

In “obvious ways . . . our system is set up to preserve the status quo”

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 Latest in a series of posts about the Community Engagement Initiative 

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ref: **“Bethlehem Council Should Learn from the Past about Social Programs”**

The first thing to note is that these earlier efforts, like the “war on drugs,” were implemented in ways that were doomed to failure — but made their sponsors look good.

As implemented, huge pots of tax money were distributed to consultants and contractors who proclaimed their expertise but didn’t really know what they were doing. (Often they were cronies of the people responsible for program implementation.) I remember the director of a CETA program in the 70s who had some great ideas and philosophical observations, but he was a poor manager who got his job through personal connections; many of the trainees and employees hired through that office were incompetent or corrupt.

Besides, it would not take a “war on poverty” to end poverty in the U.S. — one of the wealthiest countries in the world. All it would take is a fair tax structure and an end to subsidy & tax giveaways to corporations and the obscenely wealthy.

Peter

ref: **“Let’s recapture the Lyndon Johnson vision of helping the poor help themselves”**

Be wary of citing studies from places such as this. While there are also sources biased to the left, the Heritage Institute is known for its support

for the notion of free-market economics and the belief that all comes down to individual choice and self-sufficiency.

The report you used for this basically ignores or denies that the system blocks some people from equal opportunity, and this is compounded by the effects of intergenerational trauma. Our system is set up so that:

- official unemployment figures minimize the percentage of people who are un- or under-employed.
- our tax system applies the highest rates to earned income, followed by generally lower rates for interest, dividends, and capital appreciation, and even lower rates — often 0 — for inherited money.
- the tax code also provides plenty of built-in loopholes that allow corporations and people of higher incomes & wealth to avoid taxes.
- the minimum wage has stagnated to the extent that employee compensation has declined in comparison to that of 50 or 60 years ago [adjusted for inflation], while the share going to executives, managers, and owners has skyrocketed.
- businesses and corporations are not required to provide fair benefits to employees, such as we see in most European countries. (Paid maternity/parental leave, paid sick leave, and paid vacations to name a few.)

Let's face it, these are only a few of the most obvious ways that our system is set up to preserve the status quo.

Peter