



## Want to Talk About Moochers Vs. Makers? 10 Welfare-Case Companies Revisited

*Lost in the current debate about who is accepting hand-outs and expecting tax-breaks is one monster of a costly habit both Democratic and Republican politicians have supported.*

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MINYANVILLE ORIGINAL Mitt Romney's attempt to out Obama as a believer in redistribution has fallen flat. As Ezra Klein reported in yesterday's Wonkbook entry:

Mitt Romney, like pretty much every other American politician, believes in redistribution. Specifically, the "issues" section of his website says he believes in a progressive tax code, the Medicare program, the Medicaid program, the food stamp program, the Social Security program, and pretty much every other feature of the federal government that's involved in redistributing income."

As a fringe benefit to the uproar caused by both the 47% viral video and Romney's counterattack attempt to label Obama as anti-capitalist, however, the public has learned more about exactly what redistribution means and how the US tax policy works.

Several journalists and experts have rushed in to explain the many reasons why a large portion of the population is not obligated to pay taxes. About half the members of the group Romney referred to in his speech do not pay taxes because they do not meet the taxable income threshold; simply put, they don't earn enough to be taxed. Others are either the elderly or families receiving refundable tax credits as an income supplement or to help support young children. It's hard to call these people "takers."

On the other hand, the 53% who do pay taxes, we're now learning, also benefit from the greatest number of tax breaks.

Meanwhile, less discussed in these feverish debates is another form of welfare that free market believers call the dirtiest and that Democratic voters often find misguided: Corporate welfare. The CATO Institute, a Libertarian think tank, says it costs the US \$100 billion per year.

In his convention speech earlier this month, President Obama made an ambitious proclamation, saying: "I will not let oil companies write this country's energy plan, or endanger our coastlines, or collect another \$4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers."