



Letter: Misleading study

Rep. Dick Marple writes to claim that welfare recipients in New Hampshire collect nearly \$40,000 on average (Monitor letters, Dec. 22).

Unfortunately for his argument and ideology, that just isn't true. His source is a misleading 2013 study by a Koch Brothers think tank, the Cato Institute. In it, Cato compared two imaginary families – one not working and collecting every benefit available to the poor (including food stamps, WIC, temporary assistance for needy families, housing assistance and Medicaid), and one working for low wages, without getting any benefits at all.

The conclusion: Why work when you get \$40,000 for sitting idle? But as usual, real life is more complicated than Marple would suggest.

Very few poor families qualify for all these benefits at once. Furthermore, TANF, WIC and housing assistance provide short-term benefits, not long-term bailouts. So that free \$40,000 is a mirage.

Many working families, meanwhile, receive the benefits Marple maligns. For example, 86 percent of children on Medicaid come from families who work hard, for dismally low wages.

Marple has a duty to learn about the way poverty and low wages really affect his constituents and not content himself with ideological distortions.

DAVE and TINA KIRKPATRICK

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