

**May 6, 2014**

Steve Hayward at Power Line with a great post on politicians who see the light. He tells the story of David Bonior, former Dem congressman who started a business and suddenly had an understanding of the effects of regulations. Immediately I thought of George McGovern's similar experiences as the 1972 Dem candidate for president also went into business. I was going to go looking for the letter he sent to the Journal, but Hayward found that too. First we'll have Hayward.

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Bonior said **if he had the power**, he would lighten up on pesky regulations.

*"It took us a ridiculous amount of time to get our permits. I understand regulations and .□.□. the necessity for it. But we lost six months of business because of that. It's very frustrating." (Emphasis added.) ...*

Here's the Bonior article from WaPo.

*David Bonior is a hungry entrepreneur bent on making money.*

*David Bonior ?*

*The former Michigan Democratic congressman, liberal pit bull, academic, antiwar firebrand and labor-union BFF has undergone an epiphany, making him simpatico with businesses and the profit motive.*

*He has invested at least \$1 million, by my estimate, building two family-owned Washington restaurants, the second of which, Agua 301, is near Nationals Park and only a line drive from the Anacostia River. His first eatery, Zest Bistro, opened on Capitol Hill four years ago.*

*"It's the American Dream," he said of his new career.*

*Over tasty Caesar salad and tacos at Agua 301, the mild-mannered, thoughtful Bonior — chastened by local regulators and fickle weather — sounds more born-again capitalist than fire-breathing lefty.*

*"Small-business people work very hard," said the 68-year-old, who has spent most of his life in government. "If you are a small-business guy, you are out there and not as protected as a government employee. They struggle every day. A snow day, a government worker is off. A restaurant person takes a hit from that snow day. This winter was very, very tough on the [restaurant] industry." ...*

A contributor to the [Detroit News](#) reacts.

*About the only way to get a die-hard liberal politician to understand how the economy of business really works is to require them to run an actual business. Case in point: Former Congressman David Bonior. **As reported in the Washington Post**, Bonior has taken the plunge and become a business owner. Among the more ironic of his observations is this gem: "Bonior said if he had the power, he would lighten up on pesky regulations."*

*For almost three decades, Congressman Bonior did have the power. He used it to increase the regulatory burden on business – especially small business. How delightful that he finally figured out what we, small business-people, were trying to tell him during those years was true. Not that it does us a whole lot of good now. ...*

Here's [George McGovern](#).

*... My own business perspective has been limited to that small hotel and restaurant in Stratford, Conn., with an especially difficult lease and a severe recession. But my business associates and I also lived with federal, state and local rules that were all passed with the objective of helping employees, protecting the environment, raising tax dollars for schools, protecting our customers from fire hazards, etc. While I never doubted the worthiness of any of these goals, the concept that most often eludes legislators is: 'Can we make consumers pay the higher prices for the increased operating costs that accompany public regulation and government reporting requirements with reams of red tape.' It is a simple concern that is nonetheless often ignored by legislators.*

*For example, the papers today are filled with stories about businesses dropping health coverage for employees. We provided a substantial package for our staff at the Stratford Inn. However, were we operating today, those costs would exceed \$150,000 a year for health care on top of salaries and other benefits. There would have been no reasonable way for us to absorb or pass on these costs.*

*Some of the escalation in the cost of health care is attributed to patients suing doctors. While one cannot assess the merit of all these claims, I've also witnessed firsthand the explosion in blame-shifting and scapegoating for every negative experience in life.*

*Today, despite bankruptcy, we are still dealing with litigation from individuals who fell in or near our restaurant. Despite these injuries, not every misstep is the fault of someone else. Not every such incident should be viewed as a lawsuit instead of an unfortunate accident. And while the business owner may prevail in the end, the endless exposure to frivolous claims and high legal fees is frightening. ...*

[Thomas Sowell](#) with a three part series on the costs of liberalism. Here he writes on the effects of regs that limit growth.

*... One couple who had lived in their 1,200 square foot home in Palo Alto for 20 years decided to sell it, and posted an asking price just under \$1.3 million.*

*Competition for that house forced the selling price up to \$1.7 million.*

*Another Palo Alto house, this one with 1,292 square feet of space, is on the market for \$2,285,000. It was built in 1895.*

*Even a vacant lot in Palo Alto costs more than a spacious middle-class home costs in most of the rest of the country.*

*How does this tie in with liberalism?*

*In this part of California, liberalism reigns supreme and "open space" is virtually a religion. What that lovely phrase means is that there are vast amounts of empty land where the law forbids anybody from building anything.*

*Anyone who has taken Economics 1 knows that preventing the supply from rising to meet the demand means that prices are going to rise. Housing is no exception.*

*Yet when my wife wrote in a local Palo Alto newspaper, many years ago, that preventing the building of housing would cause existing housing to become far too expensive for most people to afford it, she was deluged with more outraged letters than I get from readers of a nationally syndicated column.*

*What she said was treated as blasphemy against the religion of "open space" — and open space is just one of the wonderful things about the world envisioned by liberals that is ruinously expensive in the mundane world where the rest of us live.*

*Much as many liberals like to put guilt trips on other people, they seldom seek out, much less acknowledge and take responsibility for, the bad consequences of their own actions. ...*

Next, Sowell writes on liberals and disarmament.

*Liberals can be disarming. In fact, they are for disarming anybody who can be disarmed, whether domestically or internationally.*

*Unfortunately, the people who are the easiest to disarm are the ones who are the most peaceful — and disarming them makes them vulnerable to those who are the least peaceful.*

*We are currently getting a painful demonstration of that in Ukraine. When Ukraine became an independent nation, it gave up all the nuclear missiles that were on its territory from the days when it had been part of the Soviet Union.*

*At that time, Ukraine had the third largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world. Do you think Putin would have attacked Ukraine if it still had those nuclear weapons? Or do you think it is just a coincidence that nations with nuclear weapons don't get invaded?*

*Among those who urged Ukraine to reduce even its conventional, non-nuclear weapons as well, was a new United States Senator named Barack Obama. He was all for disarmament then, and apparently even now as President of the United States. He has refused Ukraine's request for weapons with which to defend itself.*

*As with so many things that liberals do, the disarmament crusade is judged by its good intentions, not by its actual consequences. ...*

**Mr. Sowell** closes with the liberal inequality dreck.

*... If nothing else, it is a much-needed distraction from the disasters of ObamaCare and the various IRS, Benghazi and other Obama administration scandals.*

*Like so many other favorite liberal issues, income inequality is seldom discussed in terms of the actual consequences of liberal policies. When you turn from eloquent rhetoric to hard facts, the hardest of those facts is that income inequality has actually increased during five years of Barack Obama's leftist policies.*

*This is not as surprising as some might think. When you make it unnecessary for many people to work, fewer people work. Unprecedented numbers of Americans are on the food stamp program. Unprecedented numbers are also living off government "disability" payments.*

*There is a sweeping array of other government subsidies, whether in money or in kind, which together allow many people to receive greater benefits than they could earn by working at low-skilled jobs. Is it surprising that the labor force participation rate is lower than it has been in decades?*

*In short, when people don't have to earn incomes, they are less likely to earn incomes — or, at least, to earn incomes in legal and visible ways that could threaten their government benefits.*

*Most of the households in the bottom 20 percent of income earners have nobody working. There are more heads of household working full-time and year-round in the top 5 percent than in the bottom 20 percent.*

*What this means statistically is that liberals can throw around numbers on how many people are living in "poverty" — defined in terms of income received, not in terms of goods and services provided by the government. ...*

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## Power Line

### [Slow Learners on the Left](#)

by Steve Hayward

I know, being on the Left means you're a slow learner by definition, but still, the story reported the other day that former leftist Congressman David Bonior (D-**Michigan**) has become an entrepreneur and discovered, lo and behold!— *regulations are slow and costly!* From the [Washington Post earlier this week](#):

Bonior said **if he had the power**, he would lighten up on pesky regulations.

"It took us a ridiculous amount of time to get our permits. I understand regulations and .□.□. the necessity for it. But we lost six months of business because of that. It's very frustrating." (*Emphasis added.*)

This led Michigan legislator [Charles Owens](#) to observe in the *Detroit News*:

About the only way to get a die-hard liberal politician to understand how the economy of business really works is to require them to run an actual business. . . For almost three decades, Congressman Bonior *did* have the power. He used it to increase the regulatory burden on business – especially small business. How delightful that he finally figured out what we, small business-people, were trying to tell him during those years was true. Not that it does us a whole lot of good now.

Bonior isn't the first slow learner on the left to recognize the problems of regulation once they started investing their own money. Recall George McGovern in 1992 [writing](#) about how regulations had helped kill his hotel venture in New England:

In retrospect, I wish I had known more about the hazards and difficulties of such a business, especially during a recession of the kind that hit New England just as I was acquiring the inn's 43-year leasehold. I also wish that during the years I was in public office, I had had this firsthand experience about the difficulties business people face every day. That knowledge would have made me a better U.S. senator and a more understanding presidential contender.

McGovern's hotel enterprise eventually went bankrupt—just like the governing ideology he and Bonior supported in Congress for decades. Maybe we should make owning and operating a business a qualification for being elected to Congress in the first place.

## Washington Post

### [Former Congressman Bonior, longtime liberal on Capitol Hill, discovers the profit motive](#)

by Thomas Heath



*"Small-business people work very hard," said former congressman David Bonior, co-owner of Agua 301 near Navy Yard.*

David Bonior is a hungry entrepreneur bent on making money.

*David Bonior ?*

The former Michigan Democratic congressman, liberal pit bull, academic, antiwar firebrand and labor-union BFF has undergone an epiphany, making him simpatico with businesses and the profit motive.

He has invested at least \$1 million, by my estimate, building two family-owned Washington restaurants, the second of which, [Agua 301](#), is near Nationals Park and only a line drive from the Anacostia River. His first eatery, [Zest Bistro](#), opened on Capitol Hill four years ago.

“It’s the American Dream,” he said of his new career.

Over tasty Caesar salad and tacos at Agua 301, the mild-mannered, thoughtful Bonior — chastened by local regulators and fickle weather — sounds more born-again capitalist than fire-breathing lefty.

“Small-business people work very hard,” said the 68-year-old, who has spent most of his life in government. “If you are a small-business guy, you are out there and not as protected as a government employee. They struggle every day. A snow day, a government worker is off. A restaurant person takes a hit from that snow day. This winter was very, very tough on the [restaurant] industry.”

Bonior retired from Congress in 2003 after 26 years serving his Michigan constituents, including fighting for better wages. He said he entered the business world in order to help his stepson and daughter-in-law. Both had longed to own their own place after toiling for years in the restaurant business.

Since leaving office, Bonior has earned significant money selling investment products to pension funds, likely making him a 1-percenter. That has allowed him breathing room as he tries out his newfound love as a restaurateur.

“I don’t have to make a lot of money on it,” he said. But, “I hope to make a lot of money on it.”

Most importantly, he said, he wants to use the income from his pension fund work to do something family oriented; something fun, meaningful and, alas, profitable. Aside from the money, he contributed a recipe for bread pudding.

“I like the creative part of it. I like the workers. I know their stories, where they come from, their schools, their families,” he said. “Congress is often crisis after crisis. Trying to put out fires by the minute, especially if you’re in the leadership.”

Instead of fires, he spends most of his time worrying about the weather, the availability of limes or the price of avocados as he chases after those elusive profits.

“There are always going to be problems, and we’ve had our share.”

Bonior said if he had the power, he would lighten up on pesky regulations.

“It took us a ridiculous amount of time to get our permits. I understand regulations and .□.□. the necessity for it. But we lost six months of business because of that. It’s very frustrating.”

Bonior hasn’t forsaken his liberal heritage. He is a self-described labor guy who hails from a Ukrainian-Polish section in Detroit. His father ran a tiny printing business and had bouts with unemployment, which left a lifelong identification with the working man.

He attended the University of Iowa on a football scholarship and served in the Air Force from 1968 to 1972. The service sent him to cooking school in Virginia, where he learned a few basics. He disclaims any passion for cooking — except the bread pudding — although he loves the “up” vibe of restaurants.

After leaving Congress, he bought a place near Capitol Hill because he wanted to be near a growing, urban neighborhood. He owns a second home near the Chesapeake Bay.

When his family approached him more than four years ago about starting Zest, Bonior became a scrappy entrepreneur. He used his congressional access to knock on every one of 435 congressional offices, dropping off a flier for Zest. He worked the Metro stations, handing out coupons. He went door-to-door, as if he were campaigning.

“We kept thinking of ways to reach out.”

He knew it was risky. Most restaurants fail within two years. But his stepson and daughter-in-law were experienced in restaurant management. In the process, he gained an appreciation for the profit motive.

“The biggest surprise is how you have to hustle,” he said. “It was an eye-opener. I always heard this when I was in Congress. ‘You should try and own a business someday, Bonior.’ So I own two small businesses with my stepson and daughter-in-law. It’s tough to make it, in terms of profit margins. But somehow you get by and you figure it out.”

After Zest turned the corner, Bonior decided to open a second restaurant in the newly developing Navy Yard area, which has attractive demographics and strong growth potential.

He did his homework, talking extensively to the developer, Forest City. He researched the future development, talking to the Business Improvement District. He included in his equation the lunch crowds from the Department of Transportation headquarters and the residential area sprouting nearby. The restaurant adjoins a busy park and plaza where people congregate. Once the area is developed, it will be at a crossroads of 2.5 million feet of residential, retail and office activity.

“We saw the potential,” Bonior said. So he signed a 10-year lease.

Zest is profitable. Agua 301, which is modern Mexican cuisine, doesn’t lose money, he said.

To make the numbers work, he pays his 50 or so employees — who are not union members — what he calls “the tip wage,” which is \$2.36 an hour. He said that when he was in Congress, he



worked hard to increase the “tip wage,” but it was a casualty from the successful effort to increase the minimum wage.

Bonior tries to motivate employees with baseball tickets and discount meals.

His employees get paid vacations of at least two weeks a year. Most employees who were on the restaurants’ health plans have signed up for coverage via the Affordable Care Act. Bonior’s restaurants do not have retirement plans, although he says he plans to institute them in the future.

Bonior visits Agua 301 a couple of nights a week. He was bopping around the bar area on a recent evening, wearing his red Nationals hat (he is a season-ticket holder), working the crowd.

Ahhhh. The American Dream.

### **Detroit News**

#### **[For ex-politico David Bonior, regulatory burden on small business a shock](#)**

by Charles Owens

About the only way to get a die-hard liberal politician to understand how the economy of business really works is to require them to run an actual business. Case in point: Former Congressman David Bonior. **[As reported in the Washington Post](#)**, Bonior has taken the plunge and become a business owner. Among the more ironic of his observations is this gem: “Bonior said if he had the power, he would lighten up on pesky regulations.”

For almost three decades, Congressman Bonior *did* have the power. He used it to increase the regulatory burden on business – especially small business. How delightful that he finally figured out what we, small business-people, were trying to tell him during those years was true. Not that it does us a whole lot of good now.

It is worth noting that Bonior is not the first regulation loving liberal Congressman to have an epiphany after living in the real world of business. The late Congressman George McGovern **[expressed similar sentiments](#)** after leaving the ivory tower of Congress and venturing into business for himself. He went bankrupt. Both politicians had an abysmal **[voting record](#)** with the **[National Federation of Independent Business](#)** (NFIB), a leading small business advocate when they were in Congress. No coincidence here.

The big difference between the free enterprise escapades of former Congressmen and the typical small business owner is that when the average small business owner fails, they lose everything.

It must be nice for our former Congressmen to know that no matter what happens to them in business — because of the over-reaching rules they promoted while in office — the taxpayers will always catch them when they fall with their bloated government pension and benefits.

For more on the out-of-control regulations on small business visit **[sensiblereqs.com](http://sensiblereqs.com)**.



**WSJ**

## **A Politicians Dream Is a Businessman's Nightmare**

by George McGovern

**'Wisdom too often never comes, and so one ought not to reject it merely because it comes late.'**--Justice Felix Frankfurter.

It's been 11 years since I left the U.S. Senate, after serving 24 years in high public office. After leaving a career in politics, I devoted much of my time to public lectures that took me into every state in the union and much of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

In 1988, I invested most of the earnings from this lecture circuit acquiring the leasehold on Connecticut's Stratford Inn. Hotels, inns and restaurants have always held a special fascination for me. The Stratford Inn promised the realization of a longtime dream to own a combination hotel, restaurant and public conference facility--complete with an experienced manager and staff.

In retrospect, I wish I had known more about the hazards and difficulties of such a business, especially during a recession of the kind that hit New England just as I was acquiring the inn's 43-year leasehold. I also wish that during the years I was in public office, I had had this firsthand experience about the difficulties business people face every day. That knowledge would have made me a better U.S. senator and a more understanding presidential contender.

Today we are much closer to a general acknowledgment that government must encourage business to expand and grow. Bill Clinton, Paul Tsongas, Bob Kerrey and others have, I believe, changed the debate of our party. We intuitively know that to create job opportunities we need entrepreneurs who will risk their capital against an expected payoff. Too often, however, public policy does not consider whether we are choking off those opportunities.

My own business perspective has been limited to that small hotel and restaurant in Stratford, Conn., with an especially difficult lease and a severe recession. But my business associates and I also lived with federal, state and local rules that were all passed with the objective of helping employees, protecting the environment, raising tax dollars for schools, protecting our customers from fire hazards, etc. While I never doubted the worthiness of any of these goals, the concept that most often eludes legislators is: 'Can we make consumers pay the higher prices for the increased operating costs that accompany public regulation and government reporting requirements with reams of red tape.' It is a simple concern that is nonetheless often ignored by legislators.

For example, the papers today are filled with stories about businesses dropping health coverage for employees. We provided a substantial package for our staff at the Stratford Inn. However, were we operating today, those costs would exceed \$150,000 a year for health care on top of salaries and other benefits. There would have been no reasonable way for us to absorb or pass on these costs.

Some of the escalation in the cost of health care is attributed to patients suing doctors. While one cannot assess the merit of all these claims, I've also witnessed firsthand the explosion in blame-shifting and scapegoating for every negative experience in life.

Today, despite bankruptcy, we are still dealing with litigation from individuals who fell in or near our restaurant. Despite these injuries, not every misstep is the fault of someone else. Not every such incident should be viewed as a lawsuit instead of an unfortunate accident. And while the business owner may prevail in the end, the endless exposure to frivolous claims and high legal fees is frightening.

Our Connecticut hotel, along with many others, went bankrupt for a variety of reasons, the general economy in the Northeast being a significant cause. But that reason masks the variety of other challenges we faced that drive operating costs and financing charges beyond what a small business can handle.

It is clear that some businesses have products that can be priced at almost any level. The price of raw materials (e.g., steel and glass) and life-saving drugs and medical care are not easily substituted by consumers. It is only competition or antitrust that tempers price increases. Consumers may delay purchases, but they have little choice when faced with higher prices.

In services, however, consumers do have a choice when faced with higher prices. You may have to stay in a hotel while on vacation, but you can stay fewer days. You can eat in restaurants fewer times per month, or forgo a number of services from car washes to shoeshines. Every such decision eventually results in job losses for someone. And often these are the people without the skills to help themselves--the people I've spent a lifetime trying to help.

In short, 'one-size-fits-all' rules for business ignore the reality of the market place. And setting thresholds for regulatory guidelines at artificial levels--e.g., 50 employees or more, \$500,000 in sales--takes no account of other realities, such as profit margins, labor intensive vs. capital intensive businesses, and local market economics.

The problem we face as legislators is: Where do we set the bar so that it is not too high to clear? I don't have the answer. I do know that we need to start raising these questions more often.

[Letter from George McGovern to Wall Street Journal, 6/1/1992 at A12]

## **Jewish World Review**

### **The High Cost of Liberalism**

by Thomas Sowell

Liberals advocate many wonderful things. In fact, I suspect that most conservatives would prefer to live in the kind of world envisioned by liberals, rather than in the kind of world envisioned by conservatives.

Unfortunately, the only kind of world that any of us can live in is the world that actually exists. Trying to live in the kind of world that liberals envision has costs that will not go away just because these costs are often ignored by liberals.

One of those costs appeared in an announcement of a [house for sale](#) in Palo Alto, the community adjacent to Stanford University, an institution that is as politically correct as they come.

The house is for sale at \$1,498,000. It is a 1,010 square foot bungalow with two bedrooms, one bath and a garage. Although the announcement does not mention it, this bungalow is located near a commuter railroad line, with [trains](#) passing regularly throughout the day.

Lest you think this house must be some kind of designer's dream, loaded with high-tech stuff, it was built in 1942 and, even if it was larger, no one would mistake it for the Taj Mahal or San Simeon.

This house is not an aberration, and its price is not out of line with other housing prices in Palo Alto. One couple who had lived in their 1,200 square foot home in Palo Alto for 20 years decided to sell it, and posted an asking price just under \$1.3 million.

Competition for that house forced the selling price up to \$1.7 million.

Another Palo Alto house, this one with 1,292 square feet of space, is on [the market](#) for \$2,285,000. It was built in 1895.

Even a vacant lot in Palo Alto costs more than a spacious middle-class home costs in most of the rest of the country.

How does this tie in with liberalism?

In this part of California, liberalism reigns supreme and "open space" is virtually a religion. What that lovely phrase means is that there are vast amounts of empty land where the law forbids anybody from building anything.

Anyone who has taken Economics 1 knows that preventing the supply from rising to meet the demand means that prices are going to rise. Housing is no exception.

Yet when my wife wrote in a local Palo Alto newspaper, many years ago, that preventing the building of housing would cause existing housing to become far too expensive for most people to afford it, she was deluged with more outraged letters than I get from readers of a nationally syndicated column.

What she said was treated as blasphemy against the religion of "open space" — and open space is just one of the wonderful things about the world envisioned by liberals that is ruinously expensive in the mundane world where the rest of us live.

Much as many liberals like to put guilt trips on other people, they seldom seek out, much less acknowledge and take responsibility for, the bad consequences of their own actions.

There are people who claim that astronomical housing prices in places like Palo Alto and San Francisco are due to a scarcity of land. But there is enough vacant land ("open space") on the other side of the 280 Freeway that goes past Palo Alto to build another Palo Alto or two — except for laws and policies that make that impossible.

As in San Francisco and other parts of the country where housing prices skyrocketed after building homes was prohibited or severely restricted, this began in Palo Alto in the 1970s.

Housing prices in Palo Alto nearly quadrupled during that decade. This was not due to expensive new houses being built, because not a single new house was built in Palo Alto in the 1970s. The same old houses simply shot up in price.

It was very much the same story in San Francisco, which was a bastion of liberalism then as now. There too, incredibly high prices are charged for small houses, often jammed close together. A local newspaper described a graduate student looking for a place to rent who was "visiting one exorbitantly priced hovel after another."

That is part of the unacknowledged cost of "open space," and just part of the high cost of liberalism.

## **Jewish World Review**

### **The High Cost of Liberalism: Part II**

by Thomas Sowell

Liberals can be disarming. In fact, they are for disarming anybody who can be disarmed, whether domestically or internationally.

Unfortunately, the people who are the easiest to disarm are the ones who are the most peaceful — and disarming them makes them vulnerable to those who are the least peaceful.

We are currently getting a painful demonstration of that in Ukraine. When Ukraine became an independent nation, it gave up all the nuclear missiles that were on its territory from the days when it had been part of the Soviet Union.

At that time, Ukraine had the third largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world. Do you think Putin would have attacked Ukraine if it still had those nuclear weapons? Or do you think it is just a coincidence that nations with nuclear weapons don't get invaded?

Among those who urged Ukraine to reduce even its conventional, non-nuclear weapons as well, was a new United States Senator named Barack Obama. He was all for disarmament then, and apparently even now as President of the United States. He has refused Ukraine's request for weapons with which to defend itself.

As with so many things that liberals do, the disarmament crusade is judged by its good intentions, not by its actual consequences.

**Indeed**, many liberals seem unaware that the consequences could be anything other than what they hope for. That is why disarmament advocates are called "the peace movement."

Whether disarmament has in fact led to peace, more often than **military** deterrence has, is something that could be argued on the basis of the facts of history — but it seldom is.

Liberals almost never talk about disarmament in terms of evidence of its consequences, whether they are discussing gun control at home or international disarmament agreements.

International disarmament agreements flourished between the two World Wars. Just a few years after the end of the First World War there were the Washington Naval Agreements of 1921-1922 that led to the United States actually [sinking](#) some of its own warships. Then there was the celebrated Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, in which nations renounced war, with France's Foreign Minister Aristide Briand declaring, "Away with rifles, machine guns, and cannon!" The "international community" loved it.

In Britain, the Labour Party repeatedly voted against military armaments during most of the decade of the 1930s. A popular argument of the time was that Britain should disarm "as an example to others."

Unfortunately, Hitler did not follow that example. He was busy building the most powerful military machine on the continent of Europe.

Nor did Germany or Japan allow the Washington Naval Agreements to cramp their style. The fact that Britain and America limited the size of their battleships simply meant that Germany and Japan had larger battleships when World War II began.

What is happening in Ukraine today is just a continuation of the old story about nations that disarm increasing the chances of being attacked by nations that do not disarm.

Any number of empirical studies about domestic gun control laws tell much the same story. Gun control advocates seldom, if ever, present hard evidence that gun crimes in general, or murder rates in particular, go down after gun control laws are passed or tightened.

That is the crucial question about gun control laws. But liberals settle that question by assumption. Then they can turn their attention to denouncing the National Rifle Association.

But neither the National Rifle Association nor the Second Amendment is the crucial issue. If the hard facts show that gun control laws actually reduce the murder rate, we can repeal the Second Amendment, as other Amendments have been repealed.

If in fact tighter gun control laws reduced the murder rate, that would be the liberals' ace of trumps. Why then do the liberals not play their ace of trumps, by showing us such hard facts? Because they don't have any such hard facts. So they give us lofty rhetoric and outraged indignation instead.

## **Jewish World Review**

### **[The High Cost of Liberalism: Part III](#)**

by Thomas Sowell

Income inequality has long been one of the liberals' favorite issues. So there is nothing surprising about its being pushed hard this election year.

If nothing else, it is a much-needed distraction from the disasters of [ObamaCare](#) and the various IRS, Benghazi and other Obama administration scandals.

Like so many other favorite liberal issues, income inequality is seldom discussed in terms of the actual consequences of liberal policies. When you turn from eloquent rhetoric to hard facts, the hardest of those facts is that income inequality has actually increased during five years of Barack Obama's leftist policies.

This is not as surprising as some might think. When you make it unnecessary for many people to work, fewer people work. Unprecedented numbers of Americans are on the [food stamp program](#). Unprecedented numbers are also living off government "disability" payments.

There is a sweeping array of other government subsidies, whether in money or in kind, which together allow many people to receive greater benefits than they could earn by working at low-skilled jobs. Is it surprising that the labor force participation rate is lower than it has been in decades?

In short, when people don't have to earn incomes, they are less likely to earn incomes — or, at least, to earn incomes in legal and visible ways that could threaten their government benefits.

Most of the households in the bottom 20 percent of income earners have nobody working. There are more heads of household working full-time and year-round in the top 5 percent than in the bottom 20 percent.

What this means statistically is that liberals can throw around numbers on how many people are living in "poverty" — defined in terms of income received, not in terms of goods and services provided by the government.

Most Americans living in "poverty" have [air conditioning](#), a motor vehicle and other amenities, including more living space than the average person in Europe — not the average poor person in Europe, the average person.

"Poverty" is in the eye of the statisticians — more specifically, the government statisticians who define what constitutes "poverty," and who are unlikely to define it in ways that might jeopardize the massive welfare state that they are part of.

In terms of income statistics that produce liberal outcries about "disparities" and "inequities," millions of people who don't have to earn incomes typically don't.

The more people who are in a non-income-earning mode, the greater the disparities with the incomes of those of us who have to work for a living, and who have to earn more to offset high tax rates. Yet liberals often act as if this is an injustice to those who don't work, rather than an injustice to those who do work, and whose taxes support those who don't.

Actually, the liberal welfare state is an injustice to both, though in different ways.

Despite whatever good intentions some liberals may have had in creating the ever-growing welfare state, practical politicians know that more dependency means more votes for supporters of bigger government.

There are no incentives for either politicians or the bureaucrats who run the welfare state agencies to get people off their dependency on government programs. Moreover, the eligibility rules create a very high cost to individuals who try to rise by getting a job and earning their own money.

It is not uncommon for someone who is receiving multiple government-provided benefits — housing subsidies, food subsidies, etc. — to lose more in benefits than they gain in income, if they decide to take a legitimate and visible job.

If increasing your income by \$10,000 a year would cause you to lose \$15,000 worth of government benefits, would you do it? That is more than the equivalent of a 100 percent tax rate on income. Even millionaires and billionaires don't pay that high a tax rate.

Liberals don't talk — or perhaps even think — in terms of the actual consequences of their policies, when it is so much more pleasant to think in terms of wonderful goals and lofty rhetoric.

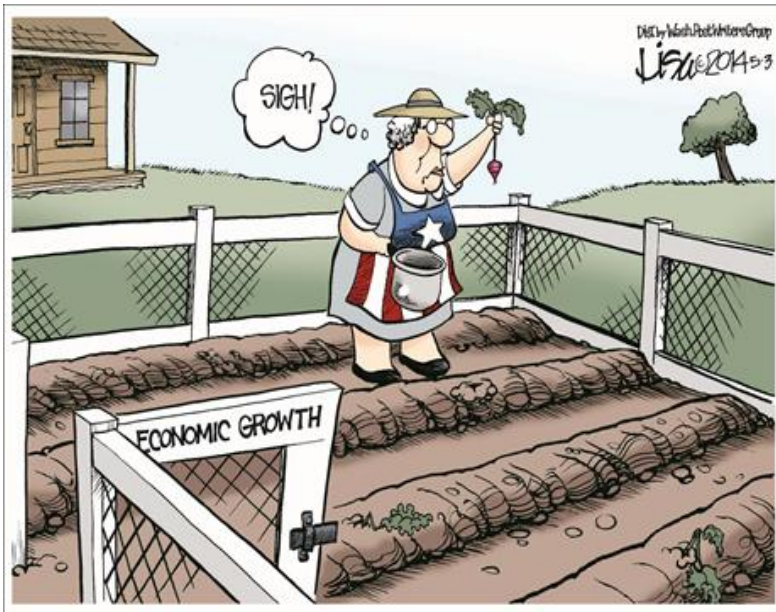






"WON'T START? MUST BE THE COLD WEATHER."





Samuel L. Hound Dog?