



## Montana Viewpoint: Beware of the monied minority

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Attorney General Bill Barr and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell have been using extraordinary means to advance their goal; confirming a Supreme Court nominee before the election when four years ago they refused to even hold a hearing for Obama's nominee, suppression of fact, encouraging violence, threatening to refuse to accept defeat — it goes on and on.

This, I can only assume, they are rationalizing with the old lie; “The ends justify the means”.

So, since I can see what the means are, I have but one question, what are the ends? Because, you see, as citizens we need to know the ends so that we can judge if the means are justified.

OK, it seems I have more than one question which is, who benefits from all this chaos? Not the general public, I can tell you with confidence, not with threats of dismantling the healthcare system and Social Security, and when I say general public, I am including those who support this endeavor. The results of this assault on America will be visited on them as well, even though they have aided and abetted it.

If the goal is to make America a better country, who is it going to make America better for? Is an America without a healthcare system better for working people? Is an America without Social Security income good for retirees and future retirees?

As far as I can see, the major beneficiaries of the current “program” are people with enormous amounts of money and corporations, which, of course, are run by people with enormous amounts of money. When people like that control America's agenda, will they be there for the vast majority of Americans — children, the elderly, the hard-working people who can never seem to get ahead, or will they be there for their own personal self-interest?

I am very aware that not all billionaires are conservatives. To name a couple there are Melinda Gates and Michael Bloomberg. But frankly, I am not comfortable with billionaires of any political persuasion running the country. I am comfortable, however, with men and women of

modest means – ranchers, millworkers, office workers – running the country because they have lived the life of the regular American.

To back that up, I give you the Montana Legislature, which is composed of people like you and me and with very few people with a lot of money. And the Montana Legislature does a decent job of looking out for the people's interests. Why? Because they are elected by a majority of the citizens from their area and they are responsive to what those citizens ask of them.

But James Buchanan, an economist from the University of Chicago, founded a movement that says, essentially, that there is a minority that needs to be protected from the majority, and surprisingly that minority is the very wealthy. They are being deprived of their Liberty by a majority that wants government to do things for them, like schools, medical insurance, old age protections — probably just the things you and I would like to see done.

Because this costs money, the wealthy have to pay taxes to help support it and they feel this is unfair. Buchanan's version of Liberty is to allow people to make as much money as they want without being charged taxes, without government regulations, and without basically anything that could impede their ability to accumulate vast sums of money.

Unsurprisingly, the Koch brothers are big supporters of this idea, and they fund the influential Cato Institute to promote it politically.

They argue that the reason for government growth, and therefore higher taxes, is because politicians pander to the needs of the majority in order to stay in office; the majority asks, and they comply. However almost everything that is asked for costs money and many wealthy people feel that they are taxed too much to support people who are taxed too little. Because of that they dislike majority rule and consider themselves as a minority, albeit a minority with lots of money.

As for myself, I prefer people with dirt under their fingernails running things, but I think that manicuring will be a growth industry before too long.