



Welfare Queens? Welfare Kings Rule the Land

By [Jimmy Williams](#)

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Taxpayers subsidize "flavored" liquors.

Since "welfare queens" and the idea of "[givers versus takers](#)" are the topic is "du jour" again, let's look at the forgotten takers: the "welfare kings" on the corporate side.

Section 5010 of the U.S. tax code is a very interesting piece of federal law. Not to pick on my friends in the liquor industry, but we the taxpayers subsidize "flavored" liquors to the tune of \$1.1 billion every 10 years. Think about it: when I turned 18 (yes I'm that old), I'd walk into a bar and there would be plain vodka, plain rum, plain gin, etc. Today, walk into a bar and there are thousands of flavors to be had. Why? Well because Section 5010 of the Internal Revenue Code gives distillers a "discount" for adding flavor. Makes sense right? Don't get me wrong. I love my citrus flavored vodka with club soda. It's refreshing but I'm not sure if it's \$1.1 billion worth of refreshment in these tight times.

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Or take the domestic sugar industry. Case in point: I *hate* Valentine's day but not for reasons you may think. It's a made-up holiday so people tell each other they love each other. That's ridiculous. So I'm forced to tell you I love you on this day or I'm in the doghouse? Um, not so much. If you have to be reminded to tell your loved on that you love them, then you pretty much suck anyway. This past V-Day, I was waiting in the green room for an appearance on MSNBC and I struck up a conversation with a representative from the candy industry. We were talking about this very issue of corporate subsidies and he told me this year, the U.S. government [will buy back](#) \$80 million worth of sugar from the domestic sugar producers and store it in warehouses because prices didn't meet government targets. I really kind of like being single, independent, carefree but I'll be damned if I want my federal government propping up the domestic sugar industry so husbands across America can go buy crappy chocolate for their less-than-pleased spouses.

Or take the domestic oil and gas industries. They make the liquor industry look destitute. We the taxpayers subsidize companies like Chevron, Exxon and Shell to the tune of [\\$7 billion a year](#). This confuses me. This confuses most Americans.

If you want to dive into the weeds on corporate subsidies, [read this](#). It'll blow your mind.

[\[See a collection of political cartoons on the economy.\]](#)

While we're at it, let's look at America's small businesses. Every small business is allowed certain deductions, from business meals to gas or mileage to depreciation of computers. What is a deduction, really? It's taxpayer-subsidized welfare. Greedy small business owners!

According to the Cato Institute, we the American people subsidize corporate America to the tune of more than \$90 billion annually, while [individual people on welfare only pull down around \\$59 billion](#). I like simple math. It's easy for me to understand. Corporations are getting the better end of that bargain but I don't hear Sen. Mitch McConnell and Reps. Jack Kingston and Bill Cassidy – the latest decriers of welfare – declaring a war on the corporate CEOs (who are actually driving real Cadillacs). The hypocrisy is staggering.

Let me be clear: These provisions may be good policy. You're welcome to make that decision. My point is, if we are going to keep having a conversation about "welfare queens" then I'm going to wholeheartedly keep talking about the "welfare kings of industry." After all, giving is giving and taking is pure and simple taking.

Oh, and I almost forgot: [Here's a great interactive map](#) where you can pinpoint current data on "welfare queens" by state and congressional district. And Congressman Kingston, you best be thankful that a majority of the kids in your district can't vote or you'd lose reelection.