# The Fraud and the Failure Called Welfare

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The disaster called welfare was probably the biggest single issue that ousted the Democratic majority in Congress in the landmark election of 1994. Even President Clinton said he wanted to "end welfare as we know it."

True to their Contract with America, the Republican Congress passed welfare reform. It wasn't a perfect piece of legislation, of course. There is no way this $5 trillion fraud and failure, with so many vested interests, could be perfected by one law in one year. But it was a giant step in the right direction.

But Clinton vetoed the welfare reform bill, so we're back to square one. The federal taxpayers will have to go on spending $234 billion annually, plus another $100 billion in state welfare spending.

Lyndon Johnson's Great Society set up a grossly unjust and immoral system in the mid-1960s whereby millions of people were taught that they had an "entitlement." They became "entitled" to pick the pockets of lawabiding, taxpaying families if they met two conditions: they didn't work, and they were not married to someone who does work.

The major problem is that welfare pays better than jobs that welfare recipients can hope to get.

A recent Cato Institute study laid out comparative figures based on the cash payments and non-cash benefits paid by our welfare system to a single mother with two children. There are 77 different sources of welfare money, but the principal pipelines are AFDC, food stamps, medicaid, housing, utilities, WIC, and commodities.

In eight states, the average welfare mother receives cash and benefits amounting to $20,000 a year. In medium-level welfare states, she gets $17,500 per year. And it's all tax-free!

In 39 states, welfare benefits are equivalent to an $8 per hour job. In New York and Washington, D.C., welfare benefits are equivalent to a $12 an hour job, two and a half times the minimum wage.

In eight states, welfare benefits are equivalent to the salary of a first-year teacher. In 28 states, welfare benefits are equivalent to the pay of a starting secretary.

Of course, all welfare recipients don't receive this much, but some get more. The conclusion is that it pays to be on welfare and there is no real hope of getting people off welfare until the benefits are less than a minimum wage job.

When LBJ started the current welfare system, it was called the "war on poverty." Indeed, it was a war against families, taxpayers, and even against the people it was supposed to help.

It's bad enough that the war on poverty took so much spendable income out of the pockets of hard-working Americans. It's worse that it is a no-win war, initiated by the same Administration that gave us the Vietnam War. We are waiting for its perpetrators to admit, like Robert S. McNamara, that they were "wrong, terribly wrong."

But the worst of it is that the liberal welfare system has perpetrated such horrendous damage on our society. It has broken up millions of families, prevented more millions of families from forming, produced seven million illegitimate children, created a pathetic underclass that will never achieve what we like to call the American Dream, virtually destroyed our great cities, and spawned the social problems that flow from illegitimacy such as drugs, delinquency, and dropouts.

The welfare system tells a teenage girl, who is doing poorly in school, doesn't know who her father is, isn't getting along with her mother, and hates her surroundings, "We'll take you out of all this, set you up in an apartment of your own, send you a check every month, and give you your own food stamps, housing allotment, health care, and commodities. All you have to do to get all these goodies is have an illegitimate baby."

Surprise, surprise, more illegitimate babies were born to teenagers. So the liberals offered another government "solution": "family planning." That's a euphemism for the massive distribution of contraceptives.

Title X taxpayer funding started in 1970 for the purpose of reducing unmarried teen pregnancies. After 25 years, the result is total disaster; every measure of teenage health is dramatically worse.

Illegitimate births to teenagers have doubled, the teenage abortion rate has more than doubled, sexual activity rates are far higher and at a younger age, and sexually transmitted diseases have skyrocketed.

When the liberals whine about how the so-called Religious Right is "imposing its morals" on the rest of society, remember that they are like the thief who cries "stop, thief" to distract from his own thievery. Welfare is the prime example of the Irreligious Left imposing its lack of morals on the rest of society.