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SCHLAFLY PS1 for 10/17/85#""IS LIBERALISM DEAD?''#""Is Liberalism Dead?'' That was the subject of a debate I engaged in recently with one of the most prominent of this country's liberal intelligentsia in the Hubert Humphrey-Walter Mondale mold. It's an interesting topic.#Obituaries for liberalism, like the news of Mark Twain's death, are doubtless premature. But significant evidence exists that liberalism is down for the count.#Consider the deafening silence of the liberals and the media about ""Reaganomics,'' which was the chief whipping boy of Reagan's first year as President. Now that Reaganomics has resulted in an end to inflation, a halving of interest rates, and creation of eight million new jobs in the private sector, liberals don't want to talk about it any more.#Reaganomics hit liberalism in its solar plexus. Liberalism defines social justice as higher and higher taxes bled from a static or shrinking-economy so that the high priests of liberalism (i.e., Federal bureaucrats) can parcel out benefits according to their personal notions of how wealth should be redistributed.#Reaganomics defines social justice as a growth economy, fueled by the work ethic, tax cuts, fewer government regulations, and encouragement of the entrepreneurial spirit, so that more people can have a bigger share of a bigger economic pie. The record of the last three years has proven that Reaganomics works, and liberal rhetoric is understandably intimidated by reality.#But, the liberal diehards reply, the social programs of FDR's New Deal and LBJ's Great Society are all solidly in place, costly as they are, and even Ronald Reagan has no stomach to dismantle them. Alas, conservatives must admit that's true; the entitlements are still

part of the system and their cost is still growing.#But the Reagan Revolution has brought about a permanent change in the agenda for national debate; our way of looking at social problems has done a 180 degree turn.#No longer is the first response to every problem ""we need a new federally-funded program.'' It has become obvious to the majority of Americans that federally-funded programs not only don't work, but often exacerbate the problem.#Today's liberal ideologies have no time to invent new tax-and-spend programs because they are too busy trying to refute Charles Murray's landmark book (BF)Losing Ground(end BF). That's the scholarly blockbuster which documents how the liberals' ""war on poverty'' promoted permanent poverty for those they pretended to help and has even increased the percentage of those in poverty.#The innovative ideas are coming out of the conservative camp today: IRAs (Individual Retirement Accounts) as the futuristic and financially-sound improvement on Social Security, and workfare as the alternative to the wasteful welfare colossus.#A case in point which indicates the demise of liberalism appeared on the
front page of the (BF)Washington Post(end BF) in a news article headlined ""California Work-for-Welfare Plan Viewed as Model.'' The article described the new California plan produced by an ""alliance between liberals and conservatives.''#The new welfare-workfare bill, passed overwhelmingly by the Democratic-controlled State Legislature and signed by Republican Governor George Deukmejian, requires real work to be performed by recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) who are healthy enough to work and have children over age 6. The

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age 6. The bill passed 32 to 2 in the State Senate and 59 to 8 in the Assembly.#Why is this significant? After all, there have been other welfare-workfare experiments elsewhere in the country, and there are numerous examples of legislative cooperation by liberals and conservatives.#Of course California is our largest state and changes initiated there (such as no-fault divorce and Proposition 13) often sweep across the country. That California's welfare-workfare will also be copied is admitted both by workfare enthusiasts and by the disgruntled minority of ""welfare rights'' advocates still mumbling about ""forced labor'' by welfare recipients.#But the most remarkable paragraph in the (BF)Washington Post(end BF) article is the admission by this Delphic oracle of liberalism that workfare will become ""a key platform plank for Democrats weary of the pro-welfare label.'' The (BF)Post(end BF) concedes that liberal Democrats have been ""stung by Republican charges that the [welfare] system encourages laziness and waste.''#The 1984 Republican Party Platform bragged in ritual Reaganese: ""We have launched real welfare reforms ... encouraged `workfare` in the States.'' The Democratic Party Platform was silent on this issue.#What a difference a year makes! The liberals are now running away from the label of liberalism.#What has most of all put liberalism in disarray today is the polling data showing that 64% in the 18-to-24 age group voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984. Young people perceive liberalism as out-of-date, unworkable, and irrelevant to today's society; Reaganism is the wave of the future.