it's great that Musk bought Twitter. He told Joe Rogan that he's lost money on the company, but that taking over Twitter was still worth "everything," because he's protecting open debate.

I agree. Twitter's previous owners censored political views that didn't conform to left-wing bias.

They even reduced the number of my Twitter followers. Only when Musk took over did the total climb back above a million again.

Now Musk's company, Neuralink, is trying to help paralyzed people access the internet and operate artificial limbs — just by using their thoughts.

Neuralink, Tesla, SpaceX, Starlink. Musk is a maker and a hero!

Warren, the taker, attacks people who create wealth.

She pushes a skewed narrative about "greedy" corporations.

Of course corporations are greedy! Greed works. It motivates people to try harder.

But (outside of government) greedy people can only satisfy their greed by pleasing customers. Unlike politicians, they can't *force* anyone to pay.

Our world needs fewer Elizabeth Warrens and more Elon Musks.

Every Tuesday at JohnStossel.com, Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom.

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