



Welfare vs. work: Government's perversion.

By Tribune-Review

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There's no incentive for government's dependents to work when today's patchwork of state and federal welfare programs provides more money — sometimes, considerably more — than entry-level jobs, according to a new report by the Cato Institute.

“The Work Versus Welfare Trade-Off: 2013,” which follows up on a similar Cato report from 1995, shows that despite so-called welfare “reform” in 1996, the slide toward dependency has grown worse in recent years.

To wit: Why would anyone give up a government check for a job that pays less?

For example, a mother of two in New York who receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families along with other common government subsidies could accrue a total benefits package of \$38,004 (\$29,817 in Pennsylvania), according to Cato. And remember, that's tax-free.

In 11 states, welfare surpasses the average pre-tax first-year salary for teachers, Cato reports. In 39 states, it beats the starting wage for secretaries.

(And, no, this is not an argument for perverting market forces and arbitrarily raising them to above government-set welfare rates.)

“If Congress and state legislatures are serious about reducing welfare dependence and rewarding work, they should consider strengthening work requirements in welfare programs,” writes Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at Cato.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration has reduced those requirements, subjecting recipients to lives no brighter than their next government check.