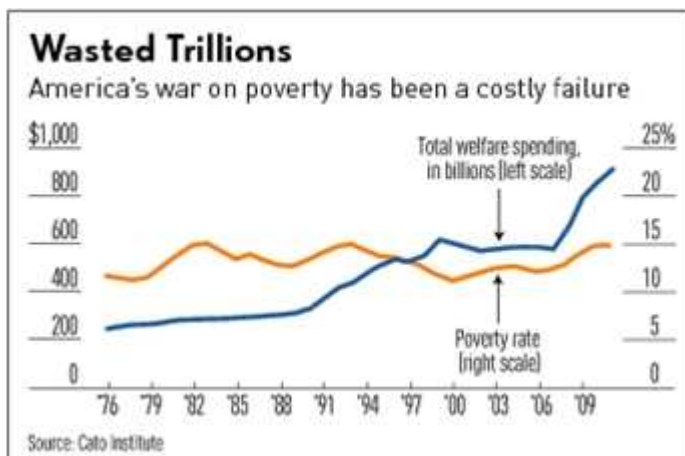


POWERLINE

POSTED ON JUNE 26, 2012 BY [JOHN HINDERAKER](#) |

IS WELFARE SPENDING FUTILE?

That's the question that is raised by [this chart](#), plotting federal welfare spending against the poverty rate. When President Johnson announced the War on Poverty, he said his intention was to abolish poverty in America. That hasn't happened, of course. And I doubt that any liberal today would proclaim such a goal. Today, welfare spending is mainly a way to funnel dollars into the pockets of Democratic Party constituencies; therefore, for Democrats, the more the better, with no end in sight or even desired.



The explosion in welfare spending during the Obama administration has, of course, done nothing to reduce the poverty rate. On the contrary. Investors Business Daily editorializes:

Consider that almost a half-century ago, President Johnson thought he could eradicate American poverty by declaring a war on it. Despite the effort, the poor stubbornly remain with us. The poverty rate is at 15.1% and climbing, says the Cato Institute's Michael Tanner, while in 1964, when the war started, it was "around 19% and falling rapidly."

Since Johnson's initiative, Tanner says Washington has "spent roughly \$12 trillion fighting poverty, and state and local governments added another \$3 trillion," a total that is close to the size of today's domestic economy. "Yet the poverty rate never fell below 10.5%," says Tanner, "and is now at the highest level in nearly a decade."

Just last year, Washington spent roughly \$668.2 billion on 126 poverty-fighting programs, “an increase of more than \$193 billion since Barack Obama became president,” Tanner writes, a sum that “is roughly two and a half times greater than any increase over a similar time frame in U.S. history.”

For all the dollars spent, there has been nothing accomplished. An entitlement class has been created and actively broadened. But that’s not progress.

Well, it is if you are a Democratic politician, and your objective is to make Americans helpless so they will feel compelled to vote for you.