



To Promote "Fairness" Lunch Lady Ordered to Stop Making Good Food

By Daniel J. Mitchell - 10/12/2012

Since part of my job at the Cato Institute is to persuade skeptics to support a free society, I'm always trying to figure out how best to convince people to favor liberty over statism.

I start with the premise that most statists are misguided rather than evil and I try to understand how they see the world. If I know what makes them tick, after all, then perhaps I can explain to them how freedom is preferable to big government.

In my efforts to win people's hearts and minds, I run into the same obstacles over and over again.

- Many people equate Republicans with limited government, so you have to explain that there's a giant difference between the views of the Cato Institute and the decisions of statists like [Richard Nixon](#) or [George W. Bush](#).
- Some folks think capitalism and cronyism are the same thing. I try to show them that there is no role for [corrupt favoritism](#) in a genuine free market, which is why it is doubly counterproductive when Republicans support policies and programs such as [TARP](#), the [Export-Import Bank](#), [agriculture subsidies](#), and [Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac handouts](#).
- Lots of people mistakenly believe the economy is a fixed pie, so they think if someone such as Steve Jobs becomes wealthy, then other people necessarily have less money.

I have ways of dealing with all these myths. I don't pretend to be successful in all or even most cases, but I think I've helped lead some people out of the darkness.

One of the other challenges I face is that [some people believe in equality of outcomes](#). It's hard to reason with these folks. I try to explain to them that this system requires massive redistribution, which cripples incentives for productive behavior by both rich and poor.

I [cite the famous Churchill quote](#) about “equal sharing of the misery.” And I ask them to show me evidence of one nation – anywhere in the world or at any point in history – that has ever succeeded with this approach.

But the folks with this ideological outlook seem impervious to logical argument or moral reasoning. Indeed, they sometimes go to absurd lengths. Here are some [Orwellian details from a Swedish news service](#).

Annika Eriksson, a lunch lady at a school in Falun, was told that her cooking is just too good. Pupils at the school have become accustomed to feasting on newly baked bread and an assortment of 15 vegetables at lunchtime, but now the good times are over. The municipality has ordered Eriksson to bring it down a notch since other schools do not receive the same calibre of food – and that is “unfair”. ...”A menu has been developed... It is about making a collective effort on quality, to improve school meals overall and to try and ensure everyone does the same,” Katarina Lindberg, head of the unit responsible for the school diet scheme, told the local Falukuriren newspaper. ...From now on, the school’s vegetable buffet will be halved in size and Eriksson’s handmade loafs will be replaced with store-bought bread. Her traditional Easter and Christmas smörgåsbords may also be under threat.

I’m almost at a loss for words. What sort of sickness is required to deny something to one group of kids just because the same benefit is not universally available?