

Who doesn't love a 'perfect entrepreneurial story'?

By Steve Benen

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If you're going to present arguments based on anecdotes, make sure the anecdotes say what you want them to say.

Last month, Mitt Romney blamed President Obama for a closed drywall plant in Ohio, but the facility was shut down [during the Bush era](#). This week, the Romney campaign released a video showing a closed Electrolux plant in Iowa, but the company has [added more American jobs](#) than it had lost.

Romney also released this video about Steel Dynamics, which benefited in part from an investment by Bain Capital.

The point of the clip isn't subtle: Romney wants voters to overlook all the mass layoffs he orchestrated at his vulture-capital firm, and instead focus on some relative success stories. The minute-long ad even tells the viewer that Steel Dynamics is a "perfect entrepreneurial story."

But this anecdote [isn't quite](#) what Romney wants it do be.

What Romney doesn't mention is that Steel Dynamics also received generous tax breaks and other subsidies provided by the state of Indiana and the residents of DeKalb County, where the company's first mill was built.

The story of Bain and Steel Dynamics illustrates how Romney, during his business career, made avid use of public-private partnerships, something that many conservatives consider to be "corporate welfare."

The former governor, on the campaign trail, likes to tell voters that government "gets in the way of creating jobs." Romney apparently didn't feel this way when he relied on government handouts as part of his private business deals.

The Steel Dynamics example is especially interesting -- the community even had to levy a new income tax to help finance Romney's venture. I wonder why the ad overlooked this detail.

What's more, Steel Dynamics isn't some isolated story from Romney's past that he would just as soon see us overlook; this is a story that Romney considers proof of his job-creating expertise. The takeaway, apparently, is that the presumptive Republican nominee wants government to get out of the way of the private sector, but only after the government gave Romney some handouts that helped boost his profits.

"This is corporate welfare," said Tad DeHaven, a budget analyst with the Washington-based Cato Institute, which encourages free-market economic policies. DeHaven, who is familiar with corporate tax subsidies in Indiana and other states, called the incentives Steel Dynamics received "an example of the government stepping into the marketplace, picking winners and losers, providing profits to business owners and leaving taxpayers stuck with the bill."

So, Romney is eager to end the same policies he used to boost his own profits, and now he's bragging about one of the more notable examples in a campaign commercial.

Got it.