

# Rolling Stone

# POLITICS

POSTED: April 4, 12:39 PM ET | By Julian Brookes

RollingStone.com contributor Jared Bernstein was on the PBS Newshour last night for a good-natured smackdown with a guy from the libertarian Cato Institute. The topic: The starkly different economic visions of Obama and the Republicans. Key snippet:

**Jared Bernstein:** *The president said ... that because of the cuts, relative to what we expect the government to do anyway, 200,000 fewer kids will get Head Start in 2014. About 20 million people will lose Medicaid benefits; 400,000 kids will lose Pell Grants.*

*Those are real numbers of people getting a particular benefit that is so important in an era of inequality, where the thing we need to do least in this country is disinvest in our children, in our education, in our infrastructure. And if that's not class warfare, taking from the poor and essentially giving to the rich, Robin Hood in reverse, I don't know what it is, I don't know what class warfare is.*

**Daniel Mitchell (Cato Institute):** *We're talking about federalism, shifting programs from an incompetent federal government back to state and local governments.*

*And we have seen with welfare reform that that model works. It was good for both taxpayers and good for poor people. And we see that Medicaid is a disaster. The federal government is running it poorly. Now, we can pull out numbers. And we can say, oh, well if the states do it, somehow, X-million fewer people will get access to the programs.*

*But we saw the real-world results of welfare reform, it works very well.*

**Jared Bernstein:** *I actually disagree with that, because the one program that worked quite -- really quite terribly as a safety net program in the recession was welfare.*

*Now, it actually worked well as the economy was generating a lot of jobs. But once you start block-*

*granting these programs to the state, which is what Rep. Ryan, now endorsed by Gov. Romney, wants to do to Medicaid, those programs begin to lose ground.*

Watch the full exchange below:

