

Destroying Social America: Bipartisan Attack on Vital Social Safety Nets

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It's on the chopping block for elimination. Initiatives began decades ago. Republicans, Democrats and Obama are in lockstep. They're waging war on vital safety net protections.

In 1996, Clinton's Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) became law. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) ended.

Time limit harshness replaced it. Five years and out became policy. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) mandates it. States get diminishing amounts of federal funding.

Fixed block grants provide it. They're permitted to administer policy freely. They take full advantage during harder than ever hard times.

To qualify, recipients must work or train for jobs. Single mothers with small children are cheated. Millions are left on their own high and dry.

America is unprincipled. It's shameless. It's ruthless. Policy reflects neoliberal harshness. It's hard right, soulless and uncaring.

It's pro-war and pro-corporate. It's anti-populist, anti-labor, anti-welfare, and anti-government of, by and for everyone equitably and fairly.

It supports the worst of imperial ruthlessness. Wealth, power, privilege and unchallenged global dominance alone matter. Let 'em eat cake applies for all others.

Progressively things worsen. Policies reflect growing dystopian harshness. On September 19, The [New York Times](#) headlined "House Republicans Pass Deep Cuts in Food Stamps."

Millions of dollars in vitally needed aid was slashed. Republicans voted to eliminate \$40 billion over the next decade.

One provision requires adults between 18 and 50 without minor children to find work or be enrolled in job training. Otherwise benefits are denied.

A time limit is imposed. Three months and out was enacted. States can now extend benefits for recipients able to work or preparing to do so through training.

According to House Speaker John Boehner:

"This bill makes getting Americans back to work a priority again for our nation's welfare programs."

How he didn't explain. America's enduring a jobs crisis. It's been ongoing for years. It shows no signs of ending.

Able-bodied workers can't find employment. Most doing so don't earn enough to live on. Both parties oppose enacting a living wage.

Republicans mandate work or train to do so or starve. Democrats and Obama are in lockstep. They differ only on timing. Rogue states operate this way.

The House measure also mandates testing recipients. It's to assure they're drug-free. It prohibits lottery winners from receiving benefits.

It's the latest initiative targeting social America. Previous ones Obama approved included cutting:

- Medicare and Medicaid benefits;
- Pell Grants for college tuitions;
- federal wages;
- the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to help impoverished families have heat in winter;
- the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP);
- community healthcare centers;
- nonprofit health insurance cooperatives;
- HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and other disease prevention programs;
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) grants to states for supplemental foods, healthcare, and nutrition education for low-income families;
- Head Start for comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income families with children;
- earlier Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (food stamp) Program (SNAP) aid for poor households;
- community development block grants for housing;
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) first-responder funding;
- energy efficiency and renewable energy programs;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clean/safe water and other projects;

- National Institutes of Health (NIH) medical research;
- the National Park Service;
- vital infrastructure and transportation needs; and
- other non-defense discretionary spending.

Further cuts Obama endorses benefit Wall Street, other corporate favorites, war profiteers, and other special interests. They do so at the expense of ordinary people losing out.

Increasingly they're on their own sink or swim. Obama calls it "shared sacrifice." Ordinary people sacrifice to let business and super-rich elites share.

Social America is on the chopping block for elimination. Austerity harshness assures it. Bipartisan complicity endorses it.

The latest measure targets food stamps. It's a core safety net protection. Enacting the House measure means denying four million recipients vital aid they need straightaway. Millions more will be affected in out years.

Democrats and Republicans haggle over details and timing. In June, Senate Democrats cut \$4 billion in food stamp aid over the next decade.

Doing so comes during protracted Main Street Depression conditions. Nearly 50 million Americans require SNAP aid to eat.

Democrats know cutting \$4 billion is only for starters. Republicans want \$40 billion. Compromise suggests they'll settle for \$20 billion. Perhaps more if Republican hardliners prevail. Either way, millions of needy recipients lose out.

Many more will ahead. Plans are to entirely shred America's social safety net. Major Medicaid cuts are coming. They're on top of previous ones.

Medicare and Social Security are targeted for elimination. It's planned by handing over both programs to Wall Street profiteers.

Depriving needy recipients of healthcare, retirement income and food reflects how low America has sunk. Class war is official policy. Gaming the system for profits matters most.

The American dream is more illusion than reality. The criminal class in Washington is bipartisan. Rogues and crooks run things.

Gangsterism is official policy. Making the world safe for capital reflects it.

War on humanity is waged for dominance and profit. Ordinary people lose out everywhere. What can't go on forever, won't. According to a 19th century proverb:

"Only when the last tree has died and the last river poisoned and the last fish caught will we realize we cannot eat money."

US policy reflects heart of darkness viciousness. Personal freedoms and general welfare are targeted for elimination.

Obama, Republicans and most Democrats endorse the worst policies planned. Disagreement's only over timing.

Duplicitous scaremongering claims America's going broke. Obama wants "fiscal discipline" restored. He supports cutting vital SNAP aid.

He calls Medicare the "big problem." Its cost is "unsustainable," he claims.

"Let's not kid ourselves and suggest that we can solve this problem by trimming a few earmarks," he said.

The "biggest cost drivers in our budget are entitlement programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, all of which get more and more expensive every year."

"If we want to get serious about fiscal discipline - and I do - we will have to get serious about entitlement reform."

Medicare and Social Security aren't entitlements. They're insurance programs. They're funded by worker/employer payroll tax deductions. They're contractual federal obligations to eligible recipients who qualify.

Obama repeats what he does best. He lies. He's a serial liar. He's a moral coward. He supports wealth and power.

He's beholden to powerful monied interests. They own him. He spurns popular needs. He prioritizes letting them go begging on his watch.

He proposed massive Medicare cuts. In 2010, 2011, and last November he urged more. He's waging class war on Americans.

He wants fundamental social benefits destroyed. He wants ordinary people hung out to dry. He wants them on own sink or swim.

His "fiscal discipline" mumbo jumbo is imposing it on the backs of ordinary people least able to survive on what he endorses.

At the same time, he handed trillions of dollars to Wall Street crooks and other corporate favorites. He spent trillions more waging war on humanity.

He's turning America into a dystopian backwater. Poverty, unemployment, underemployment, hunger, homelessness and overwhelming human misery are at Depression levels.

Wealth is more than ever disproportionately concentrated. America's 1% overwhelmingly controls it.

What do you call a nation spurning its most disadvantaged? A failed state reflects today's America. It's no democracy. It's not beautiful.

It's not the best of all possible worlds. It's not what PR wizards want people to believe. It's

rogue state viciousness writ large.

Truman once said "(t)he buck stops here!" Obama bears full responsibility for the worst of policies he endorses.

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