

[Matt Yglesias](#)

Today at 12:58 pm

[The Not-So-Right-Wing Swedish Right](#)

Daniel J Mitchell offers up a [simplistic and misleading potted history of Sweden](#) before asking the staggering stupid question “Why Is Obama Trying to Make America More Like Sweden when Swedes Are Trying to Be Less Like Sweden?” If you accept these premises, the natural answer would be that the optimal scope of the welfare state is to be more generous than what we have in the United States but less generous than what they have in Sweden.



Central Station, Stockholm (my photo, available under cc license)

Meanwhile, I’m always a bit surprised by things like the raw tribalism involved in American libertarians’ eagerness to embrace things like the [Swedish center-right](#). It’s true that the government of Frank Reinfeldt has been pursuing tax cuts, but they’re reductions to a level that’s stupendously higher than anything I’ve ever heard an American politician in a competitive election embrace. The current government [states](#) that “The objective of welfare policy is to reduce the gaps between different social groups while giving people security, the opportunity to develop and an acceptable economic standard.”

On the specific issue of health care, no politician in Sweden wants to eliminate universal coverage. Nor does any politician in Sweden want to introduce anything resembling the level of private health insurance that Barack Obama’s plan features. The right-wing government is introducing such radical free market reforms into the system as allowing for the existence of private-sector drug stores. Their health ministry

([PDF](#)) tells us that “Swedish health and medical care is based on the principles that care should be provided on equal terms and according to need, that is should be under democratic control and financed on the basis of solidarity.”

If these guys showed up in the United States, in other words, Mitchell would be calling them socialists.

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Filed under: [Health Care](#), [Sweden](#),

22 Responses to “The Not-So-Right-Wing Swedish Right”

1. *Morgan Warstler* Says:
[March 16th, 2010 at 1:02 pm](#)

Sweden is a homogeneous state of 10M people.

If we trusted states rights, I’m sure MN might try to do Sweden’s health care / tax structure.

2. *Christopher* Says:
[March 16th, 2010 at 1:07 pm](#)

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If these guys showed up in the United States, the political requirement that they enthusiastically support the principles of democratic socialism would instantly disappear. The same principle would apply if Sam Brownback were to emigrate to Sweden and then decide to run for parliament.

Exhibit A: Harold Ford, Jr.

3. *Lonnie* Says:
[March 16th, 2010 at 1:08 pm](#)

I’d like to see the US move more to the Left, like Hamas, and persecute homosexuals and support killing all Jews.

4. *Al* Says:
[March 16th, 2010 at 1:09 pm](#)

The prime minister is named Fredrik Reinfeld.

5. *Mike K* Says:
[March 16th, 2010 at 1:12 pm](#)

And MY’s embrace of Swedish socialist policy ISN’T tribal? Right.