

Money spent on social programs has not been effective

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative October 6, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Community Engagement Initiative* 

Bud Hackett is a Bethlehem resident who raised 4 kids in the City. He recently became very interested in quality of life issues in the city and hopes to offer a balance to the approach City Council is taking.

ref: **“In ‘obvious ways . . . our system is set up to preserve the status quo’”**

Peter:

Regarding the criticism of the report, maybe the data from the US Census is more compelling to understand that this country has spent billions on social programs that seem to help left wing politicians more than the US citizens they are targeted to benefit. Respectfully, neither the federal government nor the Bethlehem City Council should be pandering to the social justice/environmental movement to “get votes.”

I am inclined to believe the facts of U.S. Census Bureau annual poverty report:

- 2013, 14.5 percent of Americans were poor. (the same poverty rate as in 1967, three years after the War on Poverty started)
- Census counts a family as poor if its “income” falls below certain thresholds. But in counting “income,” Census ignores almost all the \$943 billion in annual welfare spending.
- government’s survey: 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly two-thirds have cable or satellite television; half have a personal computer; 40 percent have a wide-screen HDTV. Three-quarters own a car or truck; nearly a third has two or more vehicles. (FYI, I don’t have AC or an HDTV).

- Ninety-six percent of poor parents' state that their children were never hungry at any time during the year because they could not afford food.
- Some 82 percent of poor adults reported that they were never hungry at any time in the prior year.
- The average consumption of protein, vitamins, and minerals is virtually the same for poor and middle-class children, and in most cases is well above recommended norms.
- Less than 2 percent of the poor are homeless. Only 10 percent live in a mobile home.
- The average poor American lives in a house or apartment that is in good repair and not over-crowded. In fact, the average poor American has more living space than the typical non-poor individual living in Sweden, France, Germany, or the United Kingdom.
- For a decade and a half before the War on Poverty began, self-sufficiency in American improved dramatically. But for the last 45 years, there has been no improvement at all. Many groups are less capable of self-support today than when Johnson's war started.
- The culprit is, in part, the welfare system itself, which discourages work and penalizes marriage. When the War on Poverty began, 7 percent of American children were born outside marriage. Today the number is 41 percent. The collapse of marriage is the main cause of child poverty today.
- The welfare state is self-perpetuating, welfare creates a need for even greater assistance in the future.
- in 2014, President Obama announced plans to spend \$13 trillion over the next decade on welfare programs that will discourage work, penalize marriage, and undermine self-sufficiency.

There is little evidence that all this taxpayer money has helped people improve their lives.