

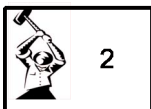


This zine created by Aaron of the 1201 collective.

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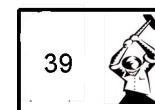


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Agorism

http://agorism.info/left_libertarian_resources (Agorist zines)
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Free-Market Economics/ Economists/ Institutes

<http://mises.org/> (Austrian School of Economics)
<http://www.hayekcenter.org/> (Hayekian Economics)
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Communism Kills

Communism is the vision of an egalitarian society with common ownership of property. Karl Marx, the father of communism, stated that the prevailing capitalist environment is responsible for class struggle and inequality among people. He believed that people are determined by their economic environments and in order to achieve the communist utopia, that environment has to be changed. For this change to occur, the working class (proletariat) must overthrow the existing regime, dismantle all capitalist institutions, and eliminate the possibility of a counterrevolution by the merchant class (bourgeoisie). Then, as a necessary pre-stage to communism, a socialist authoritarian government must be established to take complete control over the means of production—natural resources, infrastructure, tools, financial capital, and labor. Once people are thoroughly conditioned by this new structure they will morph into a “higher” man. Soon, government will wither away and in its place will emerge the stateless, egalitarian society that communists envisage. This may sound good in theory to some, but the communist experiments of the 20th century resulted in economic depravation and murder on a massive scale.

Communism Kills. Marx knew that winning the revolution would not be enough. He penned that “so long as other classes continue to exist, the capitalist class in particular, the proletariat fights it . . . it must still use a measure of force, hence governmental measures.” Lenin purged his ideological rivals, the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. Stalin, Pol Pot, Che Guevara, Castro, and Mao all eliminated whoever they suspected of opposing the regime, whether by deporting them to slave labor camps, subjecting them to sham trials in which the forgone conclusion was a “guilty” verdict and execution, or just plain murder. In all, even according to conservative estimates, communist regimes have killed at least 150 million people. Not too peaceful...Communism prohibits private property. As Marx saw it, private property is the primary cause of man's alienation from his social nature and a limitation on his freedom: "The right of property is therefore, the right to enjoy one's fortunes and dispose of it as he will; without regard for other men and independently of society... It leads every man to see in other men, not the realization, but rather the limitation of his own liberty." Marx agreed that private property is the basis of the capitalist system, creating enormous wealth and economic progress; but he claimed that such wealth and progress is limited to a small class of rich merchants at the expense of a large class of poor workers. But, as classical liberals such as Adam Smith and John Locke argued, private property is essential to securing man's natural rights to life and liberty. Think about it: The right to life is the right to live, and to live in the way you choose; the right to liberty is the right to pursue what you need to survive and live a good life, as long as it does not entail violating the rights of someone else to do the same.

However, if the needs of others are the determinant of how much food, shelter, or clothing you are allowed to have or of the profession you pursue—then, ultimately, your life depends on whoever can claim to have a greater need than you. That's not freedom; that's slavery.

Campus Freedom Network

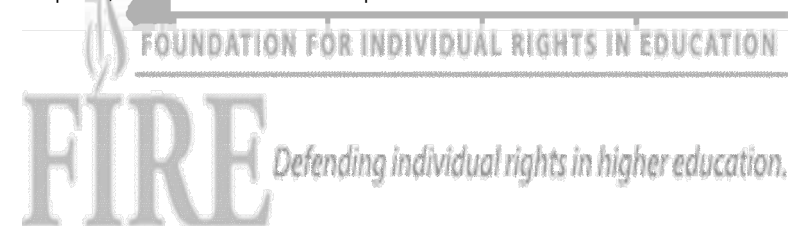
Established in 2006, the Campus Freedom Network (CFN) is an essential component of the fight to protect individual rights at institutions of higher learning across the country. Originally envisioned as a loosely-knit coalition of faculty members and students dedicated to advancing individual liberties on their campuses, the CFN has quickly become an integral part of FIRE's work. The CFN advances FIRE's mission by providing resources and educational opportunities to students and faculty engaged in advancing individual rights on campus. The goal is to encourage energetic students and faculty members to pressure their administrations to change illiberal and unconstitutional policies. To facilitate this activity, the CFN arranges speeches by FIRE speakers, rewards active students through an incentive program, organizes an annual FIRE summer conference, and bolsters FIRE's programs with grassroots support. By organizing students and faculty, the CFN strives to change the culture of censorship on college campuses from the inside.

By joining the CFN, you have made it clear that you are serious about protecting liberty on our nation's campuses. As a CFN member, you have the opportunity to work with FIRE to engage in activism for liberty. CFN staff members stand ready and willing to work with you to change your campus. You can bring in FIRE speakers, write op-eds in your school paper, and otherwise organize students at your campus against repressive speech codes. Let your college administration know that there are those on campus who will not sit idly by while the rights of their fellow students and faculty members are trampled upon.

To help you engage in activism, the CFN is preparing activism tips and other materials to help you engage your campus. Don't hesitate to contact the CFN staff directly at cfn@thefire.org with any questions or ideas you have for your campus. Also, network with other members on the message board to brainstorm and find new ways to work together.

One of the principal goals of the Campus Freedom Network is to provide students with the resources necessary to improve their campuses and make our nation's colleges and universities safe havens for freedom of expression. The activism section of the CFN website is regularly updated to provide new resources for activists looking to bring positive change to their campuses.

There is no "right way" to reform your campus. Each school is different and each student will have different strengths to bear on a given project. On the following page, the CFN has provided case studies on the efforts of various students to provide inspiration to other CFN members as well as to demonstrate the different tactics that have been successful in the past. As more CFN activists successfully reform their campuses, we will continue to add new profiles.



Students For Liberty

Students For Liberty is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a student-driven forum of support for students and student organizations dedicated to liberty. We invite all students interested in liberty and others supportive of this cause to learn more about our activities and get involved.

Students For Liberty provides a plethora of activities, programs and resources to support students interested in liberty. SFL's efforts can be broken down into 3 general categories:

1) Consulting Services.

SFL is a leader in the field of student group resources by providing consulting services targeted directly towards student groups to help groups form and run more efficiently. This includes publications on how to effectively run student groups such as our How to Start a Student Organization for Liberty guide, as well as one-on-one support where SFL leaders tackle specific problems that student organizations send to us.

2) Networking.

SFL networks students interested in liberty with three groups: students, leaders, and organizations. SFL connects students dedicated to liberty with other students to strengthen their support for one another and show students that they are not alone. SFL provides opportunities for students to meet leaders in the cause of liberty today at our many conferences and through our alumni outreach. Lastly, SFL seeks to expose students interested in liberty to the many organizations that exist to promote liberty to students. Our hope is that by strengthening these networks, students will become more enthusiastic about liberty and be better equipped to promote liberty on campus.

3) Resources.

SFL provides independent resources to promote liberty and empower students to be leaders of liberty. These include an academic journal, free books for reading groups, and many more resources that are coming out soon.

Many Students For Liberty groups connect via Bureaucrash social as a way to further discuss pursuance of resources, establishing events and getting publicity.

Communism is full of contradictions

• Communists claimed that their philosophy would outdo capitalism economically because it promotes the good of all rather than the narrow self-interest of a few greedy capitalists. Yet, if being self-interested means that one acts according to a set of values that one holds and wants to realize, then communism itself could not be implemented without self-interest. Capitalist economies far surpassed communist ones in wealth, evident by the fact that the least-well-off in the former have a greater standard of living than all but the top echelon of government officials in the latter. To achieve the economic growth necessary to alleviate poverty, productivity and innovation are key, both of which depend on the proper incentives. Under capitalism people pursue get to keep and dispose of what they have produced, which gives them an incentive to produce and innovate more. This is absent under communism.

• Communist leaders hailed their societies as beacons for a more just, abundant society. Yet, one only needs to look at how people voted with their feet to know that was not true; many were willing risked death to escape the devastatingly brutal conditions of communist countries to obtain a better life in capitalist countries. Moreover, in areas once seen as "breadbaskets" of the world, communism (and the disallowance of private property) brought mass famine, as was seen in Russia in the early 1920s and in China in the late 1950s.

• Communists stated that their philosophy is ethically superior to classical liberalism and capitalism because it seeks to abolish inequality. Under communism, they claim, everybody is equally provided for but in reality only those in power (bureaucrats and party honchos) win while everybody else loses. The only level of equality reached by the common man is in the shared level of misery.

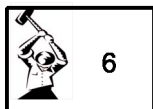
*This information was taken from the Students for Liberty website and the views or opinions expressed by Students For Liberty may not reflect those of Bureaucrash as the views and expressions of Bureaucrash throughout this zine may not reflect the views and opinions held by Students For Liberty.

Culture

Communicating the same principled message in multiple mediums means a larger potential audience. In the past, somewhat dependent on the specific culture, ideas were transferred through spoken language, dance, and later, through books. Though they still play a role, other mediums, such as the Internet, television, and music, must too be broached as people access content via their preferred medium. This does not mean we have to rework our message but only add it to the larger conversation at different points. Otherwise, it's as though we're absent from the conversation entirely. For example, government bloat and hypocrisy provides ample fodder for The Daily Show, South Park, Stossel's 20/20, and Pen and Teller's: Bullshit!, shows that influence the worldview of millions. And the same anti-bureaucracy/pro-freedom message can just as easily be communicated through Internet radio shows (like Free Talk Live), blogs (like The Austrian Economists), podcasts (such as Bureaucrash's Podcrash), and zines. If your interests and skills lie in one of these mediums, you can help reinforce those already countering pro-State rhetoric.

Technology helps us bypass traditional gatekeepers. The age of media being controlled by a handful of barons in bed with government is over (for one example of the harm this sort of relationship brought, read up on Hearst, Ansigner, and the criminalization of marijuana). We live in a time where the proliferation of technology has allowed virtually anyone, anywhere to share their ideas with others, whether via a blog post, uploaded video, Twitter message, or shared song. This empowers you – the individual, and threatens the status quo – the government and their often accomplice, the mainstream media. You no longer have to submit an op-ed to a newspaper editor and hope that they're open-minded enough to run your piece. Instead, you can ignore them completely and share your thoughts with others via the Internet. Much to the chagrin of mainstream media companies, prominent blogs have readerships that rival the largest circulated newspapers. Using an inexpensive video camera, Joe Sixpack can create and post a video on YouTube that generates more views than movies released by mammoth Hollywood companies. Those with a microphone, computer, and free software can host a podcast.

Prominent cultural figures hold enormous sway. Like it or not, many folks take cues from the singer of their favorite band, a controversial radio talk show host, a graphic artist or a documentary filmmaker. They could very easily introduce tens of thousands or millions of others to the ideas of liberty. Even if they just plant a seed, it'll help to nudge their fans just a little bit more toward the ideas of freedom.



Who Owns You?

The government and special interest groups working through the government claim they are “here to help” you. But no matter how good their intentions, usually they end up violating your rights. For instance, most people would agree that substance abuse is bad, whether that substance is heroin or over the counter sleeping pills. Most people would also agree that the doctor, the lawyer, the nutritionist, the hairdresser and the contractor you do business with should know what they are doing. Yet, the essence of natural rights is the self-ownership and freedom of association are not contingent upon man-made legislation but are inherent in each individual. The real question then, is not whether substance abuse is bad, or whether it is good for a person to have the proper training in their chosen profession, but if anyone should be able to tell you what you can or cannot consume, inhale, drink, inject into yourself, or with whom you can contract. The answer is NO – you are the only one who has the right to make this decision. And any coercion exerted by the government violates your individual rights, grossly misallocates economic resources and distorts the market. It's a simple yet powerful concept: You own yourself.

Restrictions or bans on substances violate property rights. In many countries, governments (or as some have called them, “food Nazis”) have taken to banning all sorts of items, such as trans fats, foie gras, and the smoking of cigarettes – a clear violation of property rights. If a restaurant owner believed her patrons would prefer foods without trans fats, she would be smart to prepare foods without those fats. A bar owner who sees that many customers would rather have an adult beverage without smelling of smoke would ask his patrons not to light up. But, even if the property owner made a decision that others disagree with, or one that goes against market trends, that is his prerogative. Consumers are always free to spend their dollars elsewhere. Restrictions or bans on substances are inefficient and impossible to enforce. The war on (some) drugs is a war that cannot be won. After a group of people (i.e. the Drug Enforcement Administration, legislators trying to appear “tough on crime”, etc.) deem a particular substance “illicit,” money is taken from productive members of society to fund what is now a \$40 billion per year anti-drug campaign. With 25% of those in state prisons and 55% of those in federal prison incarcerated for a drug-related offense, this failed government policy means the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world and the largest number of individuals behind bars in absolute numbers. Not exactly the “land of the free”. Further, making substances illegal does not lessen demand but only moves them to the black market where purity is questionable, where contractual disputes are resolved through violence rather than in court, and where the artificially-high price of the substance means users resort to more and more crimes to pay for their habits, thus allowing organized crime to thrive.

Occupational licensing violates your right to voluntarily make contacts. It is no secret that those who oversee licensing requirements have an incentive to limit their competition. By budding-up with legislators to create and score the tests required for a license to “legally” work in their profession, plumbers, hairstylists, contractors, doctors and others claim to act to “protect” the public from shoddy workmanship or services. This serves only to protect them from competition, which drives up prices for the consumer. By denying consumers the right to hire who they want for a particular job it violates their right to voluntarily reach a contact with another person. And it violates the rights of an individual to choose their profession. When the free market forces of competition are entered into these professions, it would drive down cost and raise quality because those who do a bad job or defraud people will be exposed for doing so.

The regulation of pharmaceuticals violates individual rights and distorts the market. The Food and Drug Administration, another agency created under the auspices of “protecting us,” is responsible for countless deaths due to the burdens (in time and money) it takes for a drug to reach market. In a true free market, consumers would have the right to buy and consume drugs at their discretion. For determining the safety and efficacy of a drug, they will likely turn to their doctors, Consumer Reports-type associations that rank drugs, and other reviews for advice. And if a drug fails to deliver on its promises it will gain a negative reputation and will be avoided, possibly causing the manufacturer to go under. This is your life, not some bureaucrat's.



Don't Tread

Mandatory community service is slavery. Through programs such as Zero Tolerance and mandatory community service, government schools teach individuals to be subservient to the State, to surrender their rights without protest. Government schools are merely a bureaucratic tool – controlling what students learn, blocking diversity of thought, transforming youth into unquestioning supporters of an invasive government that controls their personal and economic decisions. As Benjamin Disraeli stated in 1874, "Whenever is found what is called a paternal government, there is found state education. It has been discovered that the best way to ensure implicit obedience is to commence tyranny in the nursery."

Mandatory attendance violates individual rights. Though it varies by jurisdiction, akin to a prison sentence, governments decree by law that youth must attend school when they reach a specific age for a certain number of years. Failure to do so can result in fines (for their parents, whose money is already being stolen to pay for government schools) and if continued, jail. As the great hero of human rights Joseph Stalin once wrote, "Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed." Any wonder why it's mandatory?

The message "Don't Tread" communicates in two words what the entire political philosophy of classical liberalism is about – desiring to be free from oppression from whatever quarter. In other words, "don't fuck with me." This message is used by those advocating a less-invasive State because governments, through taxation, legislation, regulation, surveillance, etc., are the main aggressors upon individual rights.

Why we believe the idea "Don't Tread" is kickass:

"Don't Tread" is a concise yet powerful statement. In the U.S., the "Don't Tread" viewpoint is often symbolized by the Gadsden Flag, which pictures the Western Rattlesnake about to strike – a fitting image because the Western Rattler keeps to itself and is not aggressive, but when it is provoked, it will defend itself. Organizations such as the Free State Project and Drexel's Student Liberty Front have used the porcupine as their symbol for much the same reasons. Elsewhere, the "Don't Tread" mantra is captured by the phrase "laissez faire". Because "Don't Tread" is such a short statement and the associated images are provocative, they can easily be disseminated, for instance as a desktop wallpaper, chalked on campus sidewalks, bumper sticker, clothing, tattoos, to introduce others to the ideas of freedom or start a conversation. Most importantly, "Don't Tread" helps to remind each passing bureaucrat that we won't sit idly by as they try to control our lives.

"Don't Tread" necessitates no action from others. It does not communicate a positive right or imply a duty. Rather, it clearly states that you want to live your life in peace without interference from others, even if they believe you are making unwise decisions. It is particularly directed against bureaucrats and politicians who supposedly operate "for your own good," yet do so at the point of a gun.

"Don't Tread" leads to the most prosperity. As people are free to act without interference from others, they are able to dispose of their property as they see fit. That means they can exchange it with others, save it, use it or destroy it. And only through a system that respects property rights can wealth be generated on such a massive scale that it lifts entire societies from poverty because the innovation needed to create better and cheaper products requires the incentive of owning what one has created and profiting from it. Consensual transactions between individuals entail that both parties gain from the exchange. When government gets in the way of these exchanges it violates each individual's rights and curtails the engine of wealth creation, or what David Friedman called "The machinery of freedom."

"Don't Tread" reminds those in government who really retains the power. Though a slick politician may mouth that they work for you, few believe it. Rather, they believe they are smarter than you, and they use the force of government to restrict your choices and control your life according to their views. Fortunately, more and more individuals are figuring out that just because some legislators pass legislation, that does not make it just. They recognize the difference between man-made laws, which are produced by governments, and natural rights, which individuals possess by virtue of being human beings regardless of whether government recognizes and protects those rights or not. And individuals, being sovereign with their own personal values and self-interests, are ready to defend themselves and others from aggression, whether the aggressor happens to be a common criminal or an agent of the State.

Earth Liberation

A well-functioning environment adds to the welfare of human beings. Most people want to breathe fresh air and drink clean water; to relax in abundant parks and green forests; and to observe wildlife in their natural habitats. These same folks think that a diversity of plants and animals is important and are awed and inspired by the sheer beauty of untouched places of nature. But human beings also need to survive, and for that they need the resources nature has to offer. Being able to keep the environment in good shape while still utilizing its resources for the well-being of humanity is a complex and challenging task. Yet, to decrease the world's population, to oppose technology, and to call for governments to pass new laws and mandates is not the solution. Government policies cannot mimic the dynamism and spontaneity present in the market, and, in fact, more often than not create perverse and unintended consequences. The solution to environmental concerns is not for more government intervention but for the application of a free market approach, which encapsulates entrepreneurship, property rights, and voluntary transactions.

Why using free markets to solve environmental problems makes the most sense:

Free markets best allocate scarce resources. Free markets are based on property rights. When a resource is held in common and owned by no one in particular, people tend to exploit it because they want to get the most out of it before everyone else. Think about it this way: When a forest is held in common (i.e. anyone can use it) you will try to log as many trees as you can, before the next person comes along. That person will think the same way you do, and the next person, etc., until eventually all trees are logged. And, you have no reason to plant new trees because you have no control over who logs them. On the other hand, if you own the forest, then you have control over its use and an incentive to preserve the value you derive from it. So, you might replace the trees you log because your forest is a long-term investment for your business success. Or, you might even decide that logging is not as profitable and make your forest a recreation spot, where people pay a fee to camp, hike and enjoy nature. Property rights also give you the ability to defend yourself against polluters and hold the accountable for their actions. For instance, in England and Scotland, if you are a commercial fisher or sport angler you own fishing rights, and if a factory pollutes the waters you fish in, you can seek relief in court. Privately held fishing rights also prevent the depletion of fish because fishers want to stay in business and thus have a vested interest not to over fish. So, clearly a system of private, rather than public ownership, better protects resources

Free markets can better increase standards of living and protect the environment. Some radical environmentalists are opposed to the flourishing and advancement of human life because the progress of humans necessarily entails the destruction of nature. They would rather prefer the destruction of industrial civilization and the eradication of most of mankind. But most people rightly find this position morally abhorrent. Of course, we have to take into consideration that natural resources are not unlimited and that we cannot gratuitously destroy nature since we rely on it for our well-being. The answer lies in technology. Technological innovation arises out of the quest of producers to use resources more efficiently and effectively. But there is little incentive for innovation if people can't derive any profit from their labor. The free market spurs innovation because it is based on voluntary action and exchange, and it provides the proper incentives. For instance, consider digitalization. It was driven by a quest of producers and consumers to speed up communication and save costs by reducing the use of paper and the use of energy expended in connection with the production and use of paper, such as the energy needed to log trees, transport and process the wood, make paper and print books, transport paper and paper products to office supply stores and books to local bookstores, etc.



Teensploitation

Far from being environments conducive to learning, schools across the world use coercion to force students to conform to the whims of politicians and bureaucrats. Billed as bastions of free expression, intellectual honesty and rigor, administrators have turned schools into prisons for the mind, where one-size-fits-all policies are forced upon youth and where independent thoughts are discarded. It's a world in which the government can has the "right" to tell a student what they can and can't think, wear, say, or do. It's a world that crushes the individual for the benefit of those in power – a practice we've dubbed "Teensploitation"

Teensploitation is intellectual slavery. Government schools, while alleging to perpetuate diversity, are centers of Statist thought. Today, in virtually every class, students are taught to turn to the government when confronted with a problem, rather than to think for themselves, take their own initiative and bear the accompanying responsibility. Students are told that it is their duty to pay their taxes, to vote, and to accept regulations as good things, that government is needed to protect the less-fortunate from the onslaught of capitalism. Students are rewarded not for documenting how entrepreneurs and voluntary transactions created wealth and thus lifted people from poverty but for proposing an ever-more-invasive government programs under vague notions of "social justice". Teachers parrot socialist ideas – that market failure rather than government policies caused and exacerbated the Great Depression, that redistribution is "just", that students should listen to them and others in government because they "know what is good for" them. And like socialism, this one-size-fits-all education means that all students are treated the same – at the lowest common denominator so that none are left behind. Ever wonder why the brightest students are often bored? As H.L. Mencken stated, "The aim of public education is not to spread enlightenment at all, it is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality."

Government schools elevate the good of the collective at the expense of the individual. Teachers tell students that the good of society, or a whole race or ethnicity ranks above that of an individual. That minority rights must be protected at the expense of individual rights. But isn't the smallest minority the individual? Further, forcing diversity on students through programs such as affirmative action only reinforces prejudices, that categorize people based on a factor outside of their control (i.e. their race/ethnicity). But as has been stated elsewhere, only racists see race. To escape the epidemic of racial conflict students need only grasp that civil society and free markets are the great equalizers, not the State, as is preached in government schools. For example, a business owner does not need the government to tell her who to hire. If she wants to stay competitive she'll hire the most qualified person, regardless of their skin color or gender. Because, if she doesn't, her competitor will, placing her at a disadvantage. The same is true of whom they choose to sell to. If a business owner is racist and he refuses to sell to a certain group of people, he'll loose business while his competitor, who sees the money to be gained, readily sells to them. But, are students taught this in school? That the market is the great equalizer? That the market, not any government program or mandate, creates the most opportunities? No. And why is that? So bureaucrats can keep their jobs?



Taxes trample the idea of virtue. Forcing individuals via taxation to pay for the "needs" of others (often determined by a bureaucrat) does make them benevolent or charitable. What makes people charitable and benevolent is realizing that there are persons in true need and causes well worth while contributing to. Many people do realize that; that is why they give voluntarily. Moreover, excessive taxation actually discourages charitable giving because people have less money to give, or they figure that their taxes already pay for the needy.

Taxation is progressive. That means that individuals who earn more are forced to pay more. But why? They do not derive any greater benefit from the government by doing so. Its underlying assumption is that wealth is a like a fixed pie from which some people get to take a larger piece thereby decreasing the share of others. Accordingly, income inequality is the expression of unfair wealth distribution and should be decreased by reallocation from the top to the bottom. Hence, those who make more should pay more because they have to give back in some way what they have taken from others. But more production generates more economic progress which leads to an increase in wealth for everyone (at least in a free market system), so that the pie does not remain a fixed size.

Digitalization was a win-win for humans and trees. Pollution and unsustainable exploitation of natural materials can be solved by technological innovation. In fact, innovation often actually reduces the use of raw materials derived from nature. In his book *The Population Bomb*, Paul Ehrlich argued that the growth of the world's population would soon outpace the supply of food and resources. So, in 1980 Julian Simon made a famous wager with Ehrlich on how the prices of various commodity metals would change over the next 10 years up to 1990 (a price increase would reflect scarcity in supply). Simon bet the prices would go down, Ehrlich bet that the prices would go up. Even though the world's population experienced the largest increase in history during the 1980s, the prices of all the metals the two men had bet on went down and Simon won the wager.

Government environmental regulations fail. Market failure, as is often alleged, is not the problem. The problem is that governments prevent or meddle with markets for natural resources. And, whereas markets punish or reward businesses with profits and losses, bureaucrats are not held accountable in the same way. They incur no punishment for wasting resources or reward for using them efficiently; they get to keep their jobs either way. As a result, government environmental regulations usually either fail outright or incur unintended consequences. Consider the case of scenic areas such as parks and forest preserves. When they are owned by the government, user fees are kept so low (by taxing folks who may never visit the park) that private owners are not able to compete and thus don't consider it profitable to own a scenic area. And, government owned parks are often less well maintained. At the beginning of the 20th century, Seattle, WA had a privately owned park that was beautifully maintained and enjoyed by thousands of people every day. But the local government decided that it would not take the risk of the next private owner being less attentive to the park. Shortly after it condemned and took over the property, the park's condition deteriorated. Another example of failed environmental regulation is the Endangered Species Act (ESA) which says that if you have an endangered species on your land, you face stringent regulations as to how (if at all) you can use it. This has resulted in the 3-S treatment (shoot, shovel, and shut-up) to avoid regulations imposed by the government..

Government-owned property causes more pollution. If government-ownership of natural resources, scenic areas, and watersheds is such a good idea, why don't environmentalists point to examples of such utopias under communist regimes (where private property was abolished)? Because communist countries, absent of free markets, have been some of the worst environmental offenders. In many Eastern bloc countries factory fumes caused the death of entire forests. Whole water bodies, such as the Aral and Caspian Seas, were contaminated with factory waste or diverted for irrigation, destroying the natural habitat of many species of plant and animals. The air pollution was often so bad that people had to drive with their lights on during the day to see the road and the lack of clean air causes them major health problems. About communist China, Thomas DiLorenzo writes in the March 1992 issue of *The Freeman*: "Depletion of government-owned forests has turned them into deserts, and millions of acres of grazing and farm land in the northern Chinese plains were made alkaline and unproductive during the 'Great Leap Forward' [of 1958 to 1960]." Similarly, in the United States, the public sector, meaning government, has been a major source of pollution. The Department of Defense produces 750,000 tons of hazardous waste each year—more than what the five largest private chemical companies in the U.S. produce combined.

Enjoy Capitalism!

Capitalism is the only moral social system. Only a capitalist system allows you to act in your own interest, to keep what you have worked for and trade it with other willing individuals. For much of human history wealth has been produced primarily by looting or enslaving others. Under capitalism wealth is created by serving others, by creating values for them. Individuals who produce the best goods and services are rewarded by making the most profit. Those who produce shoddy goods, mediocre services or try to defraud others are weeded out when exposed.

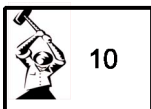
Capitalism is win-win. Producers only make profits on goods and services that consumers choose to buy. Competition among producers ensures that consumers have a variety of goods and services at different price ranges to choose from. Workers and employers come together based on mutual consent. Employers can choose to fire incompetent workers, and workers can choose to leave an employer for a better job. Competition among employers for qualified workers drives wages and benefits up. Whereas politics is a zero-sum game in which power and tax dollars are redistributed from one group to another, capitalism continuously creates more wealth, thereby growing the pie and increasing prosperity for all.

Capitalism is fair. Capitalism is predicated upon and respects individuals' free choices. No one has to pay for what he does not want and derives no benefit from. Under capitalism, individuals and businesses cannot seek politically enforced advantages or handouts. For instance, steel producers will not be able to obtain tariffs and subsidies in order to avoid being undersold or driven out of business by foreign competitors, and a workers' union will not get government to force employers to provide higher wages, more benefits and greater job security. Unable to run to the government for help, these groups must prove themselves entirely based on the worth of the goods and services they produce. That is fair to consumers and competitors.

Capitalism empowers the consumer. The consumer votes for or against goods and services with his money. If companies do not offer the kinds of goods and services consumers want to buy, they fail. But their demise inspires the emergence of new markets, new products, new services, and new methods of production. In this way, capitalism promotes innovation and efficiency through a process of creative destruction. Capitalism also fosters the creation of mass communication tools such as the internet. Thus, consumers can make informed decisions about what to purchase and can let others know about the quality of that purchase. Many consumers united together can persuade a producer to lower prices or change his product or service for the better.

Capitalism reflects human nature. People have limited knowledge. State-planned economies fail because no bureaucrat or committee, no matter how well educated in economics, has the knowledge to coordinate the actions of millions of individuals. People are also motivated by different values. Under capitalism people can pursue their chosen values, provided of course that they do not violate the rights of others. Pursuing values and being allowed to keep, dispose and profit from the results motivates people to take care of things, to produce and to innovate. Further, by tapping into human beings' competitive nature, capitalism makes everything better. Just compare the best car created under a capitalist system to the best car created under a socialist system, where competition is suppressed.

Capitalism fosters benevolence. When individuals are well-off, as would be the case for the bulk of individuals (perhaps only those who have sought protectionism from the government may not), they have time and money to take care of others. Further, if they have the right to keep what they have worked for and dispose of it in the way they choose, they are more likely to embrace helping people in need and give more than if their money is forcibly taken from them by the government via taxation. For instance, you might already donate money to your local homeless shelter, food pantry or to an organization working for a cause that is very important to you. But if you were not taxed as heavily as you are, you might be willing and able to donate more.



Tax Slavery Sucks

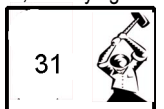
Tax Slavery Sucks According to the Tax Foundation, Americans will spend about 30 percent of their income on taxes in 2008. For comparison, in 1900, it was around 6 percent. Put differently, for almost four months out of the year you work just to pay for government. In the current system most types of income are taxed, sometimes twice, and often progressively. These are just some of the taxes levied by government federal and local income tax, sales tax, property tax, gasoline tax, cigarette tax, liquor tax, vehicle sales tax, utility tax, marriage license tax, inheritance tax, and capital gains tax, etc. On top of that, you pay to compensate for taxes levied on others. For instance, you, as a consumer, pay higher prices for goods and services because of the corporate income tax levied on businesses.

The government, if it is to exist, should protect people from force and fraud. Therefore, at most, government should tax only to maintain a national defense, a police force and law courts. But instead, legislators seek to fulfill the so-called "needs" of the constituencies and special interest groups that put and keep them in office. So, the government has tasked itself with providing cheaper prescription drugs for seniors, better education for children, support for farmers by keeping food prices high and paying them for any product they fail to sell, covering the living expenses of the poor, paying for medical research, and so on. The result is not a system that protects our individual rights but a system that provides benefits to some at the expense of others, otherwise known as concentrated benefits and dispersed costs.

Taxes violate individual rights. Specifically, it violates your property rights. By using taxation to benefit some people, the government says that you have no right to keep what you have earned or how you spend it, as long as there is someone else who needs or wants it, and that it, the government, has the right to seize your property in order to provide it to the person or group they see fit. That's damn close to making you a slave. As John A Pugsley stated, "How does the IRS agent who collects our taxes differ from the gunman? He does not. You are forced to pay under threat of imprisonment (the gun). Your money is taken without your voluntary consent. It is used by other people who claim that their need is a just demand of your property. The process is justified because a group of people (voters) decide as a group that you should be robbed and that the money should be used for whatever purposes they deem proper."

The current tax system creates winners and losers. The government does not create wealth but only usurps and redistributes it. The winners in this redistribution are legislators and the special interest groups that pander to them. Also, foreign producers win because the taxes levied on businesses increase prices on domestic goods. Tax accountants win because they garner more business due to the complicated the tax codes. And, people who are the least productive win because their income tax is lowest; some do not have to pay income tax at all. The losers are clearly productive individuals, those who have created wealth by providing goods and services to others, who have chosen to voluntarily patron their business. But more than that, everyone who pays income tax loses because they have to spend time and money to complete complicated income tax returns. As Carl Watner penned in *I Must Speak Out*: "Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, 'Taxation is the price we pay for civilization.' But isn't the opposite really the case? Taxation is the price we pay for failing to build a civilized society. The higher the tax level, the greater the failure. A centrally planned and totalitarian state represents a complete defeat for the civilized world, while a totally voluntary society represents its ultimate success."

Taxes trample the idea of virtue. Forcing individuals via taxation to pay for the "needs" of others (often determined by a bureaucrat) does make them benevolent or charitable. What makes people charitable and benevolent is realizing that there are persons in true need and causes well worth while contributing to. Many people do realize that; that is why they give voluntarily. Moreover, excessive taxation actually discourages charitable giving because people have less money to give, or they figure that their taxes already pay for the needy. not remain a fixed size.



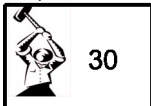
Stop Statism

Statists are anti-progress. Statists claim their policies are for the common good. For some this claim is just a front to get more power, but for others it is a genuine goal. Nevertheless, even the most well-intentioned, who believe that granting government the power to control individual actions will result in a better outcome, violate rights and cause harm. One need only consider historical fact to disprove this Statist belief. For most of history, people were not free to decide how to live their lives because they lived in servitude to a noble or king. The vast majority of people were wretchedly poor, worked from dusk until dawn six or seven days a week, were prone to encounter devastating diseases, and died in their twenties or thirties. Even the privileged few – the kings, nobles and clergy – had nowhere near the standard of living that the ordinary worker in western countries enjoys today. It was classical liberalism—the ideas of British Enlightenment philosophers, of Adam Smith, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and the American Founding fathers—that unlocked the true human potential. Classical liberalism set man free from servitude to another and gave him the right and the responsibility to care for his own life. As a result of the emergence and subsequent dominance of liberal democracy and capitalism, in the last two hundred years, the world has seen progress unparalleled in human history: according to renowned economist Angus Maddison, “[w]orld per capita real income has risen twenty times as fast since 1820, than it did in the eight centuries from 1000 to 1820.”

Statism is anti-growth. Statists often justify their policies claiming that they want to reduce inequality and poverty. In reality though, Statists achieve neither and often exacerbate both because their policies discourage economic growth, which is particularly detrimental to low income and poor people. For one, politicians and bureaucrats are limited in their knowledge, as is any individual. No matter how smart an elected official, bureaucrat, or committee is, there's no way they could adequately plan and control the actions of millions of individuals to achieve maximal economic growth. Moreover, Statism encourages **rent-seeking** and **protectionism**, the activity of groups to seek government enforced advantages and be insulated from the outcomes of **free trade**. This harms the consumer, who is forced to pay higher prices due to lack of competition and fund the rent through higher taxes. This Statist action disincentivizes increases in production and job creation, thus depriving low income and poor people of better opportunities to make a living.

Statism causes conflict. Though Statists claim to work for the common good, their actions benefit one group at the expense of another. Nazis favored the pure Aryan at the expense of all other nationalities and ethnicities; affirmative action proponents favor blacks, Hispanics and women at the expense of whites and males; socialists and unions favor workers at the expense of business owners; protectionists favor their native industry at the expense of that in other countries; rent-seekers favor their business, organization or cause at the expense of other businesses, organizations, causes and at the expense of consumers; many religious people but especially fundamentalists favor their followers at the expense of those of another religion and at the expense of atheists; and earth liberation environmentalists favor nature at the expense of humans.

Hence, Statists create friction and conflict among individuals, groups and nations. The long stretch of peace during the mid-19th century was at least in part the result of limited government and laissez-faire economics in places like Britain and the United States. The free movement of people was widespread; Russia, the only country that required a passport, was considered backwards. The bloody wars and atrocities committed by governments during the 20th century were the consequence of a move toward state intervention to control people's lives, ultimately leading to the emergence of ultra-Statist regimes such as Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Communist Russia and Maoist China, and many other totalitarian experiments including a United States that interned over 110,000 individuals of Japanese descent, drafted many more, and implemented wage and price controls.



Capitalism makes everyone richer. Even the least well-off person in a developed country today lives a life of luxury beyond the wildest dreams of the richest kings centuries ago: televisions, computers, iPods, cell phones, microwaves, cars, washing machines, or air conditioning. Compare how poor people in the United States live today to how they lived there a hundred years ago or in Third World countries today. In fact, capitalism is our best hope for alleviating and eventually eradicating poverty worldwide because it creates more wealth for everyone than any other social system.

Capitalism promotes peace. Capitalist countries are less likely to initiate violence against their citizens or against other countries. Where people come together for mutually beneficial interaction such as trade, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation are less important. What matters is whether you can offer me the kinds of goods and services I want for the price I am willing to pay.



Free Trade Now

Free trade exists when governments do not interfere with commercial transactions between individuals domestically and internationally. Free trade makes America and the world better off. The Institute for International Economics has calculated that completely liberalizing trade would add US \$500 billion, or \$5,000 per household, to U.S. annual income. And, the World Bank has estimated that reducing trade restrictions would add an additional US \$350 billion in income for developing countries and \$170 billion in income for developed countries by 2015.

Free trade is fair trade. Free trade is fair because it is voluntary and mutually beneficial. People trade the things they value less for the things they value more. For instance, I trade my money with IBM for a laptop computer. In doing so, both IBM and I are better off. An involuntary or disadvantageous trade is not a trade but coercion. Free trade is also fair because it promotes competition and innovation. In a global market there are more producers and consumers. With more producers there is more competition; and with more consumers production can take place on a large scale. More competition and large scale production lead to more innovation and lower prices, and thus to higher standards of living.

Free trade is efficient. Individuals engage in trade due to differences in comparative advantage. No one place has all the resources, such as raw materials, knowledge and skill, to produce most efficiently all the goods and services it needs. There is a reason, for example, that bananas are grown in Honduras and not Iceland. So, countries specialize in what they produce best and trade with one another to acquire what they either cannot produce at all or only inefficiently. Hence, free trade lets countries make more efficient use of resources.

Free trade increases prosperity worldwide. Throughout history, most humans lived in utter poverty. However, since the Industrial Revolution, per capita income worldwide has increased dramatically. According to economist Johan Norberg, just since 1965 Western countries have increased their wealth by 40 percent. The increase was even higher on the poorer continents: Latin America raised its wealth by 60 percent, Africa by 80 percent, and the average income in Asia rose by 300 percent. According to World Bank studies, global poverty rates fell from 33 percent to 18 percent between 1981 and 2001; poverty in East Asia fell from 58 to 16 percent and in South Asia from 52 to 31 percent. This kind of economic growth seems best explained by: "A rising tide lifts all ships." Economic growth is fueled by investments, in stocks, bonds, real estate or businesses, because investments pay for new technology and new jobs. Global free trade increases investments from developed countries into underdeveloped and developing countries, and vice versa.

Free trade fosters peace. Humans naturally seek to want to improve their condition. In order to obtain what they need, they can either trade, enslave others to produce for them, or go to war and loot the defeated for land and resources. For much of human history the pursuit of the latter two options prevailed. But over the past half century, the incidence of war and civil conflicts has steadily declined and trade dominates today. To be sure, trade is not a sufficient condition for peace, but it is a necessary one. Trade contributes to a country's internal stability by raising incomes significantly more and across all sectors of society than slavery or war and by reducing poverty. Trade also encourages democratization and democratic countries are less likely to engage in war. Finally, the more trade takes place among countries, the higher the economic cost becomes to go to war since war would destroy the trade relations and investments already made.



Stop Rentseeking

Rent-seeking refers to the behavior of individuals or groups expending resources to achieve public policy decisions that transfer wealth in favor of them and at the expense of others. Some examples:

- A nonprofit organization might seek for the government to spend taxpayer money on their pet cause, such as protecting the environment or researching a disease.
- A workers' union might want the government to force employers to provide higher wages, more benefits and greater job security.

While the rent-seekers should be faulted for the behavior, it is the government granting rent-seekers what they want that is the real problem. As it shells out more benefits and privileges, government has to collect more taxes to administer and pay for them, thus vastly increasing its size and scope.

Rent-seeking is theft. A rent-seeker wants to achieve a wealth transfer in his favor without having to provide value in return. In a mixed economy, companies and organizations find it more effective to petition the government for protection (i.e. subsidies, tariffs, entry barriers, regulations, etc.) than to compete by providing goods and services that consumers want to pay for. Since in a free market the choices of other individuals might not go in his favor, the rent-seeker would rather have the government initiate force against those individuals. The free market, on the other hand is predicated upon and respects individuals' free choices. Rent-seekers hinder the dynamism of the free market. I trade with you something I have but want less for something you have that I want more, e.g. I trade my money with IBM for a laptop computer. In doing so, both IBM and I are better off. By contrast, when the government initiates force in favor of a rent-seeker, it makes everybody but the rent-seeker worse off. It leaves the rent-seeker's competitors worse off, because the rent-seeker now has a government-enforced advantage, whether it be a government-approved monopoly, or stifling regulations faced by would-be entrepreneurs. Because market forces and signals are hindered and distorted it leaves consumers worse off. They are forced to pay higher prices for lesser quality goods and services.

Rent-seeking harms economic growth. Instead of companies investing their money in new technology, new jobs, offering consumers better products and better prices, or increasing their employees' pay, the money ends up in the pockets of lobbyists and the politicians able to grant favors. Consumers are forced to pay more for goods and services and taxpayers have to foot the bill to pay for the rent-seeker's government-enforced advantage. So, over time, as government arbitrarily favors one group over another and expands in size in order to pay for rents, rent-seeking erodes the mechanisms that make economic growth and wealth creation possible: the impartial rule of law, limited government and individual rights.

Statists, whether out of distrust of individuals or faith in the ability of the government, prefer that the State controls people instead of people controlling themselves; they opt for government intervention rather than individual liberty. Statist policies can include regulation of the economy, provision of social goods, and control over personal behaviors. Many political ideologies can be subsumed under the label "Statist" – communism, fascism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism. Even a democracy can become Statist if it does not provide for any constitutional safeguards against the majority imposing its will without regard for the individual rights of the minority.

Statism is anti-liberty. Individuals have property in themselves, also called self-ownership, which entails they should be free to control their bodies, their minds and their lives. The only way to interfere with that freedom is by means of physical force. The job of governments is to defend individual rights by protecting individuals against the initiation of physical force. However, when governments institute Statist policies, they initiate force against individuals who are not infringing on the liberty of others and thus violate individual rights. For instance, regulations, tariffs and subsidies for businesses violate the rights of entrepreneurs, who are faced with high entry barriers, and of business owners and consumers, who both are prevented from voluntarily determining the terms of their interactions. Immigration restrictions violate the rights of individuals, since they are prevented from peacefully living and working where they choose to. Bans on smoking and the use of other drugs, speed limits and seat belt requirements, and laws preventing the sale of organs violate your rights since you are prevented from making decisions about your own body.



Social Slavery

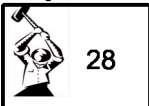
The current Social Security (aka socialist insecurity) system is designed as a pay-as-you-go system, in which current workers' tax dollars pay for the benefits of retirees. And, it is in serious trouble. With increased life expectancy and a declining birth rate, there are fewer workers to support a greater number of retirees. In 1950, there were 16 workers paying for the benefit of one retiree. Today, there are about three workers per retiree, and by 2025 there will only be two. According to the Social Security Administration itself, if unreformed Social Security will begin running a deficit by 2017, and by 2060 Social Security and Medicare combined will make up 71 percent of the federal budget.

Social Security violates individual rights. It is predicated upon two ideas. One, the strong should support the weak, in this case, the young should support the old financially when the old cannot do so themselves any longer. Two, life entails certain basic risks that people either encounter at no fault of their own, such as economic downturns, or simply fail to prepare for. Now, while these ideas might be true, they miss an essential point. Your life belongs to you. And, since it is you living your life and you have the most interest in it, most likely you know your financial situation much better than any politician or bureaucrat. Therefore, as long as you are not violating someone else's rights, you should be free to control your life and to make the choices that affect your future, even if you end up making mistakes. You are not violating anyone's rights by planning for your retirement. So, you should be free decide whether you want to save for retirement and how much risk you are willing to take in investing, reaping the rewards or incurring the losses. As for helping the less fortunate, since Social Security is a bad investment with a poor rate of return (see point 3), it actually disproportionately hurts poor people because they cannot afford to invest additional funds for retirement privately.

Social Security negates choice. By forcing individuals to contribute to Social Security, the government takes away important choices they should be able to make about their own retirement. If you work, you are forced to pay into it but have no choice about how the money is invested. In fact, your Social Security taxes are not even invested at all; they are paid out to current retirees and to loan the federal government money for other government programs. You have no choice over how many years you work or when to retire in order to collect any benefits. You have no choice about what happens to the accumulated money after you die; you cannot pass it on to your family or your favorite cause (like Bureaucrash).

Social Security is a bad investment. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if you are in your late twenties today, the most optimistic projection for your Social Security return is 0.7 percent! By contrast, historically returns on private investments have been much higher: stock market returns 6.8%; corporate bonds 3.8%; treasury bonds 3.3%; a balanced portfolio (50% stock/30% corporate bond/20% treasury bond) 4.9%. If you were able to invest your money privately, you could choose which type of investment you prefer. Stock markets might be riskier but involve higher returns than money market or plain old savings accounts. And, if you invest your money privately, you have a legal right to any returns on that money.

You have no legal right to Social Security benefits. In 1960 the Supreme Court ruled in *Flemming v. Nestor* that, "a person covered by the [Social Security Act] has not such a right in benefit payments as would make every defeasance of 'accrued' interests violative of the due process clause of the fifth amendment." Hence, Congress can change or rescind those benefits at any time. For instance, before 1983 Social security benefits were not taxed. Since the 1983 Amendments to the Social Security Act, up to one-half of the benefits received are taxed if the recipient's yearly income exceeded a certain threshold (generally individuals making more than \$25,000 and married couples making \$32,000). So, not only does the government forcibly take part of the money you earned out of your control, you also are not guaranteed to derive full benefits. That is legalized robbery.



Free trade helps the world's poorest. Free trade facilitates economic growth. In turn, economic growth leads to higher living standards, lower infant mortality rates, increased average life expectancy, improved health, decreased hunger, greater access to drinking water, and increased literacy. Global trade improves these indicators for the world's poorest, as Norberg's research shows. For instance, he writes that hunger in developing countries has been reduced from 37 to 17 percent over the last 30 years. Calorie consumption actually rose fastest in the developing countries, from 1,932 calories a day in 1961 to 2,684 calories a day in 1999. Whereas 25 years ago, 90 percent of the world's rural population had no access to clean water, today it is only 20 percent. And, in 1950, the developing world's illiteracy rate was 70 percent; today it is only 23 percent.

Protectionism hurts individuals in poor countries. When governments impose import tariffs, quotas and hand out subsidies to protect domestic industries from foreign competition, they keep prices high and stifle economic development. This is particularly detrimental to poor countries. For instance, American cotton farmers receive an average of US \$250,000 in subsidies, which keeps the price of cotton high for consumers and prevent producers in poorer countries like Burkina Faso from growing their economy by selling cotton in America. According the Fraser Institute's 2007 report on economic freedom, the average per capita GDP of countries in the top quartile of economic freedom is \$26,013, whereas that of countries in the lowest quartile is only \$3,305. Free trade must occur in the absence of government intervention and so-called free trade agreements which are riddled with subsidies, quotas and other protectionist elements



Freedom: My Anti-Gov

Freedom subsumes individual liberty and personal responsibility. If individuals are free to act and also held responsible to bear the consequences for their actions, good outcomes will be reinforced, correct behavior and bad outcomes will provide a learning experience. When government gets in the way of this feedback loop, it prevents the development of virtue and merely subjects the individual to the will of the State.

As long as you do not harm others, you should be free to act. This is so because the only one who owns you is you. This is true no matter where an individual happens to be born. The differences of relative freedom we see for individuals born in different countries are a direct result of the level of burden the government on them. For example, an individual born in North Korea has the same rights as an individual born in Canada. The difference is that the North Korean government has usurped more of the individual's rights. Imagine, if each nation were an individual, the parasite of government would put all into the hospital, and while some freer nations may be able to wheel around the corridors, many would be on life support. For those of us calling for freedom for ourselves and our kin—whether that be defined as family or those in an arbitrary political boundary—we should not forget others who suffer under even more repressive States.

More freedom means more prosperity. As The Economic Freedom of the World Index shows year after year, those areas of the world with less burdensome governments have greater standards of living. This fact should quiet calls for more redistribution at the hands of the government or more invasive economic regulations, even by persons supportive of such programs out of concern for those in the lowest socio-economic groups. Promoting freedom means promoting the free movement of goods and people across borders, the abolishment of protectionist measures, and the end of occupational licensing laws, all of which create prosperity.

Freedom is positive! Throughout history various tactics have been used to grow movements. Some dictator would campaign using fear tactics, telling folks that if he is not elected, there will be dire consequences. Contemporary politicians sell utopian visions, being purposefully vague so they cannot be held accountable for the shortcomings of their stated policies (which more often than not involve massive violations of individual rights). But the most successful movements have used truth, reason, and optimism as beacons. Just consider that since the philosophy of classical liberalism has shaped political regimes and societies beginning with the founding of the United States in the 18th century, the world has seen economic growth and levels of prosperity hitherto fore unprecedented in history. That is why this movement will succeed – and why it has to succeed.



Smoking is Healthier Than Fascism

Smoking bans have gone into effect in many jurisdictions, mostly indoors (bars, restaurants, workplaces, casinos, even apartments and condos) but also outdoors (beaches, in front of public buildings, parks and stadiums). Under the auspices of “protecting people” the government tries to discourage individuals from smoking by levying “sin taxes” on the cigarettes they buy and prohibits smokers from lighting up in places they share with non-smokers. To dissuade people—especially young folks—from starting to smoke, the government has banned cigarette advertising from TV and radio. -

Why we oppose anti-smoking legislation:

Smoking bans violate property rights. By legislating against smoking, the government initiates force. It initiates force against property owners—owners of bars, restaurants, private workplaces, apartments and condos—by prohibiting them from deciding whether to allow their employees, customers, guests and tenants to smoke. By contrast, none of these people are violating anyone's rights because they are not initiating physical force. Smokers are not forcing anyone to endure their smoking; people are free to leave a smoky environment. No employer is forcing anyone to work in a place where many people smoke. More importantly, those who choose to work in establishments where smoking is allowed did just that – choose. There is no right to a job, and the employee freely weighed the pros and cons prior to taking the position. The government also initiates force against cigarette manufacturers and broadcasters by banning them from advertising on TV and radio even though an advertisement does not force anyone to smoke. So, the government is unjustly violating citizens' rights by legislating against smoking.

“Smoking bans violate self-ownership. The government does not have the right to protect you from doing what you want with your own body. Smoking may be unhealthy, but acknowledging and taking that risk is your choice. The government uses a gun to prevent you from harming yourself—now that is irony!”

Smoking bans only entrenches the Nanny State. Anti-smoking legislation is a blatant example of the government using force to arbitrarily prevent people from doing things that the government deems harmful. Consider, for example, that the government does not prevent you from consuming alcohol, bungee jumping, becoming a police officer, a fireman, a soldier, or a coal miner, all activities with high adverse health risks to the individual and negative effects on others such as family and friends.

Smoking bans distort the free market. Many people realize that smoking can be a nuisance to nonsmokers. Hence, many restaurants had voluntarily become smoke-free absent of government coercion simply because of their customer demand. Many workplaces had already made rules about where to smoke to address the needs of their nonsmoking employees. Many home owners ask guests not to smoke in their homes, and many smokers do not smoke in their home because they have nonsmokers living there. Many parents, even those who smoke, are perfectly willing to limit their children's exposure to smoke if they believe it is harmful; no law is needed when a mother's protective instinct is already operative.

Smoking bans aren't supported by science. As for the dangers of second-hand smoke, while it is unpleasant, most studies investigating its effects looked at people who are exposed to it on a daily and prolonged basis, such as individuals who live with smokers, not people who go to bars, restaurants or are outside in the immediate vicinity of a smoker. Those studies did not always find that second-hand smoke harmed.



Fuck Censorship!

Backing of social welfare programs is empirically and ethically wrong. Progressives support social welfare programs like Social Security and Medicare out of concern for their fellow man. Apparently they don't realize that that money was stolen from productive individuals by government actors who first take a cut for themselves. A less rights-violating and more-efficient method of helping those in need would be for those willing to give of their money to do so. Do Progressives not trust in their fellow man enough to believe others wouldn't be taken care of? Historical examples show that before government intervention, civil society functioned very well – striking a balance between providing assistance and ensuring that access to help was not abused. And militant support of Social Security and Medicare by Progressives (programs that will together account for 71% of the federal budget by 2060) is not just alarming but dangerous. Moreover, entitlement programs invite moral hazards; those who don't want to take care of themselves will simply find a way to make themselves look needy enough. Medicare fraud alone costs taxpayers an estimated \$60 billion dollars! Or consider welfare recipients who have several aliases or claim to support numerous children. To be sure, most people abhor suffering and are willing to give to starving children or the local food pantry voluntarily. But no one has grown more benevolent, more virtuous or more charitable by having his hard-earned money redistributed by government.

Progressives oppose progress by demanding universal healthcare. Universal healthcare is based on the false claim that everyone has a right to healthcare. But saying I have a right to healthcare places a duty on others to provide it to me; it means I can force others to serve or pay for my medical needs. In contrast, saying I have a right not to be interfered with when I need medical help simply means that the government cannot prevent me from choosing whose medical services I purchase, or from obtaining medicines and treatments. As occurs in countries that have socialized healthcare, when the government pays for your healthcare, it will tell you what doctor you can go to, what treatments you can receive and what drugs you can buy. This is so because when a resource is “free,” people use it without regard to whether the resource will replenish, so government has to be in control over how it is dispersed, which leads to rationing, long waits and premature deaths. Further, universal healthcare is not free – it's paid for with your tax dollars. And, as with any other good or service, due to the lack of competition the quality of healthcare will decrease as its cost increase. Progressives should consider just how terrible a job government has done administering other programs – the drug war, the military, the post office, Fannie Mae – then re-think their stance on government-provided healthcare.

First, let's get clear on what kind of censorship we oppose. We oppose any censorship by government because only the government has the “authority” to legally use force against you for expressing your ideas. Your neighbor might kick you off his property if you say something he dislikes, or a privately owned newspaper can refuse to publish your letter to the editor, but neither can legally use force against you to shut you up.

Censorship lessens one of the main avenues we have to address our concerns. Most commonly, governments want to suppress the expression of ideas that undermine their position of power. To be able to actively speak out and oppose governmental action is essential to keep the government in check. Unfortunately governments throughout history have implemented illegitimate legislation aimed at preventing criticism of their actions. For example, in 1798 in the United States the Federalists (those advocating for a centralized government) passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which made it a crime to print anything that questioned the actions of a government official.

Censorship is futile. Using the force of government—which is to say, pointing a gun—doesn't change people's mind. Forcing you successfully into believe something is impossible. No one can check if you believe what they want you to believe; even if you claim you do, because they cannot read your mind. Physical force only stops persons from acting on the ideas in their minds but it doesn't eradicate those ideas from their minds. Also, censorship is ineffective because language evolves. If specific words are banned people will come up with new words to express their sentiments in a different way.

Censorship is an instrument of totalitarian regimes. Since censorship is ineffective at stopping people from holding certain ideas, to kill ideas one has to kill those who express and propagate them. So, while censorship advocates often claim that censorship protects people from violence (emotional or physical), history shows that censorship goes hand in hand with violence: The Chinese government violently broke up the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, the Catholic Church tortured and killed people as heretics during the Renaissance, the Nazis first burned books and then burned people.

Censorship prevents bad ideas from being exposed. Censoring an idea, no matter how atrocious it may be, does not prevent people from adopting it. In fact, many people who hold such an idea would use the fact that it's censored as further evidence that they are right and that their belief is being subverted by the government. Today, there is legislation against holocaust denial in over a dozen European countries. Not only does violate an individuals right to speech (though they don't have a right to force you to listen), it prevents an open discussion of the issue, preventing their claims from being exposed to the light of reason. False ideas have to be allowed to be out in the open, and you have to be free to discuss them, without fearing that the government will fine, imprison, or point a gun at you to try to shut you up.

Censorship allows a group of people (the government) to promote their morality. By granting the government the authority to deem certain content “obscene” or “dangerous” it means the government will be lobbied by countless groups to trying to impose their views on others. For instance, certain moralists want the government to ban pornography or the use of profanity because in their view these expressions have no redeeming value and often only offend people. But what is offensive or of no value to one person is in direct contrast to that of another person. We as individuals have the right to decide for ourselves what we are and are not exposed to, but not to limit that decision for others.

Censorship prevents the proliferation of truth and reason. People make mistakes. Since the government is made up of people, it too makes mistakes and therefore it cannot be given the power to censor something. Ideas, even if universally considered true, need to continually be challenged so that individuals do not get in the habit of accepting things based on faith, authority or prejudice—they need to know and internalize the reasons why their ideas are true and how to defend them properly.

Hands Off My Home

Thanks in large part to the work of the **Institute for Justice** and the 2005 Supreme Court case **Kelo v. New London**, eminent domain – the taking of private property by the government, has caused much grassroots and legal activity.

Why we oppose eminent domain:

Eminent domain is theft. Seizing private land for public use, even under the guise of economic development—is a violation of property rights. It does not matter how many people benefit from such a taking or that the government offers “just compensation.” A forced sell is not voluntary – there is no just compensation for an owner when he does not want to sell his property in the first place and has no choice about whom to sell it to. Eminent domain negates property owner’s rights to control its use, benefit from it, transfer or sell it, and exclude persons from it.

Eminent domain is arbitrary. Government actors steal property for “public use”. But what constitutes public use? And who qualifies as the public? If by “public” is meant the majority of people within a given jurisdiction, no individual’s property is safe since it can always be decided that somebody else would make better use of the property for the majority than the individual from whom they wish to take it. If by “public” is meant just some people within a given jurisdiction, then the group with the most political pull decides how property is allotted and used. And as we know, politics is force.

Eminent domain stifles the free market. Eminent domain is based on the rationale that an individual (a bureaucrat) or group of individuals (a government board or agency) have the knowledge of how best to allocate scarce resources. This individual or group supposedly can determine how a greater benefit can be derived from that property and not according to who rightly acquired it by his or her own efforts and by trade. As people such as FA Hayek demonstrated, there is no way that an individual or group can possess the tacit knowledge, or know the subjective preferences, of another group of people.

HANDS OFF My Home



Citizens Fighting Eminent Domain Abuse
www.CastleCoalition.org

Links
Institute for Justice -<http://www.ij.org/>



Progressives Against Progress

Progress is an abused word these days, especially by bureaucrats and the special interest groups that cater to them. Yet such groups, in the name of progress and social justice, support government intervention through intervention in the market, minimum or living wages, and universal healthcare. We find neither progress nor justice in government actions that advance one group at the expense of another. Don't get us wrong: we are for progress – for economic growth, wealth creation, and the elimination of poverty – but that which accompanies voluntary interactions and protects individual rights.

Why we oppose Progressives Against Progress:

Opposition to free markets is the antithesis of progress. If one thing unites Progressives it is their hatred for free markets. Yet it is free markets that can best provide for all the things Progressives advocate – the elimination of poverty, quality education, a clean environment, etc. Blanket opposition to free markets is a strange idea indeed. What sense does it make to use the force of government to prevent willing buyers and sellers from engaging in transactions? This simple act, done with someone from across town or across the ocean, creates wealth. And done billions and billions of times, it's what lifts whole societies from poverty. By turning to government, Progressives not only ignore this engine of wealth creation but hinder it, as government must steal the wealth it redistributes from someone that has first created it. But, Progressives are right in one related area though – targeting businesses that obtain special privileges from the government. But they are wrong in where they lay the blame. Rather than singling out these businesses, Progressives must realize that these special favors were obtained only due to the large size of the government. And, if Progressives take issue with businesses using government to their advantage, perhaps they should reexamine their own tactics and realize that they engage in exactly the same thing – imposing their will on others through the government. Not too progressive.

Support of public education hinders progress and is immoral. As free markets have proven over and over again, when competition is introduced to any industry, consumers are met with more choices and higher-quality, less-expensive products and services. Education is no different. We all want the same thing – for our children to be educated – but what is the best way to go about making that happen? Progressives would have you believe that schools just need more funding. Perhaps they are unaware that the amount spent-per-pupil in the U.S. has risen over 300% in real dollars over the last three decades with no improvement in test scores. That may be because much of that increased funding has been siphoned off by the all-powerful National Education Association to create more administrative jobs, increase teacher pay based not on performance but seniority, and fight any bill that threatens their hold on government schools. Schools which are so bad that many parents pay twice for their children's education – once, when the government takes their money to support public schools, and twice, to ensure their child actually receives an education by paying for a private school. And unfortunately it's often those children receiving the worst education – those in inner-cities – that do not have the means to escape from government schools, which means that attempts by Progressives to stop the introduction of competition into the education system actually harms those worst-off. That doesn't seem like an ideal to strive for.



REAL IDs are a slippery slope. As our **Public Choice** friends have proven, the propensity of government is for it to continually expand. The REAL ID Act will facilitate further intrusions on individuals' liberty and privacy. It is not farfetched to think that in the future the phrase "Your papers, please" will be commonplace. The Supreme Court opened that door when it stated, in *United States v. Drayton*, that "[e]ven when law enforcement officers have no basis for suspecting a particular individual, they may...ask for identification...provided they do not induce cooperation by coercive means." Does anyone feel uncoerced in the presence of an officer with a gun asking for identification? Further, the information government collects from you and stores in a central database as part of REAL ID will most certainly not remain the last information gathered about you.

Think of all the transactions for which you normally need to produce identification: working, opening a bank account, applying for credit, purchasing a phone contract, flying, renting a car, seeking medical attention etc. The government will almost certainly try to collect all that information as well. In fact, the feds have already made such attempts with the Total Information Awareness Program, which sought to link together databases containing transactional records, medical data, and physical information including fingerprint, scars, DNA and iris scans for easy government access.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." In the wake of terrorist attacks against the U.S., U.K., Spain, and others, governments of these countries have found it easy to usurp sweeping new powers by claiming they will be better able to protect citizens. Such logic allows government actors to justify its power grab, which ultimately restricts the rights of innocent individuals—especially when governments view the threat of terrorism as a never-ending war. Apparently taking a cue from the "War is Peace" mantra found in George Orwell's 1984, Dick Cheney has called such a perspective "a new normalcy."

Why we oppose Homeland Tyranny and the granting of more power to governments under the auspices of safety:

More governmental power means an increased surveillance state. The 2007 International Privacy Ranking report shows that more governments are planning and implementing identity systems and databases to collect individual's communication, financial and biometric information. The report ranks the U.S. lowest of all the democratic countries in the world in terms of privacy protections (and only slightly higher than Russia and China!). No wonder, since the U.S. is the origin of such fine spying programs as ECHELON, a global network of computers that intercepts communication and searches it for pre-programmed keywords, and CARNIVORE, a program which monitors Internet-based communication. With the assistance of private communications companies like AT&T and Verizon, the government has also listened to the phone conversations of millions of Americans without a warrant – a practice the Bush Administration successfully defended in court (though many still deem it illegal). The FBI has sent national security letters (which the agency issues itself without a judge's approval) to tens of thousands of individuals to force access to private and sensitive information such as their Internet and phone records, bank accounts, money transfers, credit card and loan information, and flight records and car rental receipts. Recently, the FBI began taking steps to implement a database for biometric information, such as finger and palm prints, eye scans, tattoos, scars and facial shapes. European countries are not much. The U.K.'s surveillance state already includes a massive array of 4.2 million CCTV cameras (and many American cities such as NYC are planning to emulate it). The U.K. government also wants to implement databases for DNA and phone and Internet records. Italy is considering fingerprinting every single one of its citizens, and the Swedish government just approved a law allowing its intelligence agency to wiretap phone conversations, email and fax messages—without a court order. As is clear, when the government acts to "protect" us from harm, it treats us all like criminals.

Centralizing government power increases police scrutiny and brutality. For years, police have used red light cameras to take pictures of cars running red lights and fined their owners to generate revenue for the government. Supporters of red light cameras claim that such surveillance reduces traffic accidents and fatalities, but research suggests that red light cameras actually increase the number of crashes (as people speed to get through the light). Though some may consider such devices only a nuisance, the seriousness of other governmental actions are clear. Reminiscent of COINTELPRO in the 1960s, law enforcement routinely spies on political groups and anti-war organizations through undercover agent infiltration, wiretapping phones and videotaping demonstrations. Led in part by the FBI's request to local police departments to keep tabs on anti-war protestors' activities, NYPD arrested anti-war protestors in 2003 and, without counsel present, interrogated them about their political beliefs. In 2008 it came to light that the Maryland State Patrol had added dozens of people to a terrorism watch-list simply due to their participation in anti-war protests (they were later sent letters apologizing for this classification). And, while police brutality has always been a problem, according to the U.S. Justice Department the number of incidences has risen by 25% between 2001 and 2007 (possibly due to the emphasis on increasing police forces since 9/11, which has led police departments to lower hiring standards and skimp on training to fill vacancies). Unfortunately, most reported cases of police brutality are not prosecuted. (Check out ShootBack to fight back.)

A larger, more powerful police state means more violations of individual rights. Shortly after 9/11, the President Bush issued an executive order, which gave him the power to decide whether non-citizen defendants would be tried before a special military tribunal, stripping them of almost all due process rights protected by the Constitution: they have no right to choose their counsel, no right to equal access to evidence held by the prosecution, no right to confront their accusers, no right to exclude hearsay testimony, no right to exclude evidence obtained under duress or torture, and they may even be tried in absentia should the administration determine that national security demands it. Without these rights, it is significantly more difficult for defendants who have been falsely accused to prove their innocence. Habeas corpus refers to the right of a prisoner to petition a court to determine the lawfulness of his detention. The U.S. government detains non-citizen prisoners it declares enemy combatants indefinitely without charge, without a court hearing and without access to an attorney. Under, the Patriot Act (a misnomer if there ever were one), the government has the "authority" to put you under a gag order, which means you cannot reveal to your family or customers that you had to disclose sensitive information about yourself or them, even after the FBI has abandoned investigating you. But perhaps most stifling, you are barred from speaking publicly (i.e. to the press or legislators) about the letter, which deprives you of using your right to free speech to expose and seek remedy for government abuse. Regrettably, individual rights are not only under attack in the United States. In Canada, immigration law provides for special "security certificates" to be issued, which allow the government to detain a person it deems a threat to national security to be held for an unspecified period without charge or trial, to present secret evidence to a judge without having to disclose it also to the defense, and to deport the suspect. In Britain, the time a terrorism suspect could be held without charge was recently extended to 42 days. In France, terrorism suspects are not informed of their right to remain silent. They can be held in police custody for up to six days before being brought before a judge and have to wait 72 hours before they can get a lawyer. Australia's Anti-Terrorism Act of 2005 allows the government to detain terrorism suspects for 14 days without charge or trial. It can also put suspects under house arrest, impose wearing electronic tracking devices on them, and bar them from working for up to 12 months—all without a hearing and without the defendant knowing what evidence exists against him or her. Any conversations the defendant has with a lawyer can be monitored. The Act also includes a provision against sedition: people who advocate violence against the government can be imprisoned for up to seven years. All this, in the name of making us "safer."

A larger governmental scope means more governmental spending. As historian Robert Higgs has noted, governments take advantage of people's fears at the expense of their liberties. They use crises situations – sometimes real, but often exaggerated or contrived – to grow, and once the crisis has passed or has been dispelled as false, governments rarely shrink back to their original size and scope. Just consider that in 1902, U.S. government spending was seven percent of GDP. By 1919, after World War I, it had risen to 29% of GDP, and toward the end of World War II, it peaked at 52%. During the Cold War years, government spending was never less than 20%, mostly 30%, and since 1980, it has been around 35% of GDP. European governments' spending today hovers around 50% of GDP. And many times the funds end up supporting some cause with a dubious or nonexistent relation to national security. According to Reason Magazine's March 2006 issue, for instance, hundreds of millions of dollars allocated for "homeland security" were spent on things like Project Alert, a school-based drug prevention program, grants to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Child Pornography Tipline, and an exercise program that meets the intent of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. There is no reason to suspect that dollars allocated for "homeland security" will be spent anymore wisely than those spent by the inefficient behemoth in Washington, or any other capital around the world.

Politics hinders the workings of civil society. We all want people to have enough to eat, to have shelter, and to be educated. But far too often people look to the government as the sole provider to ensure this happens. The massive scope of the State has overshadowed the role of civil society organizations that help those struggling get a leg up. You may already give some of the money you earn to such charities to help remedy these problems. Wouldn't you give more if you weren't taxed so heavily? Starkly differentiated from the incentives present in politics, these organizations seeking your contributions will work to be as transparent and effective as possible since they're competing with other organizations for your dollars. Already, we see charities note that they only spend a fraction of the money they raise on administrative costs as evidence that your donation helps those it was intended to. This is not true with social welfare programs administered through the political process. It's not so much that politicians and the programs they oversee are evil (though some no doubt are), but that they're insulated from the incentives present in the market – incentives that truly help to lift people out of poverty.



Politics Hurt

When confronted with a problem most people today turn to the government. But in reality, it's often the government that created the problem and its continued involvement only exacerbates the problem. Politics distorts free market signals, quashes rights, and quite bluntly, kills individuals.

Why we believe politics hurt:

Politics is force. The violation of an individual's rights, whether the aggressor be a mugger in an alley or a politician in a comfy office is simply that: a violation of their rights. Some contend that because a group of people express their preference for one candidate to rule them that the politician is exonerated. But, to take a page from Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, to be governed is to be regulated, indoctrinated and commanded by beings who have neither knowledge nor virtue. To paraphrase Benjamin Tucker, he who attempts to control another is an aggressor and the nature of such aggression is not changed, whether it is made by one man upon another man (i.e. an ordinary criminal), or by all other men upon one man (i.e. via an elected official).

Politics centralizes State power. Politics only confers more power on the State. As more and more people look to the State as the instrument to enact their agenda Centralized State power, which subsumes an increase in the scope of authority allows for rent-seeking. As expressed by Public Choice scholars, when the scope of the State is large, companies find it easier and more beneficial to lobby Congress rather than attempt to be competitive in the market. It's a classic case of concentrated benefits and dispersed costs. A small group that will reap the benefits – farmers for instance – will put enormous resources into lobbying the government for a handout/subsidies/protectionism, while the larger group that bears the costs – hundreds of millions of consumers who pay a few cents more for each gallon of milk or pound of meat – don't find it worth their time to organize and push for a repeal of such handouts. As Voltaire astutely noted, "[T]he art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one party of the citizens to give to the other."

Politics is a zero-sum game. Government does not create wealth; it only steals it from those who create it and then distributes it to those who lobby the government (after keeping some for themselves). Conversely, the free market – the voluntary interactions between consenting individuals – creates wealth and protects rights. Politics is a fixed pie whereas the free market is an every-growing pie. A free society cannot be organized or centrally planned by one person or group of people, no matter how well-intentioned or smart they may happen to be. Just as it's impossible for a politician, committee, or agency to have the tacit knowledge and subjective value present in a free market, so too is it impossible for them to act without violating the rights of individuals.

Politics illegitimately grants others "authority". No is no such thing as a "social contract". For a contract to be legitimate it must be knowingly and freely signed by all parties. Have you signed a contract stating that each particular politician who claims authority over you does in fact have the right to pass legislation that impacts your freedoms? I sure as hell know I didn't. In the U.S., some have stated that the Constitution is the fountainhead of legitimacy for political actors. But, like any contract, that document only binds those who signed it (39 men). Only those men, and not others alive at the time or their descents, and certainly not you and I over 200 years later are beholden to their actions. According to Lysander Spooner: "To call such a contract a 'Constitution' does not at all lessen its criminality, or add to its validity. . . . Legitimate government can be formed only by the voluntary association of all who contribute to its support."



I Am Not A Number

When you were born, your parents or guardians gave you a name. At the same time (assuming you were born in a hospital), the government assigned you a number. Government actors view individuals as just that – faceless numbers. Many countries assign individuals an identification number so the government can track them from cradle to grave; the number is used to file taxes, seek public services and engage in financial transactions. Some countries have made a national ID card compulsory, such as Turkey, and require individuals to carry them at all times, such as Sri Lanka. One government – Nazi Germany – even went so far as to tattoo a number on those it deemed undesirable to track them like cattle as they were sent to work in death camps. Here in the United States, the latest chapter in this saga takes the form of the REAL ID Act, passed in 2005. The Act mandates that state-issued identification cards and drivers licenses contain specific data about the person which will be accessible to the feds and other state governments via an interlinked database. REAL IDs will be required of you when you board an airplane or enter a federal facility. Also, when issuing the ID, states are required to verify and store copies of each document that is presented as part of the application, such as birth certificates, immigration papers, and utility bills. Passed under the auspices of "protecting us from terrorists," make no bones about it – it is a defacto national ID.

Why we oppose Real IDs

REAL IDs violate individual rights. You should be free to move about as long as you do not violate someone else's rights. Even though the REAL ID act does not require you to obtain a REAL ID card—not yet, if you want to travel by plane or enter a government building, you will need one. Also, when (if) you renew your drivers license you'll be forced to upgrade. So, the REAL ID Act effectively violates your right to travel and your right to petition the government and raise grievances in face-to-face meetings with government officials and elected representatives.

REAL IDs do not provide greater security. The REAL ID requirement will not stop criminals and terrorists because they don't obey laws! A REAL ID can still be forged, or obtained by bribing the bureaucrats issuing or checking them. Alternatively, terrorists could recruit people with valid REAL IDs to carry out attacks, or steal someone's identity. Storing application documents electronically or physically, making cards machine-readable and the creation of interlinked state databases will make identity theft easier. And it's no secret that the government has a terrible record of preventing identity theft.

REAL IDs are a burden. The Act requires states to verify all documents presented as part of a REAL ID application. They will also have to make changes to their database systems, and hire and train new employees to deal with the workload. Consequently, billions of dollars will have to be expended to implement the Act's provisions, which will be forcibly redistributed from individuals via **taxation** or application fees to enrich government contractors; initial estimates of the implementing the Act range between \$9.1 and \$12.8 billion. This is one reason why many state legislatures have passed legislation expressing their unwillingness to cooperate despite the fact the Act took effect in the spring of 2008. Plus, the verification requirement also substantially burdens individuals who have no birth certificate and immigrants who cannot obtain passports from their country of origin's government. And, if you hate going to the DMV now, you will have to spend even more time there, facing longer lines and bureaucratic problems to get your new REAL ID compliant drivers license or state ID.



ImmiGreat

Thanks in large-part to misinformation and the rhetoric that accompanies protectionist legislation passed with the support of Big Labor and other rent-seeking groups, immigration has become a divisive topic. As was seen between East and West Berlin decades ago and the United States and Mexico today, this sometimes results in the construction of physical barriers to prevent the free movement of individuals. Yet, fortunately there are some reasonable voices in this discussion, helping to point out how immigration restrictions only further entrench governments and negate individual rights, not to mention severely hampering the economy.

Why we support free and open immigration:

Immigration restrictions violate the natural rights of each individual. Restricting where a person can live or work based on the geographical location where they were born hearkens back to the days when governments imposed similar restrictions on another factor outside of an individual's control – their skin color. We should be concerned about the welfare of all persons, not just those who happen to be born within a certain arbitrary political boundary.

Immigration restrictions violate self-ownership. An individual has the right to reach an agreement with an employer, whether he happens to be born 50, 500, or 5,000 miles away. To allow the government to prevent such a contract violates each individual's rights. Because, if the government has the authority to say who can work for who, we are slaves.

Immigration, like free trade, improves the economy. Robust immigration helps to raise the standard of living. Any limit on the potential pool of mental and physical labor only diminishes the market's potential for wealth creation. Free and open immigration allows for the dynamism and entrepreneurship of the market to be more-fully realized as individuals are free to specialize in areas that they excel, found businesses, and innovate. And they provide a positive externality, creating jobs and goods and services. A rising tide raises all ships. Allowing for immigration is a peaceful way to pressure tyrannical States to shape-up. Rights are not granted by the government. An individual born in North Korea, Brazil, the United States, Germany, and Nigeria all have the same rights. But, since governments usurp rights, those living under the most repressive regimes often move to less-restrictive areas, seeking a better life for themselves and their families. If the best and brightest from a particular country are emigrating elsewhere, even the most authoritarian of governments realize the loss of talent and are forced to become less-burdensome – something that helps individuals still living in those countries.

Immigrants internalize the ideas of freedom. They know firsthand the stifling effects of burdensome, corrupt governments. By uprooting their family and moving to a new area, they have demonstrated that they value individual liberty, personal responsibility, and markets. They have, quite literally, voted with their feet. They remind each of us of the importance of liberty, and of the importance of preserving that liberty.

Immigrate? No. ImmiGREAT!



Mock The Vote

Every two years in America – especially during presidential elections – many folks become fixated on the show that is elections. The same is true for those living in other countries under various other government apparatuses. The “us” versus “them” mentality takes hold, talking heads spout mindless nonsense, and resources are wasted on campaigning. It's clear that Bureaucrash doesn't believe voting is all it's cracked up to be. We believe we don't need someone to tell us how to live our lives; to tell us what we can and cannot do with our body and our money. Check out our rationale below and think for yourself.

Why we mock the vote:

Voting is force. You would not walk up to a stranger, brandish a gun, and demand their money under the auspices of knowing how to spend it better than they do. It is no more legitimate that 50 percent + one of voters grant a candidate the “authority” to control the actions of all. Each of us who votes to elect a politician is culpable for the actions perpetrated by that elected official, which by their nature violate the rights of others. In that sense we are like the getaway driver of a bank robbery who may not have pointed guns at people in the bank but still acted wrongly and facilitated the crime.

Voting violates self-ownership. We each own ourselves. We have the right to act as we please so long as we do not harm others. When an individual casts a vote, it is an illegitimate act because it grants “authority” to another person to control the life of another. And besides, what type of person wants to govern the life of another? As Lysander Spooner penned, “No man can delegate, or give to another, any right of arbitrary dominion over a third person; for that would imply a right in the first person, not only to make the third person his slave, but also a right to dispose of him as a slave to still other persons.” And we all know that slavery sucks. Big time.

Voting merely legitimizes State power. Governments have found it much easier to control those over which they claim authority through elections rather than through brute force. It is much easier for them to maintain their supposed legitimacy by claiming that through voting people can exercise a check on what the government does. Yet, as history has proven, this is not the case. Is it any wonder that the governments of some countries even mandate by law that individuals vote? That doesn't sound too free to me.

Voting only expresses a preference for the least-worst of candidates. When you go into a grocery store you are able to put the exact items you want into your basket. However, when you vote, it's akin to entering a grocery store and having to select from among baskets already assembled. Similarly, if you walk into the voting booth you are not allowed to choose exactly what you want but only voice a preference for the least-worst of options – not much of a choice at all. Instead, a better decision is to choose to make others aware of this arrangement, of the harms inherent in this structure.

Voting has no real impact. Most folks will admit that government today is not accountable and is operating outside its bounds. Yet they still believe the best way to counter this is to get their slate of candidates elected. As Benjamin Tucker noted, one could no more attack government by electing politicians than one could prevent crime by becoming a criminal. And, as Public Choice economists have shown, it's the structure of government itself that cause its shortcomings (i.e. no profit/loss mechanism). The nature of government is for it to keep growing, which means that the freedom to live your life as you see fit continues to shrink.

