

## Daily Policy Digest

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### Welfare Issues

October 15, 2010

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#### Keeping the Poor in Poverty

The Obama administration and congressional Democrats talk frequently about the poor. They lavish programs upon them. (Last year the Obama administration increased spending on means-tested and other antipoverty programs by \$120 billion, to a total of just under \$600 billion.) But they seem curiously indifferent -- if not actually hostile -- to proposals that might actually reduce poverty in America, says Michael Tanner, a senior fellow with the Cato Institute.

For example, few things are as important in helping people escape poverty as education.

- High school dropouts are more than twice as likely to end up in poverty as those who complete at least a high school education.
- Dropouts are less likely to find jobs, and if they do their wages will be low.
- In inflation-adjusted terms, wages for high school dropouts have declined by more than 23 percent in the past 40 years.
- In an increasingly competitive world economy, where success requires advanced skills and technical knowledge, that situation is only going to get worse.

Yet Obama and the Democrats, in thrall to the teachers' unions, steadfastly resist proposals to give parents more control over their children's education, says Tanner.

And, of course, nothing is more important in fighting poverty than jobs. Yet the Obama administration is overtly hostile to the entrepreneurs and job creators in our economy. We can't expect to create more jobs if we punish the type of activity that creates jobs.

Compassion is more than talking about the plight of the poor or giving them just enough money to make poverty a bit more comfortable. Real compassion is about creating the conditions that will enable the poor to get out of poverty, says Tanner.

Source: Michael Tanner, "Keeping the Poor in Poverty," National Review Online, October 13, 2010.

For text:

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/249520/keeping-poor-poverty-michael-tanner>

For more on Welfare Issues:

[http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article\\_Category=44](http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_Category=44)