

One of the duties of the state is that of caring for those of its citizens who find themselves of such adverse circumstances as makes them unable to obtain even the necessities for mere existence without the aid of others. To these unfortunate citizens aid must be extended by government - not as a matter of charity but as a matter of social responsibility.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Poverty Epidemic in America, by the Numbers
Center for American progress
April 24, 2007

Today, America is the richest nation in the world, yet 37 million Americans live below the official poverty line and millions more struggle to get by every month.

The fact that our nation's leaders allow huge swaths of the country's population to live in poverty is more than just a gross moral failing. Poverty imposes costs on society in the form of increased crime, broken neighborhoods, and squandered human resources

Criticisms - 40 years of the war on poverty

President Johnson's "War on Poverty" speech was delivered at a time of recovery (the poverty level had fallen from 22.4% in 1959 to 19% in 1964 when the War on Poverty was announced) and it was viewed by critics as an effort to get the United States Congress to authorize **social welfare** programs. Some economists, including **Milton Friedman**, have argued that Johnson's policies actually had a negative impact on the economy because of their interventionist nature. Adherents of this school of thought

recommend that the best way to fight poverty is not through government spending but through economic growth.

One common criticism of the war on poverty is the incentives that it creates. Specifically, critics claim that the welfare programs encourage illegitimacy and dependency, and that they discourage people from obtaining education and job skills. Some examples follow:

- William L. Anderson, who teaches economics at **Frostburg State University**, wrote an opinion column explaining why he believes the war on poverty has caused more harm than good. To show his point, he compared two poor immigrant families to each other. According to Anderson, one family lived in a very small apartment. The parents obtained entry level jobs, and were eventually able to afford a larger apartment. A few years later, they had purchased their own home, and were now middle class. The other family started collecting welfare and food stamps, and living in Section 8 housing. Several years later, they were still dependent on those government programs, and had done nothing to improve their circumstances. Anderson concludes "... the Great Society programs... actually made things much worse."^[2]
- In 2004, African American economist **Thomas Sowell**, a very conservative black author, writing about the war on poverty, stated, "The black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life."

BALTIMORE (AP) August 1, 2008

Bill Cosby urged people in Baltimore to empower themselves and nurture their children, but during his visit Thursday he avoided the scolding tone that has drawn criticism from some black leaders.

Cosby urged parents to keep their children close. "Your children got no business going to the street for love. There's no love out there," Cosby told the crowd during a city-organized block party. "All that's out there is lost young men looking for love."

Cosby says people in Baltimore need to empower themselves by taking advantage of the educational opportunities that lead to well-paying jobs.

In 1995 the Nation sponsored the Million Man March in Washington, D.C., to promote African American unity and family values. Estimates of the number of marchers, most of whom were men, ranged from 400,000 to nearly 1.1 million, making it the largest gathering of its kind in American history.

The New York Times
nytimes.com **September 10, 1996**

Kemp Praises Farrakhan For His Focus on Family

By JERRY GRAY

Pressing his message of inclusion and his outreach to black voters, Jack Kemp has praised the Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan, for emphasizing black self-reliance and family values.

Mr. Kemp, the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate, said he wished he had been invited to speak at the "Million Man March," which Mr. Farrakhan and other black leaders organized last fall in Washington.

"I'm going to set off rockets if this is taken out of context," Mr. Kemp said in an interview published on Sunday in The Boston Globe, "but I think it's interesting that in America today, in the black community, more and more black church leaders are telling men to be responsible fathers and to be respectful of their wives and women."

Mr. Kemp told the newspaper that he did not agree with all of the teachings of Mr. Farrakhan, who has made statements widely viewed as anti-Semitic, but said that his self-help philosophy was "wonderful."

Mr. Kemp is well known for his advocacy of civil rights and for promoting self-help programs in inner-city neighborhoods. In his stump speech he frequently quotes and praises black leaders like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jesse Jackson and Kweisi Mfume, the new leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

While here in the Magnolia State - Aug.19th Clarion-Ledger

A new report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation says Mississippi again is America's fattest state, and adult obesity rates across the nation are on a steady climb.

The report said Mississippi's adult obesity rate is 31.7 percent — the highest in the nation. It was followed by West Virginia with 30.6 percent; Alabama with 30.1 percent; Louisiana with 29.5 percent and South Carolina with 29.2 percent

.Two buddies riding down Highway 82 on a hot August day in a '58 Studebaker pick 'em up truck. The engine begins to boil over and the arrow on the old temperature gauge buries the arrow in the HOT zone. Earl says to the driver, "Look HT, you better pull off the road. Your engine is burning up!" HT pulls the old truck over and gets out a hammer and breaks the glass on the gauge. Then he tries to physically force the arrow to the cool side of the indicator. Earl says, "HT what in the world are you a doing?" Frustrated HT says, I'm a trying to cool this dad gum engine down!

There are just no 'fair' answers to Medicaid

THE CLARION-LEDGER • JULY 27, 2008

State Rep. Cecil Brown calls the Medicaid plan supported by Gov. Haley Barbour, the Senate and Mississippi Hospital Association "unfair," saying: "Hospitals receive Medicaid payments because they provide medical treatment to Medicaid patients, just as they receive payments from Blue Cross because they provide services to Blue Cross patients. And hospitals don't pay their patients' Blue Cross premiums" ("Barbour's plan for hospital tax is not 'fair' to anyone," July 18 letter).

That's right: Individuals pay their own insurance premiums. How, then, is it "fair" to force them to also pay other people's premiums in the form of Medicaid? By Rep. Brown's own reasoning, it's also unfair to tax smokers to pay for Medicaid; and taking Rep. Brown's train of thought to its logical conclusion, the concept of Medicaid itself is unfair because it takes tax money from one group of people which already pays insurance premiums and uses it to pay for coverage for another group.

There is no "fair way" to take money from one person to benefit another. If it must be done, then it should be done by the widest swath of the citizenry possible, and the plan passed in the Senate is it.

Robert Turnage

Madison

Governor Barbour reminded us in his 2004 inaugural address -

"Strong family values have long been the values on which good government policy has been based. Individual freedom coupled with personal responsibility; honest hard work; self-reliance; fair play; the rule of law; a strong sense of community; faith in God; a giving spirit. These are the foundational traits of Americans, and we Mississippians demonstrate these values as well as anyone on earth."



Government is not the long-term fix to poverty

August 07, 2008 10:34 am - Sen. Chris McDaniel

— Last week, the Mississippi House of Representatives Select Committee on Poverty conducted a public hearing in Laurel to discuss issues of poverty in Mississippi. Several of our local representatives attended the event, which was successfully spearheaded by State Rep. Omeria Scott. As a part of the hearing, an informative presentation on poverty was shared by representatives from Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning. It was

an important hearing to attend, and I was honored to have been invited. After some initial presentations, an opportunity was allowed to ask questions and make comments. The group discussion quickly revolved around government assistance in combating poverty. Instead of searching for solutions of a personal or local nature, some among the crowd, which consisted of hardworking people, focused only on the responsibility of government. To be honest, it broke my heart, because government has already demonstrated that it cannot adequately satisfy their concerns. To a few in our society, it has sadly become a generational habit to expect government to owe the benefits it confers, but impoverished Mississippians deserve more than false hopes provided by government programs and the false promises of government salvation. We have allowed government to wage its ineffective war on poverty for 44 years; now it is time for a different approach.

That is not to say that all government assistance is bad; we should applaud state agencies which labor tirelessly to assist our needy. Nor would I contend that it has accomplished nothing in its war on poverty. It is impossible to spend trillions of dollars and not deliver some positive benefits, but based on the obscene amount of money and time invested, positive returns have been negligible.

Government assistance may temporarily provide a menial existence for our most desperate, but it cannot permanently elevate the needy out of poverty. More often than not, the end result is an unattractive equal sharing of miseries between the poor and other economic segments of our society. Instead of raising the poor up to the economic status of the working middle class, the majority of government assistance programs often result in unintended consequences, such as punishing the middle class by

decreasing wealth accumulation through additional tax costs. Rest assured, while our taxpayers continue to struggle with the inflationary costs of fuel and groceries, the last thing they need is a higher tax burden.

If we are serious about lifting our neighbors out of poverty, we should first establish that government is not well-suited for such a role. Instead of relying on it to forcibly redistribute income, a long-term solution to poverty will only be found with individuals, families, churches and charitable organizations, in conjunction with private enterprise and creation of economic opportunity.

There are two related reasons why government has struggled with ending poverty, both of which have been ignored by ambitious politicians eager to purchase votes.

First, government does not create wealth. Second, government has no wealth of its own. For instance, in order to provide welfare assistance, it must collect money from somewhere, and that money comes from you and me.

Yet by divesting the taxpayer of the means to provide for his personal needs and by confiscating substantial income from society's productive segments, government may actually harm those who are to arguably benefit from its benevolence. As the great burden of taxation is unfairly levied against a small percentage of Mississippi's income earners, it becomes much more difficult to provide well-paying jobs for the unemployed or the poor.

Despite archaic talk about necessary taxation, those who advocate a redistributionist approach would be wise to remember – it is impossible to punish working Mississippians with an oppressive tax burden without also punishing our state's poor.

Letting people keep more of their hard-earned money will eventually benefit everyone, including the impoverished, since more capital is available for use to start businesses, create jobs, stimulate the local economy and, yes, increase charitable giving. When the government takes less of our money in the form of taxation, there is more money available for entrepreneurial endeavors which produce economic opportunity. It is the creation of jobs, not handouts, that will effectively and permanently reduce poverty.

To encourage opportunity for each economic segment of society, we should demand smaller government, less regulation and lower taxes. By encouraging enterprise and providing economic opportunity for all, Mississippians will experience less reliance on government programs, an increased work ethic and a newfound sense of dignity. Moreover, new generations will realize the industrious nature of hope, liberty and happiness that are born as the result of the prideful elimination of dependence.

For most Mississippi families, poverty has only been one, two or three generations removed. It has always been the norm, the natural condition of mankind. The real story is therefore not how people in our state become poor but how some of our neighbors escaped from poverty. Their path to financial independence should be our focus.

By embracing strengths of diligence, quality education, dependable healthcare, personal responsibility, free enterprise and self-reliance, we should encourage the less fortunate to learn from lessons of success, while affording them the private charity they need to stand on their own.

Government has a role to play in relieving the suffering of our most needy, particularly the disabled and elderly, but it cannot provide a long-term solution to the problem of poverty. Only opportunity can do that.

utopian socialism

an economic system based on the premise that if capital voluntarily surrendered its ownership of the means of production to the state or the workers, unemployment and poverty would be abolished.

2008 State of the State

Said Governor Barbour, "The biggest budget challenge we face is Medicaid. In this past four years, we've made significant progress in saving Medicaid for the nearly 600,000 Mississippians who rely on it. We have enacted reforms because we know it is wrong for a family to work hard at two or three jobs, to raise their kids and pay for their healthcare, and then have to turn around and pay extra taxes so others who are able to work and take care of themselves choose not to but instead get free healthcare at taxpayers' expense. That's not right.

Under this Administration, the Division of Medicaid checks people's eligibility face-to-face, and the Medicaid rolls have decreased to fewer than 600,000. This drop is what you should expect when the number of people employed has increased by more than 50,000.

We've changed our prescription drug program to better utilize generic drugs. That, along with Medicare Part D, is saving taxpayers tens of millions of dollars on pharmaceuticals with no negative effect on beneficiary health.

But even with these common-sense, successful savings efforts, the Medicaid budget faces a large shortfall. This is primarily because the federal government has forced us to stop using certain funds to cover the state Medicaid match requirement."

"Medicaid requires a fair, permanent, sustainable funding solution, but the legislature hasn't enacted one. The Senate passed a fair, permanent, sustainable solution in May but the House has failed to do so. The solution I am announcing today is a fair, permanent, sustainable way to fully fund Medicaid," Governor Barbour said.

"We have been working with CMS throughout this process but it was not until a detailed analysis could be made in light of Judge Singletary's July 10 ruling that we could seek approval of this solution," Governor Barbour said. He was referring to a recent ruling by Hinds County Chancellor William Singletary confirming Medicaid's statutory authority to adjust the gross revenue assessment to draw down the maximum UPL payment available from the federal government.

"For more than 15 years hospital and nursing home provider fees have played a significant role in Medicaid's overall funding methodology, and today such fees account for about 30 percent of Mississippi Medicaid's funding. The plan I am announcing today uses the benefits of those fees to attract the maximum federal match to state Medicaid dollars," Governor Barbour said.

“I’m very proud of the leaders and staff of the Mississippi Division of Medicaid for the outstanding work they did in developing this solution,” Governor Barbour said. “I’m grateful to the staff at CMS for recognizing this is the right remedy to resolve this issue in a way that meets all federal requirements and does not cost federal taxpayers any extra money.”

cap-i-tal-ism

an economic system in which investment in and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations, esp. as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth.

Medicaid Engine