

OUR WELFARE SYSTEM

Encouraging Dependency Instead Of Responsibility

As a society we have a moral responsibility to take care of our citizens who are poor, needy, or disabled. So we use a welfare system to help our society supply support to those in need. The welfare system in America was originally designed to help support disabled American citizens. It was also supposed to give temporary financial aid to those in need until they could financially get back on their feet. It was never intended to be a way for any able person to make a living without working. For this welfare system to run efficiently it is the responsibility of our society to make sure it is not abused. The welfare system is funded by our government through collected taxes. Therefore those on welfare must rely on people to work so they can pay taxes so many of those on welfare do not have to work. The more welfare programs there are and the more people there are on welfare, the more taxes have to be paid by tax payers.

We are blessed to be able to live in America, and we owe this opportunity to the many citizens who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom. Their deaths have allowed each of us to have the freedom to decide how we want to live our life. We can either honor them by being responsible and work hard to give back to our society, or we can dishonor them by being irresponsible and expect our society to pay our way for us. If we are mentally and physically able to work, we owe it to them to try to work rather than depend on others to support us.

Have we as a society properly run the welfare system? How has our welfare system affected our society? I once knew a young woman whose husband had lost his job and had not received a paycheck for two months. They had gotten behind on their bills and needed help. So she called our welfare system and asked about some financial aid. The first question she was asked was “the man you are living with, are you married to him?” She said “yes”. So she was then told “then we cannot help you. If you were just living with him and not married, we could help you.” Therefore she would have had to get a divorce to get aid. For this reason many people on welfare do not get married. Our government therefore rewards people for living together and encourages people to not get married.

Instead of teaching kids good work ethics and how to get and keep a job so they can be responsible for paying their own way in life, our welfare system is encouraging kids to rely on government aid. Those on welfare know, or quickly learn, that if they get a job they will lose some or all of their welfare benefits as free food stamps, housing, utilities, child care aid or medical insurance. I have heard people say something like “I got a job once, but I was making more on welfare before I got the job, so I quit the job.” We now have generations of families who have never worked or worked very little because our government continues to support them. I know of some responsible people who are working two or three jobs at a time in order to stay off welfare while many others refuse to work at all, preferring rather to let tax payers support them.

Instead of holding people accountable who are mentally and physically able to work, our welfare system is keeping them at poverty levels by discouraging them from working to improve their situation. In a society which is now stressing the importance of a good education so you can better support yourself, your family, and your community, where is the incentive for people on welfare? I know that some people on welfare are desperately trying to get off welfare by getting a good education and a good job, but many others see schooling and work as too much effort. This kind of attitude is destroying the workforce in heavy welfare communities. Many people have been supported by the welfare system for so long that they never learned or even desired to learn how to work. Their work ethic and attitude is often so bad that many employers have no desire to hire them. So this further makes them dependent on the welfare system and/or illegal money making endeavors since they are labeled as unhireable. Attitude, desire, and effort are choices made by people. If a person really wants to work, they can get some kind of work if they prove themselves to others. It is hard to get Americans to do some hard labor jobs today. We are losing many jobs to Mexicans because they are willing to work. But what is a person's incentive to work or do a good job if he knows he can always go back to government aid and not have to work at all?

What about kids? How do babies influence the welfare system? When a girl on welfare gets pregnant she starts getting more aid from the government to help the mother care for the baby. Once the baby is born she gets a check and other benefits every month. If she gets married she will lose some benefits; if she gets a job she will lose some benefits. Instead of teaching kids to be more responsible by waiting to have babies until they are married and mature enough to properly care for babies and able to financially support a baby on their own, as a couple, many times teenage kids on welfare are encouraged to have babies and especially out of wedlock. Instead of kids waiting until they are ready to settle down and they are mature enough to begin raising a family, many young teenagers are encouraged and sometimes expected to have babies. Teenage children are having babies before their own bodies have even stopped growing. This is unhealthy for both the teenager and the developing baby.

Since the welfare system pays extra to people for having babies, it has become profitable to have children if you are on welfare. In some areas young teenagers are expected to have children to help increase income in the household. Sometimes older teens are even looked down upon if they have not had a child yet. In households where teenage pregnancy is common and expected, once a teenager becomes of age to become pregnant, often their mother is ready for their young teenage daughter to have children so they, now a grandmother, can finally raise children. You see, the grandmother did not get to raise her own children since when she had children she let her mom raise her children. This way teenage children do not have to take responsibility for their own children. They just deliver the children and let their mother raise the children so the teenager can continue to live her life as before she had children - responsibility free.

In a society where girls are encouraged to be unwed mothers and consequently boys are encouraged to be less responsible and not held accountable for raising their own children, many children have no real positive male role models in their lives. Men are often not respected by women or kids in such a society. Therefore where does a boy get male influences in a home without a responsible father or grandfather? If he is not involved with church or other positive, constructive organizations, he may try to find acceptance from his peers or even a local gang. It is important for kids to have both positive male and female role models who show them love, care and respect.

When a society begins to tolerate unacceptable behavior it eventually begins to accept it as normal behavior and it begins to corrupt the rest of society. Over the past few decades we have seen a huge increase in the rates of single parent families, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, cohabitation, gang activity, and the decline of work ethics even among people who are not on welfare. Not all people on welfare have such immoral and unethical behaviors. On the contrary, many people on welfare are hard-working, moral, law-abiding citizens. Welfare has received a bad name from those who practice the behaviors mentioned in this article.

So by encouraging people on welfare to not get married, to have children out of wedlock, to not work, and to rely on government aid, our present welfare system is causing people to remain in poverty. Unfortunately being on welfare is no longer an undesirable situation. Used to people were proud to be able to support themselves, but now they are unashamed to ask or demand tax payers to support them. Some countries have very low unemployment because they do not pay people who do not work. Unfortunately these countries have very poor living conditions for their poor. So I am not saying that the welfare system is bad or should be eliminated, but it is heavily abused by many people in many facets of the system and needs to be restructured.

If we are going to change and strengthen our society we are going to have to change peoples' attitude and expectations. Respected citizens and government leaders must practice what they preach and set the example of how a responsible society should live. It will take time but our society must reward good behavior and punish or at least not reward poor behavior. If tax payers have to work to support people on welfare, people on welfare should show their appreciation by doing some type of work as helping to improve their own community. We could require all adults on welfare, who are mentally and physically able to work, to do a certain amount of community service to continue to receive government aid. They could routinely pick up trash, repair damaged public items, provide services for each other, improve landscaping, build and maintain recreation areas, etc. They could decide in organized meetings what they would like to do to improve their own communities. Working hard to improve your own community can help build self-respect and restore pride in your community and other individual efforts. They may even learn skills which may encourage them to want to be trained in a job they would enjoy doing.

We need to reward good, constructive efforts and try to educate people to get them off welfare for their sake and the sake of tax payers. The welfare system must become a temporary assistance program to be used only until a person has had the opportunity to be educated and trained to do a job which he is capable of doing which will also allow that person to be financially supported without government aid. We must offer free or repayable, affordable education (to those willing to be trained first). Once educated they will know that their welfare aid will end at a pre-determined date. This way adults and their kids will have an incentive to develop good study habits and good work ethics and attitude. To keep a job they have to maintain a proper attitude and work ethic. If they lose a job, welfare aid can no longer be an option, they must try to get another job. Otherwise there is no incentive for them to try to keep the job. For our society to be strong, people must be trained in how to work, given the opportunity to work, provided with guidance as needed, then be held accountable and responsible for their actions. They must be treated like anyone else who is not on welfare.