



## How Government Handouts Create Life-Sapping Dependency

By: Daniel J. Mitchell – February 8, 2013

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Remember Julia, the mythical moocher created by the Obama campaign to show the joys of government dependency? As illustrated by this Ramirez cartoon, Julia symbolizes the entitlement mentality.

Unfortunately, there are many real-life Julias.

I wrote a couple of years ago about Olga, a Greek woman who petulantly believed that government was responsible for her empty life.

But we don't know any details about Olga other than her desire to mooch, so the best real-world examples of Julia may be from England. We have Natalija, a Lithuanian immigrant who has quickly learned bad habits of dependency, and Danny and Gina, two native-born scroungers.

Natalija, Danny, and Gina all decided to get a free ride from taxpayers, largely because overly generous handouts meant that they could enjoy higher living standards by staying at home and watching TV rather than living productive lives.

And if these info-graphics are any indication, there must be lots of people in the United Kingdom who make similar calculations.

No wonder English employers sometime have a hard time filling slots. Why climb the economic ladder when government is providing a comfy hammock?

Unfortunately, the same misguided policies exist in the United States. I shared a remarkable chart last year showing that a household would be better off with \$29,000 of income rather than \$69,000 of income because of the combined impact of both taxes and redistribution programs.

Now, courtesy of some first-rate journalism by a local television station, we have a powerful example exposing how the system operates. We learn the story of Kristina, who chooses to earn less money in order to keep the taxpayer-funded gravy train rolling.

We've all heard the line that America is becoming an entitlement society or welfare state, with half of U.S. households now receiving some type of government benefit. But a CBS 21 News investigation has taken that stat one step further to show you how much people are actually getting for free. A few years ago, reporter Chris Papst worked with a single mom who had two children. She turned down a raise because she said the extra money would decrease her government benefits. It was hard to understand why she did that, until Chris started working on

this story. “You do what you have to do as a single mom,” explained Kristina Cogan. “And that’s what I did.” .....she admits living a life off the government can be comfortable. “If you’re going to get something for free, are you going to work for it?” Cogan explained. “It kind of like sucks you in.”

Here are some of the horrific details.

For this story, CBS 21 researched what government programs are available to a single mother of two making \$19,000 a year. What we found was incredible. Our family would be eligible for \$14,976 in free day care, another \$13,400 for Head Start and Early Head Start, \$7,148 in housing vouchers, \$6,500 for weatherization projects, \$400 to pay heating bills, \$480 a year for a cell phone, with an extra \$230 for a land line, and \$182 in free legal advice. The family would get more than \$6,028 in food assistance and another \$6,045 in medical assistance. The mother is eligible for \$5,500 in Pell Grants for school with an additional \$12,000 for the Education Opportunity Grant; SMART Grant; and TEACH Grant. Our family would also get \$6,800 in tax credits, and \$1,900 in withholding would be returned. Add it up and this family can get \$81,589 in free assistance.

There’s nothing in the story to suggest that Ms. Cogan is utilizing all these programs, but the plethora of available goodies certainly helps to explain why so many people decide it’s easier to be moochers rather than producers.

Which also explains why the welfare state is a recipe for ever-increasing dependency, as shown by this famous set of cartoons.

Which also causes a sluggish economy, as illustrated by this Chuck Asay cartoon.

No wonder the share of households taking something from the government has been increasing. And no wonder the poverty rate stopped falling once the government’s so-called War on Poverty began.

P.S. Most stories about welfare are pathetic, as we see from this dependency contest featuring the “Connecticut Kid” vs the “English Loafer.” But the welfare state also breeds more bizarre behaviors.

In the battle of the bums, we’ve had the spectacle of “Diaper Man” vs “Footless Hans.”  
In the contest for most despicable moocher, we have the “Florida Pedophiles” vs the “Gimme Babymaker.”  
In the perverse challenge match to subsidize one’s enemies, there’s the “Australian Jihadist” vs the “French terror suspect.”

P.P.S. Are you subsidizing bad behavior? Click here to see a map revealing which states offer the most extravagant welfare benefits.

P.P.P.S. Share this video to help others understand the high cost of the welfare state.