

## Government gone mad conspiring to fleece poor, pay rich

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Recently Paul Ryan said, “Most of our debt in the future comes from our entitlement programs.” Maybe I’m just a crotchety old woman but I just hate being lied to and that statement’s one big whopper. Ryan and his pals like to include Social Security as an entitlement program although it’s no such thing since it’s paid for out of its recipients’ paychecks and is fat with money in spite of the fact that Congress has borrowed millions from it. The genuine entitlements are such a skinny line in the government budget pie chart it’s hard to see.

On the other hand Forbes Magazine says, “The largest, wealthiest, most powerful organizations in the world are on the public dole. Where is the outrage?” The Cato Institute estimates federal subsidies to corporations cost taxpayers almost \$100 billion every year. Federal tax breaks for corporations reduce taxes to a rate of only 13 percent saving corporations \$200 billion annually according to the US Government Accountability Office. There’s even a subsidy for corporate jets that costs taxpayers \$3 billion a year. Entitlements much? I’d need much more room than I have here to even do an adequate overview of corporate subsidies. The bigger and richer that you are the bigger the free money that comes to you. Ask Donald Trump — he’s one of the bigger recipients. And if you’re a member of that privileged club, don’t worry about going to prison if you break the law. If you get caught you might have to pay a fine but if you have to pay a fine you’ll get tax breaks due to having to pay and that will take the edge off of having to pay. But prison, hell no, that’s for poor people. It’s so rare for a member of the corporate elite to go to prison that it’s big news although often their crimes are so huge they effect and harm thousands like the mortgage crisis that put countless people on the streets and destroyed families, destroyed lives.

While the Republicans beat the drum about “overregulation” that supposedly holds down the economy and Steve Bannon promises to bring about the “deconstruction of the regulatory state,” not only is the economy going to hell and job losses abounding but Congress is an unholy mess as they bog down in their attempts to deal with an avalanche of attempts to deregulate. They begrudge every penny of so-called entitlements but are scrabbling to enrich the rich by deregulating everything they can find so corporations can run wild and not worry their little heads about rules and regulations that might hamper their abilities to kill people with poisons and Oklahoma earthquakes and such. And the environment and climate be damned in a world ruled by Bannon and company.

The Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act is sitting on the Senate wait list and if that passes it will result in every environmental, health and welfare act of decades to go bye-bye. Remember what Los Angeles looked like in the ’60s and ’70s? That’s what we

will have to look forward to only worse because now we have even more sophisticated ways of destroying the earth, the air we breathe and the water we drink. Nobody in Washington is worrying about the poor folks in Flint or the people whose water catches on fire. Luckily Congress is so buried in cleaning up the droppings from White House actions like the Comey hearings and hearings on the next possible FBI director that the legislative agenda for 2017 has been disrupted. Health care and tax reform will likely be pushed off for months and then there's the federal budget waiting in the wings.

I wish I could list all the pending bills that our government gone mad is piling up and hoping to put into action. The Trump budget proposes huge cuts to education including cuts to Medicaid that will effect children with disabilities. Title I supporting high poverty schools will be flat, teacher training and after school programs (effecting nearly 2 million children) lose a combined \$3.5 billion. Remember the corporate jet subsidies?

As I struggle to follow the actions pending in Washington that will take food from mouths, roofs from over heads, a decent education from children, a healthy environment from all I can't help but despair about the many Americans who will not, seemingly can not, see what is happening and who still believe that good will come out of this.