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The Road to Serfdom is Paved with Entitlement Programs

A threatening mindset is taking over our American culture. Once the land of rugged individualism, self-reliance, self-responsibility and limited government, we are becoming a culture that expects and demands the government take care of us and have a say in many, if not all, aspects of our daily lives. Far too many people are willing to sit by and let it happen all because they have been “convinced” into believing it’s “for our own good.”

No one is arguing against the need for legitimate government regulations. Our Founding Fathers were very careful in how they constructed our Constitution and the enumerated powers that they gave to the Federal government. All other powers not specified for the federal government were given to the states.

Somehow our American culture has been lulled into the idea that we need government programs to help us every step of the way in our lives.

How did this mindset come into being?

The Great Depression was a turning point in our history. Prior to that time, each man/woman depended upon themselves and knew they alone were responsible for their life. They lived and died by their own abilities and strong ties to family, Church and community were there to help during times of crisis.

But what made this Depression different than any other the states and the country had endured before? This wasn’t the first time the country experienced an economic crisis. Between June 1857 and August 1929, according to the Department of Commerce dating of cycles, there were 19 downturns that set off cycles (peak to trough to peak) for an average length of 3.8 years.

The difference between this economic crisis and others was President Franklin D. Roosevelt. FDR used the Depression to get the public to accept and demand government intervention since, according to him, the free market was not able to provide goods and

services to all people. The New Deal was born and was funded through using other people's wealth to pay for government assistance through taxation and taking from those who have to give to those who do not have.

Today, dependence on government is at the highest point in our history. Government entitlement programs are a full 70% of the federal budget. It includes Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and all the other individual programs for education, low-income assistance, etc. Federal welfare spending has increased by 41%, more than \$193 billion per year (according to a study done by the Cato Institute). More people than ever are on food stamps and only 58.6% of adults are earning a paycheck. Instead of these programs being used to give people a helping hand up as they face a crisis, the funds are being used to make being poor more comfortable. More food, better health care and better shelter are given but not the tools to get out of poverty. The poverty rate when the War on Poverty started in 1966 was 14.7%. All of this government spending has only resulted in the poverty rate continually fluctuating between 11-15%.

Today we have President Obama illustrating just how these cradle to grave entitlements are a "benefit." His website illustrates "The Life of Julia," a composite woman, who has benefitted from government entitlement programs since her birth. Apparently, Julia did not have a mother who gave birth to her or a father, nor an extended family, church or community to teach her. Instead, she needed the Head Start program. She also did not have to save or work her way through college because she received government grants and loans. She didn't have to work hard and save to start a business because she received government loans for that as well. As her life progresses, she found she can count on Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, disability insurance and health care insurance to take her to her grave.

All this done without self-responsibility or self-reliance, but instead government assistance.

How has government been able to get to this point?

The only way government can become this "needed" and powerful is to break down the family, the community and the Church. Strong families, with both parents, that have strong ties to their extended family, communities and Church do not need government. They rely on each other for support. They do not look to government programs to solve their problems.

As these institutions have been broken down, it's only natural that people will be forced to look to the government to supply their basic needs should a crisis strike. The question looms: How does one appreciate what was not justly earned? Once the dangling carrot of free goodies is accepted, that person must accept the strings attached to it. These

entitlement programs destroy self-motivation and the desire to succeed. It destroys innovation. People become nothing more than dependents of the state with the state giving them little opportunity to escape the entitlement cycle.

The string attached to these programs is the loss of personal liberties as the Nanny State becomes allowed to dictate all that we can and cannot do. Our freedom to choose is taken from us because it was willingly given away due to buying into entitlements programs.

In order for people to be free, their problems don't need money thrown at them. What is needed is incentives for people to escape poverty and reliance on government entitlement program. How can one be truly free if you can't improve your situation in life and control your own destiny?

Finally, these government programs are not "free." They are paid for through taxation and in order to fund them, taxes will continue to rise until finally the government runs out of other people's money.

Is this the legacy we want to leave future generations - the legacy of citizens being nothing more than serfs to the government?