

Class War

How public servants became our masters

Reason

[Steven Greenhut](#), [February 2010](#) issue

In April 2008, *The Orange County Register* published a bombshell of an investigation about a license plate program for California government workers and their families. Drivers of nearly 1 million cars and light trucks—out of a total 22 million vehicles registered statewide—were protected by a “shield” in the state records system between their license plate numbers and their home addresses. There were, the newspaper found, great practical benefits to this secrecy.

“Vehicles with protected license plates can run through dozens of intersections controlled by red light cameras with impunity,” the *Register*’s Jennifer Muir reported. “Parking citations issued to vehicles with protected plates are often dismissed because the process necessary to pierce the shield is too cumbersome. Some patrol officers let drivers with protected plates off with a warning because the plates signal that drivers are ‘one of their own’ or related to someone who is.”

The plate program started in 1978 with the seemingly unobjectionable purpose of protecting the personal addresses of officials who deal directly with criminals. Police argued that the bad guys could call the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), get addresses for officers, and use the information to harm them or their family members. There was no rash of such incidents, only the possibility that they could take place.

So police and their families were granted confidentiality. Then the program expanded from one set of government workers to another. Eventually parole officers, retired parking enforcers, DMV desk clerks, county supervisors, social workers, and other categories of employees from 1,800 state agencies were given the special protections too. Meanwhile, the original intent of the shield had become obsolete: The DMV long ago abandoned the practice of giving out personal information about *any* driver. What was left was not a protection but a perk.

Yes, rank has its privileges, and it’s clear that government workers have a rank above the rest of us. Ordinarily, if one out of every 22 California drivers had a license to drive any way he chose, there would be demands for more police power to protect Californians from the potential carnage. But until the newspaper series, law enforcement officials and legislators had remained mum. The reason, of course, is that the scofflaws *are* law enforcement officials and legislators.

Here is how brazen they’ve become: A few days after the newspaper investigation caused a buzz in Sacramento, lawmakers voted to *expand* the driver record protections to even

more government employees. An Assembly committee, on a bipartisan 13-to-0 vote, agreed to extend the program to veterinarians, firefighters, and code officers. “I don’t want to say no to the firefighters and veterinarians that are doing these things that need to be protected,” Assemblyman Mike Duvall (R-Yorba Linda) explained.

Exempting themselves from traffic laws in the name of a threat that no longer exists is bad enough, but what government workers do to the rest of us on a daily basis makes ticket dodging look like child’s play. Often under veils of illegal secrecy, public-sector unions and their political allies are systematically looting the public treasury with gold-plated pensions, jeopardizing the finances of state and local governments around the country, removing themselves from legal accountability, and doing it all in the name of humble working men and women just looking for their fair share. Government employees have turned themselves into a coddled class that lives better than its private-sector counterpart, and with more impunity. The public’s servants have become our masters.

Good Enough for Government Work

There was a time when government work offered lower salaries than comparable jobs in the private sector but more security and somewhat better benefits. These days, government workers fare better than private-sector workers in almost every area—pay, benefits, time off, and job security. And not just in California.

According to a 2007 analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics by the *Asbury Park Press*, “the average federal worker made \$59,864 in 2005, compared with the average salary of \$40,505 in the private sector.” Across comparable jobs, the federal government paid higher salaries than the private sector three times out of four, the paper found. As Heritage Foundation legal analyst James Sherk explained to the *Press*, “The government doesn’t have to worry about going bankrupt, and there isn’t much competition.”

In February 2008, before the recession made the disparity much worse, *The New York Times* reported that “George W. Bush is in line to be the first president since World War II to preside over an economy in which federal government employment rose more rapidly than employment in the private sector.” The Obama administration has extended the hiring binge, with executive branch employment (excluding the Postal Service and the Defense Department) slated to grow by 2 percent in 2010—and more than 15 percent if you count temporary Census workers.

The average federal salary (including benefits) is set to grow from \$72,800 in 2008 to \$75,419 in 2010, CBS reported. But the real action isn’t in what government employees are being paid today; it’s in what they’re being promised for tomorrow. Public pensions have swollen to unrecognizable proportions during the last decade. In June 2005, *BusinessWeek* reported that “more than 14 million public servants and 6 million retirees are owed \$2.37 trillion by more than 2,000 different states, cities and agencies,” numbers

that have risen since then. State and local pension payouts, the magazine found, had increased 50 percent in just five years.

These huge pension increases have eaten away at public finances, most spectacularly in California, where a bipartisan bill that passed virtually without debate unleashed the odious “3 percent at 50” retirement plan in 1999. Under this plan, at age 50 many categories of public employees are eligible for 3 percent of their final year’s pay multiplied by the number of years they’ve worked. So if a police officer starts working at age 20, he can retire at 50 with 90 percent of his final salary until he dies, and then his spouse receives that money for the rest of her life. Even during the economic crisis, “3 percent at 50” and the forces behind it have only become more entrenched.

In the midst of California’s 2008–09 fiscal meltdown, with the impact of deluxe public pensions making daily headlines, the city of Fullerton nevertheless sought to retroactively increase the defined-benefit retirement plan for its city employees by a jaw-dropping 25 percent. What’s more, the Fullerton City Council negotiated the increase in closed session, outside public view. Under California’s open meetings law, known as the Brown Act, even legitimate closed-session items such as contract negotiations are supposed to be advertised so that the public has a clear idea of what’s being discussed. But the Fullerton agenda for that night only vaguely referred to labor negotiations.

Four of the five council members—two Republicans and two Democrats—seemed to support the deal. But Republican Shawn Nelson, a principled advocate for limited government, didn’t appreciate the way the council was obscuring not only the legitimately secret details of the negotiations but the basic subject matter. He called me at the *Register* (where I worked at the time) and, without revealing details of the closed session, shared his concerns about the way the public had not been alerted. After I wrote about the secret, fiscally reckless deal, the recriminations came down in a hurry: on Shawn Nelson.

Not surprisingly, the liberal council members were furious that the public had been informed about what was going on. But some conservative Republicans, including a prominent state senator, Dick Ackerman of Irvine, were angry as well, because Nelson’s willingness to talk embarrassed a Republican councilman whom the GOP was backing for re-election. When I later bumped into Ackerman at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, he laid into me about Nelson’s supposed violation of the Brown Act. Some officials and bloggers actually called for Nelson to be prosecuted. Local union mouthpieces and fellow council members portrayed the whistleblower as a common criminal, even though he was merely acting in the spirit of the open meetings law and showing the kind of fiscal responsibility you would hope to see in public officials.

In its embarrassment, the city council voted against the deal at the last minute, but only after council members publicly chastised Nelson, accused me of libel, and vowed to come back for more when the timing was right. One Republican councilman couldn’t figure out what the fuss was all about, given that the council enhances public employee pay and pensions all the time.

Pension Tsunami

Although Americans may have a vague sense that the nation has run up a great deal of debt, the public employee benefit problem is not well known. Yet the wave of benefit promises is poised to wash away state and local government budgets and large portions of the incomes of most Americans. Most of these benefits are vested, meaning that they have the standing of a legal contract. They cannot be reduced. And the government employees' allies, such as California's legislative Democrats, are cleverly blocking some of the more obvious exit strategies.

For instance, when the city of Vallejo went bankrupt after coughing up 75 percent of its budget to police and firefighters, the state Assembly introduced legislation that would allow cities to go bankrupt only if they get approval from a commission. Such a commission would of course be dominated by union-friendly members. The result: Cities would be stuck making good on contracts they cannot afford to fulfill.

When the economy was booming, these structural problems could be hidden. But not now. As debt loads become unsustainable, you can expect cuts in services, tax increases, pension-obligation bonds, or some combination of the three.

In California unfunded pension and health care liabilities for state workers top \$100 billion, and the annual pension contribution has shot up from \$320 million to \$7.3 billion in less than a decade. In New York state, local governments may have to triple their annual pension contributions during the next six years, from \$2.6 billion to \$8 billion, according to the state comptroller.

That money will come from taxpayers. The average private-sector worker, who enjoys a lower salary and far lower retirement benefits than New York or California government workers, will have to work longer, retire later, and pay more so that his public-employee neighbors can enjoy the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed. The taxpayers will also have to deal with worsening public services, since there will be less money to pay for things that might actually benefit the public.

In July 2009, Orange County, California, Sheriff Sandra Hutchens proposed more than \$20 million in budget cuts to close the gap caused by falling tax revenue. Her department slashed 40 percent of its command staff, cut a total of about 30 positions, and made changes that affected about 200 positions through reassignments, demotions, new overtime rules, and other maneuvers. "These are services that we believe are quite important to maintaining public safety, that we're just not going to be able to continue," department spokesman John MacDonald told the *Los Angeles Times*.

The sheriff failed to identify another reason for the tight budget: In 2001 the Orange County Board of Supervisors had passed a retroactive pension increase for sheriff's deputies. That policy nearly doubled pension costs from 2000 to 2009, when pension

contributions totaled nearly \$95 million—20 percent of the sheriff’s budget. So the sheriff decries an economic downturn that is costing her department about \$20 million, but she doesn’t mention that a previous pension increase is costing her department more than double that amount. It’s safe to say that had the pension increase not passed, the department would have money to keep officers on the streets and to avoid the cuts the sheriff claims are threatening public safety.

Chief’s Disease

One would think that a “3 percent at 50” retirement would be a good enough deal for most people. Most workers in the private sector would probably jump at such an opportunity. But many public safety officials aren’t satisfied with a system that allows them to retire with 90 percent or more of their final year’s pay at young ages. They feel compelled to game the system in ways that stretch or break the law.

A large percentage of public safety officials —more than two-thirds of management-level officials at the California Highway Patrol, for instance—come down with something widely known as “Chief’s Disease” about a year before their scheduled retirement. “High-ranking [CHP] officers, nearing the end of their careers, routinely pursued disability claims that awarded them workers’ comp settlements,” John Hill and Dorothy Korber of the *Sacramento Bee* reported in 2004. “That, in turn, led in many cases to disability retirements. As they collected their disability pensions, some of these former CHP chiefs embarked on rigorous second careers—one as assistant sheriff of Yolo County, for example, another as the security director for San Francisco International Airport.”

When Mike Clesceri was mayor of Fullerton (a part-time position filled by a city council member), he also worked as an investigator for the Orange County District Attorney’s Office. As his retirement approached, Clesceri claimed to have an extreme case of acid reflux, which would help him net a tax-free pension of \$58,000 a year, plus cost-of-living increases. Even while retired with that alleged disability, Clesceri pursued a local police chief’s job, retained his mayorship, and ran a tough re-election campaign. He even had the time to have his brother-in-law, an attorney, send threatening letters to members of the community who commented on the absurdity of his disability pension. As Clesceri explained in a newspaper column, the disability only applied to his job at the D.A.’s office.

The exposure of this abuse ultimately galvanized the public to boot Clesceri off the Fullerton City Council. The problem is most of these situations never get aired publicly.

Other state employees go to great lengths to find the highest-paying job they can in their final year, thereby locking in their permanent retirement benefit based on a salary they made only once. *Bee* reporters Hill and Korber told the story of Sharon McGraw, a Sacramento-area accounting manager for the state who moved from her suburban home

to a tiny apartment in the San Francisco Bay area so she could temporarily take a high-paying job that would increase her pension benefit by \$18,000 a year.

Then there's the bizarre story of Armando Ruiz, a part-time trustee for the Coast Community College District in Southern California. Ruiz also worked full time as an administrator with the South Orange County Community College District. Ruiz wanted to run for re-election as a trustee and use the "incumbent" label on his ballot, but he also wanted to take advantage of a strange California law that dramatically increases an employee's pension payout if he retires from two jobs on the same day.

"Ruiz 'retired,' effective Oct. 31, as a part-time trustee of the Coast district and as a full-time counselor at Irvine Valley College," *Register* columnist Frank Mickadeit reported in 2008. "Even though the trustee gig pays just a \$9,800 annual stipend, he was able to calculate his state pension as if he had been paid \$106K a year for that 'job' plus the \$106K a year he got for his real job at Irvine. So, based on a \$212K salary he never really made, his pension will work out to about \$108K a year for life. Otherwise, the pension would have been \$59K—\$54K for the real job; \$5K for the trustee job. Even though Ruiz was officially retired from the Coast district board, he was still listed on Tuesday's ballot as an incumbent. A cynical person might say that by waiting to 'retire,' just days before the election Ruiz knew it would be too late to change the ballots. And incumbents rarely lose such elections."

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The only good news from that scam: After Ruiz's maneuver was exposed, the state legislature repealed the incomprehensible pension-spiking rule. But the pending pension crisis, with its thousands of abuses undetected by outside scrutiny, continues to loom over our heads.

The Public Sector Menace

In the summer of 2009, various Democratic candidates for California attorney general came before the Police Officers Research Association of California, a union lobbying organization, to ask for its support. According to one attendee (who asked to remain anonymous, given the obvious repercussions for his career), the organization had two basic questions for Assemblymen Ted Lieu (D-Torrance), Alberto Torrico (D-Newark), and Pedro Nava (D-Santa Barbara), each a candidate in the 2010 attorney general race. The first: Did they support the death penalty for cop killers? The second: Would each candidate, as attorney general, make sure the official summary of a state pension reform proposal would be slanted to destroy its chances of passing?

In California crafting ballot language is one of the most important jobs of the state's attorney general. The police union officials reminded the candidates that 90 percent of voters read nothing more than the ballot title and summary, and they emphasized the

importance of putting the kibosh to the measure. My source was appalled, not just by the directness of the question but by the eagerness with which the candidates, especially Torrico, answered it. They all promised they would help kill the measure.

Public-sector unions have a growing influence in state and federal governments, and in the overall labor movement, but they are a relatively recent phenomenon. Civil service unionization in the federal government wasn't allowed until President John F. Kennedy issued an executive order legalizing it in 1962. In California it didn't become legal until 1968. Yet now California may be spearheading the re-unionization of the country.

In a 2003 study of union membership rates, the sociologists Ruth Milkman and Daisy Rooks explained that "California stands out as an exception to the general pattern of the past decade. Against all odds, union density has inched upward in the nation's most populous state, from 16.1 percent of all wage and salary workers in 1998 to 17.8 percent in 2002."

The study was produced by the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment, itself a testament to union power in the Golden State. Critics call the institute Union University, arguing that the state is funding a left-wing advocacy and research organization that advances union causes. As the *Los Angeles Times* explained in a 2004 article about the controversy, "For years these programs received the majority of their funding from the budgets of the universities where they are housed. Then in the 2000–01 budget, former Gov. Gray Davis approved \$6 million to create the institute encompassing the two centers and charged with carrying out 'research, education and service involving the world of work, and the public and private policies that govern it.'"

In the 2003 study, Milkman and Rooks found that union growth in California's public sector has far outpaced such growth in other states, for an obvious reason: "Organized labor has more political influence in California than in most other states." In more-recent studies, the Institute for Labor and Employment found that for the first time in five decades, U.S. unionization rates actually *increased* in 2008. The reason: increases in California, mainly in the government sector.

At all levels, state and local government employment grew by 13 percent across the United States from 1994 to 2004. The number of judicial and legal employees increased by 28 percent. The number of public safety workers increased by 21 percent. The number of teachers increased by 22 percent.

Michael Hodges' invaluable *Grandfather Economic Report* uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics to chart the growth in state and local government employees since 1946. Their number has increased from 3.3 million then to 19.8 million today—a 492 percent increase as the country's population increased by 115 percent. Since 1999 the number of state and local government employees has increased by 13 percent, compared to a 9 percent increase in the population.

The United States had 2.3 state and local government employees per 100 citizens in 1946 and has 6.5 state and local government employees per 100 citizens now. In 1947, Hodges writes, 78 percent of the national income went to the private sector, 16 percent to the federal sector, and 6 percent to the state and local government sector. Now 54 percent of the economy is private, 28 percent goes to the feds, and 18 percent goes to state and local governments. The trend lines are ominous.

Bigger government means more government employees. Those employees then become a permanent lobby for continual government growth. The nation may have reached critical mass; the number of government employees at every level may have gotten so high that it is politically impossible to roll back the bureaucracy, rein in the costs, and restore lost freedoms.

People who are supposed to serve the public have become a privileged elite that exploits political power for financial gain and special perks. Because of its political power, this interest group has rigged the game so there are few meaningful checks on its demands. Government employees now receive far higher pay, benefits, and pensions than the vast majority of Americans working in the private sector. Even when they are incompetent or abusive, they can be fired only after a long process and only for the most grievous offenses.

It's a two-tier system in which the rulers are making steady gains at the expense of the ruled. The predictable results: Higher taxes, eroded public services, unsustainable levels of debt, and massive roadblocks to reforming even the poorest performing agencies and school systems. If this system is left to grow unchecked, we will end up with a pale imitation of the free society envisioned by the Founders.

Steven Greenhut (stevengreenhut@gmail.com), the director of the Pacific Research Institute's Journalism Center, was a columnist for The Orange County Register for 11 years.

[Steven Greenhut](#) is the California columnist for the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

- [Libby|3.17.10 @ 6:48PM|#](#)

Completely specious argument (they can drive however they wish)! Everyone has to carry license and registration as well as proof of insurance. Huge disconnect here. Do you really think cops let Veterinarians off because their plates are shielded? If your initial premise is flawed, which it is, the rest of the article can be and will be discounted.

log in or register to reply

- [JB|1.12.10 @ 12:10PM|#](#)

Government is the problem.

Our Enemy the State.

log in or register to reply

- **Joseph McGregor**[|10.28.10 @ 10:20AM|](#)#

I'm not entirely sure of this JB, as the truth is: the government is run by people just like you and me. There is no "they"- just "we"... The sooner we all realize that, the sooner we can get back to repairing our country's economy (and, for me, selling engineers insurance).

log in or register to reply

- **bigbootylove**[|8.26.11 @ 5:10AM|](#)#

The Govt today is not democractic at all.. All they do is suckk corporate's balls !

log in or register to reply

- **Leonard Reed**[|1.12.10 @ 12:13PM|](#)#

[Socialists are thieves without character.](#)

log in or register to reply

- **¢**[|1.12.10 @ 12:14PM|](#)#

There was a time when government work offered lower salaries than comparable jobs in the private sector

No there wasn't.

log in or register to reply

- **Ted S.**[|1.12.10 @ 2:36PM|](#)#

(This may be an apocryphal story, but it's widely reported.)

When Babe Ruth got an \$80,000 a year contract in 1930, some journalist told him he would be making more than the president, and asked Babe what he thought about that.

Babe's response? "I had a better year than the President".

log in or register to reply

- **Charles Sainte Claire**[|8.25.10 @ 9:50PM|#](#)

Yes there was and still is in professional ranks.

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.12.10 @ 12:15PM|#](#)

Here is how brazen they've become: A few days after the newspaper investigation caused a buzz in Sacramento, lawmakers voted to expand the driver record protections to even more government employees.

Typical bureaucratic thinking.

"They caught us doing doo-doo. Let's do even MORE doo-doo! That way, people will forget their outrage and simply take it as just business as usual!"

log in or register to reply

- **Frederic Bastiat**[|1.12.10 @ 12:17PM|#](#)

[The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else.](#)

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.12.10 @ 12:19PM|#](#)

At least real thieves risk something - their lives. Socialists are pussies that beseeches the State to do the thievery for them.

log in or register to reply

- **Pablo**[|1.12.10 @ 12:20PM|#](#)

California sounds horrific in this regard but I'm not sure all other states are as bad. Here in GA the pay for state salaries generally sucks. I say that as a former public defender. Attorneys in private practice make, on the average, several times as much as government attorneys. I'd be interested to hear other apples-to-apples comparisons because you can't just look at average pay for all employees.

log in or register to reply

- **MDGuy**[|1.12.10 @ 4:22PM|#](#)

Of course your pay sucked. You were a public defender! Your job was to oppose the state in it's efforts to lock people up. Why would they pay you well to get in their way? The real question is, how much did the prosecutor make compared to private-practice attorneys?

log in or register to reply

- **Pablo**[|1.13.10 @ 10:10AM|](#)#

I can't disagree with that. To answer your second question, prosecutors also make less than private-practice attorneys, but more than public defenders.

log in or register to reply

- **Bruce N. Stein**[|1.28.10 @ 4:39PM|](#)#

Anecdotal, but as I understand it lawyers are one of a handful of professions (the "1 out of 4" perhaps) where the government pays diddly. My sister works for a state government as a lawyer and she makes a pittance, comparatively.

However, her friend who works for the EEOC doing god knows what makes more than her, and has guaranteed pay raises, etc.

log in or register to reply

- [|1.29.10 @ 8:18PM|](#)#

> Attorneys in private practice

Another group of crooks.

log in or register to reply

- **Anonymous Homeowner**[|1.30.10 @ 10:23AM|](#)#

> Attorneys in private practice

blog.onthecommons.us/?p=49

Last year, [HOA attorney Tom] Newton, who was working for another homeowners association, foreclosed on an elderly disabled couple, Dan and Elaine Lambert, because they hadn't paid \$380 in HOA fees.

At the time he said he felt justified in foreclosing on struggling homeowners who are only a few hundred dollars behind on their HOA dues.

“I feel comfortable in taking those steps necessary to enforce my client’s legal rights,” said Newton at the time. “And if that means that ultimately somebody may go through this foreclosure process, it is unfortunate. But it is a consequence of their own making.”

log in or register to reply

- **Glock8651**[|1.31.10 @ 6:30AM](#)|#

I live in California & can assure you that California - a state that at one time boasted the world's 8th largest economy - is worse off than any other state. And, you can understand why.

The same greedy parasites that are busily destroying the national economy are also sucking the life out of California. It is the federal government that is chiefly to blame for the destruction of the national economy while growing unions, increased illegal immigration, and actions undertaken by California's state government methodically strangled California's economy.

Due to its size, California's tanking economy will end up disproportionately impacting the already-tanked national economy. So, California's looming \$100 billion retirement unfunded liability that covers the state's government workers will double down the effects of the \$112 trillion unfunded liability belonging to Medicare + Social Security (yes, both Medicare and Social Security are currently bankrupt thanks to the thieves that are our elected and unelected officials).

The depth & quantity of damage incurred by California will prevent any possibility for the state's recovery.

Might as well come to terms with this fact and go ahead & kiss the state goodbye.

log in or register to reply

- **zoltan**[|1.12.10 @ 12:20PM](#)|#

I may be a bit biased as I am boning someone who is in a public-sector union, but I have seen such unions at least do better than the local government that is trying to screw them. For example, the Austin firefighter union fought down a contract last year that included a pay raise--they didn't want it because it would give the city carte blanche in the hiring process (ensuring that the city would choose recruits based on the color of their skin and the content of their genitals instead of, oh you know, the physical exam and skills tests).

log in or register to reply

- **MP**[|1.12.10 @ 12:21PM](#)|#

I found this to be a terrible article. Long on anecdotes and short on analysis. Seemed more like a greatest hits of Greenhut's investigative journalism career.

log in or register to reply

- **BlackLabsRule**[|1.13.10 @ 1:11PM|#](#)

Interesting MP, I just sat here reading this article for the 20 minutes or so with my jaw on my desk and then read your comment that this is a terrible article. Question: exactly what government agency do YOU work for?

log in or register to reply

- **Citizen Nothing**[|1.12.10 @ 12:31PM|#](#)

MP wants more of those quotes from government officials.

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.12.10 @ 12:48PM|#](#)

The REAL class warfare:

There are only two kinds of people - tax payers and tax consumers. The tax consumers will have the tax payers go at each other by making them think they are exploiting each other - divide and conquer. This is why you will hear and read the canards and red herrings about "workers" vs "capitalists" from tax-consuming teachers and intellectuals, notwithstanding the fact that the battle lines are clearly drawn in the sand: us, producers, tax payers, versus THEM, tax consumers (The State and The Dole.)

The tax consumers will bamboozle tax payers into thinking the tax consumers have a legitimate right to consume the tax payers' efforts, by appealing to a sense of belonging to a higher order, a higher "thing", which one aspires to by the mere action of "voting". This appeal is obviously mystical in nature, no different than peddling a religion.

log in or register to reply

- **TrickyVic**[|1.12.10 @ 1:17PM|#](#)

I like the way people pretend that taxing isn't part of the U.S. Constitution.

I'm not a fan of taxes either, but the authority to tax is found in the Constitution. References to taxes can be found in Article 1 sections 2, 8, and 9.

Article 8 says: The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes,...

There may be taxes that are not Constitutional, but taxing is.

log in or register to reply

• **Old Mexican**[1.12.10 @ 1:46PM](#)#

Re: TrickyVic,

I like the way people pretend that taxing isn't part of the U.S. Constitution.

Legal thievery is *STILL* thievery.

I'm not a fan of taxes either, but the authority to tax is found in the Constitution.

You're begging the question. Just because it is in the Constitution does not make it MORAL, ETHICAL or VALID. Prohibition was also Constitutional - an Amendment was voted to implement it. That did not make Prohibition MORAL, ETHICAL nor VALID, either.

There may be taxes that are not Constitutional, but taxing is.

Slavery was considered Constitutional - that did not make it any MORE valid than the other form of slavery, which is the INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE that was conscription.

log in or register to reply

• **TrickyVic**[1.12.10 @ 2:11PM](#)#

""You're begging the question. Just because it is in the Constitution does not make it MORAL, ETHICAL or VALID.""

Remember that the next time you get stopped by a cop and he wants to search your car. Just because you have a 4th amendment right doesn't make it valid.

log in or register to reply

• **Old Mexican**[1.12.10 @ 2:48PM](#)#

Re: TryckyVic,

Remember that the next time you get stopped by a cop and he wants to search your car. Just because you have a 4th amendment right doesn't make it valid.

You're equivocating - we DON'T have a 4th Amendment Right. The 4th Amendment prohibits the Federal Government from trampling on rights YOU ALREADY HAVE without justification or cause, like your right to your freedom and to your property.

log in or register to reply

- **TrickyVic**[|1.12.10 @ 9:32PM|#](#)

""""You're equivocating - we DON'T have a 4th Amendment Right.""""

LOL. No, you are by arguing against the validity of the Constitution.

I understand the idea of natural rights, but they are not worth a damn unless you can uphold them against government.

Every single person on the planet has the same natural rights. But guys with guns decided not so much. Point being, there is no right God can give that man can not take away.

Man will always govern man, what is written is more important than what is not. Otherwise, when authority comes to you, you'll just be a peasant begging the heavens for mercy.

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.13.10 @ 2:38AM|#](#)

Re: TrickyVic,

LOL. No, you are by arguing against the validity of the Constitution.

You totally misinterpreted the argument - I am not arguing against the validity of the Constitution. I am arguing against the proposition that JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING IS WRITTEN IN THE CONSTITUTION, ipso facto is valid, moral or ethical.

I understand the idea of natural rights, but they are not worth a damn unless you can uphold them against government.

That's circular thinking. Rights do not exist because of government, and certainly, government is not needed to protect these rights.

Every single person on the planet has the same natural rights. But guys with guns decided not so much.

Governments are also guys with guns. What's the difference? Don't tell me - us, tax producers, vote for those tax consumers that will rule over us, thus making them legitimate thieves, right?

Man will always govern man, what is written is more important than what is not. Otherwise, when authority comes to you, you'll just be a peasant begging the heavens for mercy.

If authority comes to me, I will know what to do - don't presume to know what I will do. If you want to be a slave, then that's YOUR prerogative. I prefer to have more huevos.

log in or register to reply

• **Taylor**[1.30.10 @ 12:02PM](#)|#

"Every single person on the planet has the same natural rights.... Man will always govern man,"

Not on the Planet of the Apes.

What?! It was Earth all along? Damn you to hell!

log in or register to reply

• **anonymous**[1.12.10 @ 2:36PM](#)|#

It doesn't invalidate the point. If taxes are being spent on the "general welfare", and the majority of people have a tax obligation, the two groups will overlap a great deal.

log in or register to reply

• **Old Mexican**[1.12.10 @ 2:49PM](#)|#

Re: Anonymous,

It doesn't invalidate the point. If taxes are being spent on the "general welfare", and the majority of people have a tax obligation, the two groups will overlap a great deal.

The General Welfare cannot be promoted through thievery - that's a contradiction, one that the Constitution's framers failed to address.

log in or register to reply

• **Big John**[1.12.10 @ 3:08PM](#)|#

Most US citizens do not consider taxation as thievery, but as a necessary evil.

No taxes? Yeah, that works...

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.12.10 @ 3:16PM|](#)#

Re: Big John,

Most US citizens do not consider taxation as thievery, but as a necessary evil.

This is why the protection of our rights cannot be left to popularity contests.

log in or register to reply

- **Big John**[|1.12.10 @ 4:16PM|](#)#

I know. It's just a matter of which elitist group gets control. The far left socialists, or the far right libertarians.

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.12.10 @ 4:46PM|](#)#

Big John,

I would like to know exactly how Libertarians get to receive the appellation of "Far Right". What does that mean, exactly?

There are only two types of people: Tax consumers and Tax producers. Tax consumers come in many flavors: Neocons, Socialists, Fascists, Communists. The difference lies in their justifications for their thievery. So far I have seen, Libertarians do NOT pretend to become tax consumers, so what's your rationale?

log in or register to reply

- **heller**[|1.12.10 @ 5:59PM|](#)#

What would a group whose main goal is to create a coercion-free society control? Doesn't that contradict non-coercion?

log in or register to reply

- **Some Guy**[|1.12.10 @ 8:23PM|](#)#

I would like to know exactly how Libertarians get to receive the appellation of "Far Right".

Because the far right uses vaguely libertarian sounding speech as a pretext for their massively un-libertarian actions, and people are too dumb to understand that.

For example, Glenn Beck claims to be a libertarian.

log in or register to reply

- **Tim A**|[1.13.10 @ 5:05PM](#)|#

So you say one is either a Tax Consumer or Tax Producer? This means you don't consume any taxes (since you must be saying that you are a producer). So you don't drive on the road. You don't use the Postal Service. You don't use the internet, which was created by tax payer dollars and is still supported by tax payer dollars through public universities and research (oh wait, you must). You don't get protection from the police, fire department, or U.S. army. Right.

log in or register to reply

- **erinca**|[1.14.10 @ 2:21AM](#)|#

The moment I read "the are only two types of people" is the moment I know I'm listening to an an ideologue. Almost all Americans are BOTH tax consumers and tax producers, despite your simpleminded claim—and that's as it should be. Together we have funded and benefited from a government that has managed to secure for us a better life than most of humanity has ever known. Assault its trivial failures at your peril.

log in or register to reply

- **Bonafide View**|[1.14.10 @ 1:57PM](#)|#

Dear Erinca, It is the people of this country who have been free to pursue their dreams through hard work that have given us such a good life. The role of the government is to keep things civil so that we can continue to do so. Believe in bureaucracy at your peril. I'd rather be poor and proud than take money from a hard-worker at McDonalds paying for my pension.

log in or register to reply

- **gao xia en**|[2.22.10 @ 11:14AM](#)|#

I'd get more benefit from my tax dollars if I threw them in the fireplace and burned them for heat. I'd pay HIGHER taxes to get the government to stop doing most of what it does.

log in or register to reply

- **Patrick Tempel**|[2.23.10 @ 1:08PM](#)|#

Income wouldn't come in very smoothly without people working to provide for the common good. Would you rather live in anarchy, like Somalia? People employed by governments work and pay taxes like everyone else. They're entitled to what they have negotiated.

log in or register to reply

• **Rick**|[1.12.10 @ 8:27PM](#)|#

What about Section 1 of the 14th Amendment?

"...nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

I take this to mean the law should treat everyone equally, regardless of skin color or personal income. This includes tax law.

Take Measures 66 & 67 on the ballot in Oregon right now. Public service unions and Salem democrats want to retroactively tax "rich people" more and phase out the Federal tax deductions on their state taxes.

The other measure would retroactively tax all businesses based on sales volume, not profit.

Tell me where in the Constitution does it legally say robbing Peter (businesses) to pay Paul (the public unions in this instance) is justified?

Based on the 14th, just singling out "rich people" is unconstitutional.

I point out the 14th Amendment was written after the 13th, that one about slavery and involuntary servitude.

Also, the 5th Amendment makes for good reading too... "nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation".

Isn't money earned from free enterprise and labor private property?

log in or register to reply

• **ericinca**|[1.14.10 @ 2:28AM](#)|#

It's not "equal protection" to tax someone with no money at the same rate as someone with millions of dollars. The consequences of said tax are far from equal; moreover, the two people are not benefiting equally from a social infrastructure that makes wealth possible in the first place. Those who benefit more should pay more to protect the very system that has facilitated their success.

It's extraordinary to me that we now live in world where our own citizens repudiate progressive tax. Do you know that Eisenhower (Republican) taxed the wealthiest Americans at 91% ?! And that during the 1950s, the most prosperous decade in our history.

log in or register to reply

- **Patrick Tempel**[|2.23.10 @ 1:13PM|](#)#

Exactly, too many people fail to see without government services there would be no income for anyone.

log in or register to reply

- **Mojine**[|2.24.10 @ 9:58AM|](#)#

You are sadly misinformed.

log in or register to reply

- **Glock8651**[|1.31.10 @ 6:48AM|](#)#

There is no constitutional basis for the federal government to directly tax American citizens. Direct taxes on wages are illegal unless the federal government evenly apportions such amongst all U.S. citizens.

That's why there are a huge number of tax cheats working for the federal government! What do you wanna bet that none of those tax cheats did a single thing to lower their tax liabilities!

The federal government can only indirectly tax a citizen; i.e., "indirectly" meaning the likes of excise taxes, gasoline taxes, etc. where the citizens have choices and can choose to opt out.

log in or register to reply

- **Your Mom**[|1.13.10 @ 1:09AM|](#)#

You're a total ---hat, Old Mexican.

Did you know that Adam Smith, whose work our capitalistic society is based on, in his "Invisible Hand" advocated that the wealthy in our society prop up the less fortunate?

Do you know why this? Because you're a greedy, amoral ---hole if you think that you should get to live a life of lavish luxury while the poor and unfortunate suffer and die due to lack of healthcare, food or shelter.

Not all taxes are good, not all welfare is good. Our system isn't perfect, it is far, far from it. It is, however, ludicrous and ignorant of you to imply that 'intellectuals' and so-called 'tax consumers' are bad or wrong. Yea, there are lazy people who take advantage of the welfare state. But there are also greedy mother----ers who exploit the hell out of the less fortunate, and that is far from right.

log in or register to reply

- **Diane**[2.3.10 @ 10:26AM](#)|#

"Tax consumers" as you say, still pay taxes. I am a government employee working in Human Resources, and I make less than my private sector counterparts. However, we do have better benefits. That is the only way we can get qualified people to work for us. And yes, we pay income, sales, property and all other taxes just like everyone else.

log in or register to reply

- **Mojine**[2.24.10 @ 10:11AM](#)|#

You pay taxes with what, exactly? You fail to see that your so called taxpaying could, at best, be characterized as a partial rebate of your tax CONSUMPTION. And we, who must produce something of value that others willingly pay for, are FORCED to pay you for whatever "service" you provide.

log in or register to reply

- **Charles Sainte Claire**[8.25.10 @ 10:02PM](#)|#

Utter nonsense. I get paid for work. After I get paid the money is mine. It doesn't matter where the money comes from. And the work I do does in fact have worth to the country.

log in or register to reply

- **Charles Sainte Claire**[8.25.10 @ 10:02PM](#)|#

Utter nonsense. I get paid for work. After I get paid the money is mine. It doesn't matter where the money comes from. And the work I do does in fact have worth to the country.

log in or register to reply

- **Tim from Philly**[1.12.10 @ 12:57PM](#)|#

When you can't change things at the ballot box, it it time to use the bullet box. If the tax feeders start dying in great numbers we will get some "Hope and Change".

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[|1.12.10 @ 1:10PM|](#)#

Tim,

The tax consumers have most of the guns - why do you think the tax consumers have always tried to disarm the tax producers? Remember that your "formidable" army has billions of dollars of (interestingly enough) "Urban Warfare" equipment and training. Why do you think an army purported to exist for the defense of the nation would have that?

There is an alternative, but requires even MORE guts than simply grabbing your flintlock at the call of arms, and that is:

To stop acquiescing to the requests of the tax consumers. Tax producers MUST STOP producing, all at once. The tax consumers do not know how to plow land or milk cows - oh, they WILL fight back, even try to enslave some of the tax producers, but to no avail.

Gandhi did it - Americans can do it, too.

log in or register to reply

- **Sarah**[|1.12.10 @ 2:01PM|](#)#

Amen, Old Mexican. We will all be John Galt when we finally refuse to serve and stop producing.

log in or register to reply

- **zoltan**[|1.12.10 @ 2:24PM|](#)#

LOL, maybe when "we" decide to stop bitching about it on message boards.

log in or register to reply

- **Citizen Nothing**[|1.12.10 @ 3:12PM|](#)#

Ya know what's worse than the bitching?
Bitching about bitching.

log in or register to reply

- **Citizen Nothing**[|1.12.10 @ 3:13PM|](#)#

And then there's bitching about bitching about bitching.

log in or register to reply

- [zoltan|1.12.10 @ 10:36PM|#](#)

I could keep going. I seriously thought I was going to get a "DRINK!" to that comment. Instead, I got a pleasant +1.

[log in or register to reply](#)

- [Old Mexican|1.12.10 @ 3:18PM|#](#)

Sarah,

It just needs something as simple as stopping using the FRN and paying taxes. Nobody said the Tax Consumers will not fight back, but the alternative is becoming their drones.

[log in or register to reply](#)

- [John and Dagny Galt|1.14.10 @ 10:27AM|#](#)

Dearest Sarah and all,

Please read Tom Baugh's new book *Starving The Monkeys* today. It is awesome and is indeed the new, shortened, and much improved *Atlas Shrugged!*

Sincerely,

John and Dagny Galt

Atlas Shrugged, Owners Manual For The Universe!(tm)

.

[log in or register to reply](#)

- [anonymous|1.12.10 @ 2:41PM|#](#)

Not sure killing someone for having a job widely viewed as legitimate is going to be seen as "execution" rather than "terrorism". Not to mention that you're lumping people into a huge group without any consideration of the relative honesty or dishonesty of their actions, much less worthiness of capital punishment. It's actually rather collectivist.

There are plenty of non-violent means to protest -- they may eventually lead to violent reprisal by the state, but the longer you stick to nonviolence, the more popular moral sanction you will have (and, critically, the more deathworthy individual targets you will have identified) when the time for retaliation does arrive.

[log in or register to reply](#)

- [Rick|1.12.10 @ 8:30PM|#](#)

Violent revolution rarely leads to a good government.

log in or register to reply

- **James**[|1.13.10 @ 9:43PM|](#)#

Yeah, just ask George Washington.

log in or register to reply

- **Dr. Hook**[|1.19.10 @ 12:41PM|](#)#

Keyword here, I believe, was "rarely".

log in or register to reply

- **TrickyVic**[|1.12.10 @ 1:10PM|](#)#

I guess it's why CA's first lady would ignore traffic laws, she would still be getting away with it if it wasn't for that meddling TMZ.

log in or register to reply

- **Paul**[|1.12.10 @ 6:38PM|](#)#

LEAVE BRITNEY ALONE!

log in or register to reply

- **Dane**[|1.12.10 @ 1:26PM|](#)#

Another trick used by civil servants is to run up their overtime the final year before they retire. In many cases, that dramatically increases their retirement pensions.

log in or register to reply

- **parclair**[|2.27.10 @ 3:20PM|](#)#

At least in CA, overtime does not accrue to pension benefits. In fact, overtime is gravy to the state, since it has to pay no benefits on the time.

log in or register to reply

- **Bill Dalasio**[|1.12.10 @ 1:38PM|](#)#

Bigger government means more government employees. Those employees then become a permanent lobby for continual government growth.

That isn't a sustainable situation. A non-wealth-generating sector (or one consuming more than its marginal production) can either grow in scope or grow in per capita consumption. It can't indefinitely do both. Eventually, even barring the productive sectors "going Galt", the parasitic sector runs out of feed. Of course, what happens in the interim and at expiration is another story.

log in or register to reply

• **Steve**[1.12.10 @ 1:52PM](#)|#

As a member of the fed gov't (military), gotta say this struck a cord and doesn't necessarily make me feel very proud of my profession. The "Chief's disease" is alive and well in the military with a very deliberate attempt by nearly everyone retiring or separating from the military to pad their med records and shoot for the stars as far as disability goes, at the expense of every taxpayer and genuinely wounded/disabled veterans. My most recent boss (full colonel), just retired and squeezed out a 90% disability... pretty shocking when you consider the guy spends every morning in the gym lifting heavy. Freakin shameful...

log in or register to reply

• **The Gobbler**[1.12.10 @ 2:01PM](#)|#

It's common in the private sector as well. People on the verge of retirement try to get any long-term disability as a work-related injury. If successful, even after they retire it's considered a worker's comp injury and covered 100% by worker's comp.

log in or register to reply

• **Steve**[1.12.10 @ 3:53PM](#)|#

I should clarify: it's not that the departing folks on their own seek out the entitlements, they are told to in various forums including "transition assistance" programs that 'here's what you do' and their medical records are reviewed and suggestions made to squeeze out as much as possible.

log in or register to reply

• **Maverick**[1.12.10 @ 5:27PM](#)|#

I recently separated and remember the leech that gave the VA disability brief at my "mandatory" transition class. 5'2", 200 lbs of heart attack waiting to happen. She was an admin clerk but had milked the system to receive 100% disability for various ailments:

nerve damage, hypertension, hearing damage, etc. During a break, some friends and I saw her smoking and then purchasing a couple of the 2-liter bottles of Coke. Her husband had 80%+ disability because he blew out his knees by being drunk-softball-guy. Her daughter=70%+ also.

Yet, here she was, working for the VA and teaching a roomful of mostly and healthy under-25-year-olds how to "game" the system. A better instructor for this purpose couldn't have been imagined. and like she kept saying, "I didn't make the rules, Congress did."

log in or register to reply

- **Rick**[1.12.10 @ 8:34PM](#)#

My grandfather used to call it "Cadillac welfare" or "white trash welfare". And my grandfather was a redneck farmer from WVA.

log in or register to reply

- **Paul**[1.12.10 @ 6:42PM](#)#

I've met dozens of Union private sector people that do that... and of course there are ex-military people in my own family who actually got the disability thing thrown at them by a doctor so they they took it. But regular private sector folks... like, me-- whipping a worker's comp injury ten minutes before retirement? Never happen.

log in or register to reply

- **thumbs up**[1.12.10 @ 2:21PM](#)#

From Wikipedia:

A quote attributed to Margaret Thatcher goes along the lines of

"The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money [to spend]."

or

"Eventually, Socialists run out of other peoples' money [to spend]."

log in or register to reply

- **Kroneborge**[1.12.10 @ 2:44PM](#)#

Great article. IMO, either government employees should NOT be allowed to have unions (preferable) OR they should not be allowed to lobby/enrorse etc.

You shouldn't be able to pick your boss when someone else is paying the tab of your wages.

log in or register to reply

- **Rick**[|1.12.10 @ 8:36PM](#)|#

Or maybe banned from voting? Too radical?

log in or register to reply

- **marisman**[|1.12.10 @ 3:56PM](#)|#

I am not completely anti-union - unions have their purpose. BUT, unionization of government employees should be outlawed. It is an inherently unbalanced (no competition) scenario that as we see no is too open for corruption.

When the public sector employees become such a large bloc of overall voters, they have the ability to dominate the remaining private sector taxpayers demanding ever more compensation. All they have to do is promise votes to the politicians who can get it done.

log in or register to reply

- **Rick**[|1.12.10 @ 8:35PM](#)|#

Measures 66 & 67 on the Oregon ballot right now are a good example of that.

log in or register to reply

- **Silentz**[|1.13.10 @ 12:57AM](#)|#

Re: 66 and 67

What amazes me is that politicians know that the best way to get people to stop doing something you don't want them to do is to tax the crap out of it (i.e. smoking, trans fats, gasoline, etc.), but this fact escapes them when they want to tax things like income and business. They're still gonna end up with less of it. Not more.

log in or register to reply

- **Bill Ross**[|1.12.10 @ 4:41PM](#)|#

Class war starts when the "rule of law" (All persons are to be treated equally, in terms of rights and responsibility, by law) is rationalized away. For our "rulers", it is "rule by divide and conquer", the creation of inter-group conflict, which they profit from. The

chaos this creates also deflects attention from our general fleeing. Anyone who thinks power will "fix" the system is totally deluded:

log in or register to reply

- **Pablo**[1.12.10 @ 4:51PM](#)|#

What pisses me off as much as anything are those little black bumper stickers with the horizontal blue line thru the middle. "Professional courtesy."

log in or register to reply

- **Paul**[1.12.10 @ 6:48PM](#)|#

Put one on your car.

log in or register to reply

- **Pablo**[1.13.10 @ 10:11AM](#)|#

Good idea, maybe I have a third cousin somewhere who is a cop.

log in or register to reply

- **gao xia en**[2.22.10 @ 11:24AM](#)|#

A Teamsters bumper sticker saved me from a couple of tickets.

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[1.12.10 @ 4:59PM](#)|#

[Totalitarian "Synchronization" — Germany 1933 and USA 2010](#)

By William Grigg January 12, 2010

The German National Socialists used the term Gleichschaltung to describe the "coordination" or "synchronization" of all government functions by centralizing power in the Chief Executive. This process was carried out through a series of executive decrees supposedly authorized by the 1933 Enabling Act, formally known as the "Law for Removing the Distress of People and Reich."

The September 14, 2001 "Authorization for Use of Military Force" has served a similar function for both George W. Bush and Barack Obama. That measure has been invoked to justify the war in Iraq, the

institutionalization of torture, the presidential designation of individuals as “unlawful enemy combatants,” the summary execution of suspected terrorists by means of unmanned Predator drones, and other tyrannical exercises of presidential “authority” in the context of the “war on terror.”

Yesterday (January 11), Barack Obama added another critical element to the architecture of wartime presidential dictatorship by signing an executive order establishing a “Council of Governors” for the supposed purpose of strengthening federal-state “partnership” in military and homeland security affairs.

The body would consist of a bipartisan panel of ten state governors who will “meet at the call” of various executive functionaries, including the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security to assist the Supreme Leader in carrying out the “synchronization” — again, what the Nazis called Gleichschaltung — “and integration of State and Federal military activities in the United States.”

According to an official White House press release, this new body will be invaluable in the effort to “relieve the distress of the people and Reich.” No, not really; the statement actually said that the Council “will provide an invaluable Senior Administration forum for exchanging views with State and local officials on strengthening our National resilience and the homeland defense and civil support challenges facing our Nation today and in the future.” Which, come to think of it, is pretty much the same thing.

Taken by itself, this executive order does little more than add another layer of bureaucracy dealing with the use of the National Guard. It should be remembered, however, that in 2006 Congress turned the National Guard into something akin to a [Praetorian Guard](#) to be used — whether at home or abroad — as the president desires. This helps explain an obvious and ominous change in the Guard’s definition of its mission and responsibilities, which include hands-on involvement in domestic law enforcement.

It’s also worth pointing out that this new Council represents yet another avenue through which the president can circumvent congressional resistance to military adventurism, in the highly unlikely event that such resistance were to coalesce.

While it’s true that Obama’s executive order will not immediately result in troops flooding our cities and detention camps springing from the soil, it represents a critical milestone on the road to undisguised dictatorship.

Welcome to the People's Democratic Republic of America.

log in or register to reply

- **Charles**[1.12.10 @ 5:06PM](#)|#

The only thing worse than fascism is long block quotes in blog comments.

log in or register to reply

- **Old Mexican**[1.12.10 @ 5:16PM](#)|#

At least long block quotes get to run the trains on time!

log in or register to reply

- **gao xia en**[2.22.10 @ 11:28AM](#)|#

The USSA.

log in or register to reply

- **JR**[1.12.10 @ 6:14PM](#)|#

This is going to get ugly.

log in or register to reply

- **Some Guy**[1.12.10 @ 8:26PM](#)|#

Under this plan, at age 50 many categories of public employees are eligible for 3 percent of their final year's pay multiplied by the number of years they've worked. So if a police officer starts working at age 20, he can retire at 50 with 90 percent of his final salary until he dies, and then his spouse receives that money for the rest of her life. Even during the economic crisis, "3 percent at 50" and the forces behind it have only become more entrenched.

Just someone PLEASE tell me that this is at least capped at 100%. It doesn't even have to be true, I just want to hear it.

log in or register to reply

- **Rick**[1.12.10 @ 8:45PM](#)|#

I remember something like this when reading Freedman awhile back... something about how, "women will marry men not for love or any sort of genuine affection or because he's a good man, but just because he has a job with a pension and benefits."

I'm paraphrasing.

Perhaps it was in "Road to Serfdom"?

log in or register to reply

- **Robert**|[1.12.10 @ 9:26PM](#)|#

Well, everyone's eligible to become a gov't employee, so what are you complaining about? It's not as if it's hereditary. You have the choice of applying to work in the gov't sector. You may not be hired, but you had a chance along with everyone else.

log in or register to reply

- **People Power Hour**|[1.12.10 @ 9:48PM](#)|#

Isn't that like saying you had a right to be a well-paid criminal, but since you didn't, quit bitching about criminals?

log in or register to reply

- **october**|[1.13.10 @ 9:43PM](#)|#

That would be great if it were true. In real life in order to get one of those jobs you have to have a brother,sister,mother,dad,cousin, you get the idea,to get a foot in the door.That's just the way it works.

log in or register to reply

- **Patrick Tempel**|[2.23.10 @ 1:29PM](#)|#

I don't know which state you're from but I got my job on my own. I started out part time on every shift and day that where I was needed .I went back to school on my own time and gradually went up the ladder.I am retired now and get about half of what I was earning back then.

log in or register to reply

- **Mojine**|[2.24.10 @ 10:31AM](#)|#

So, you're not only an economic illiterate, but a leech as well? Cognitive dissonance, anyone?

log in or register to reply

- **Glock8651**|[1.31.10 @ 7:08AM](#)|#

Hooray for government employees! (Just kidding)!

Seriously, I want to know exactly what is expected of this "growing" government? We don't produce anything in this country anymore; we are now a nation of "services." So, this growing government's work has nothing to do with products or exports.

The only thing this growing government could possibly be working on concerns work generated by the welfare state.

Not sure if the welfare state is in need of such a large amount of supervision.

Just a wild thought: Perhaps this Obama fellow plans to use the government, itself, to control the lowly, non-government peons?

I really don't like that idea - although it does seem highly plausible.

log in or register to reply

- **ComradeZero**|[1.12.10 @ 9:52PM](#)|#

But if you don't have high salaries and perk you can't get the top talent. All banks know that!

log in or register to reply

- **jpocali**|[1.12.10 @ 10:31PM](#)|#

This makes me bawl so much.

log in or register to reply

- **GreginOz**|[1.12.10 @ 11:34PM](#)|#

Any one remember Ancient Rome or Byzantium? There is a tipping point in the failings of Empire. A phrase I just read in Variable Star (started by Heinlein, finished by Spider Robinson, great Sci-fi!) comes to mind. "The world ended not with a whim but with a banker"!!!

log in or register to reply

- **Almanian**|[1.13.10 @ 2:40AM](#)|#

I don't remember Ancient Rome or Byzantium - they were just a tick before my time.

log in or register to reply

- **grahampink**[|1.13.10 @ 1:46AM](#)|#

Dang, when your economy collapses through multi-trillion dollar debt, multi-trillion dollar unfunded liabilities, hyper-inflation and stagnant growth, it will not be a pretty sight.

This. Will. Not. End. Well.

log in or register to reply

- **Almanian - MI**[|1.13.10 @ 2:45AM](#)|#

I'm claiming disability due to high blood pressure caused from 33 years and counting of paying taxes. And having to endure the stress of 8 years with Jennifer Granholm as governor of my ---hole state. THAT'LL learn 'em.

log in or register to reply

- **Jenna**[|1.13.10 @ 3:59AM](#)|#

As a California taxpayer working in the private sector, this article made me physically ill. The parasite has officially killed the host, and the state is going over the cliff.

log in or register to reply

- **theillinoisguy**[|1.13.10 @ 6:31AM](#)|#

The dems love class warfare, and they play that card repeatedly. They create a crisis, blow it out of proportion, then take advantage of the situation.

log in or register to reply

- **Bill Sanford**[|1.13.10 @ 6:43AM](#)|#

Boy, how true this is! A few years ago I won a local election... left the Corporate world to work in local government.

I have NEVER seen such arrogance, disdain for their CUSTOMERS, and sense of privilege. I am at continual conflict with the Govt. bureaucracy... that reports to me!

log in or register to reply

- **Ken**[|1.13.10 @ 7:21AM](#)|#

As a prosecutor who has had my car keyed, tires flattened and been followed home I support the "perk" of having my license plate blocked. After DMV stopped giving out the

information to the public the larger street gangs hired Private Investigators to get the home address info. P. I.s are now prevented from getting the info. Police agencies are not prohibited from getting the information. If you speed, run a red light etc. then you can still receive a ticket. I have co workers who have been cited and had to pay the same fines as everyone else.

log in or register to reply

- **Bill McGonigle**[|1.13.10 @ 1:17PM|](#)#

You're concerned about your fellow government employees selling out your home address if it were possible?

log in or register to reply

- **Ken**[|1.13.10 @ 7:25AM|](#)#

I am painfully aware that SOME public employees earn more money than the general public. Most prosecutors earn substantially less than the criminal defense attorneys. In our county the public defenders receive 4% more than deputy district attorneys. The private criminal defense attorneys earn substantially more than either of public employees.

log in or register to reply

- **Ronnie Schreiber**[|1.20.10 @ 9:03PM|](#)#

The average compensation of ALL federal non-military non-postal employees is about double what people in the private sector average.

log in or register to reply

- **Patrick** [|2.23.10 @ 1:36PM|](#)#

Could I get a link for that statistic?

log in or register to reply

- **Ken**[|1.13.10 @ 7:33AM|](#)#

Very few people start work at the age of twenty and remain at the same job for the next 30 years. I would love to see some statistics documenting how many people actually retire at 50 with full pensions. In the case of cops and firefighters that would mean 30 years of working most holidays, nights weekends, kid's birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions etc. What is the cost of having to work a graveyard shift, come to court immediately after and testify, go home to be a good spouse, parent and then go back to

work that night? If it was all benefits and no downside then there would be a lot more people who would be applying.

log in or register to reply

- **Ronnie Schreiber**[|1.20.10 @ 9:08PM|#](#)

You mean like the cop in suburban Detroit who makes more than \$80K/yr in overtime pay? He has enough seniority to pick his shift so he works the third shift and in one year gave out almost 2,400 tickets for running stop signs. Every ticket he writes is overtime for him, since he gets paid to come to court offshift. When a local tv crew did a story about him, the fat slob just smirked at the camera.

Tell us, when you get pulled over for a traffic stop, do you hand the cop your prosecutor's ID?

log in or register to reply

- **gao xia en**[|2.22.10 @ 11:37AM|#](#)

Us private sector workers NEVER have to put up with that stuff, right? Then we get ---- canned instead of a pension.

log in or register to reply

- **Fred**[|1.13.10 @ 9:02AM|#](#)

"In 1947, Hodges writes, 78 percent of the national income went to the private sector, 16 percent to the federal sector, and 6 percent to the state and local government sector. Now 54 percent of the economy is private, 28 percent goes to the feds, and 18 percent goes to state and local governments. The trend lines are ominous."

Looking at those numbers, and then adding in the huge number of people dependent on direct government financial support of one type or another, along with all the folks in the non-profit sector and those working on government contracts, it becomes pretty clear that the United States has ceased to have anything even remotely like a market economy. The implications for the future are not promising in a democracy comprised of an electorate of government dependents. Such depressing fundamental statistics on the structure of our economy indicate that the recent financial crisis is likely just the beginning of a long and politically contentious economic decline with increasing levels of corruption in all aspects of our society.

log in or register to reply

- **mike flynn**[|1.13.10 @ 9:39AM|#](#)

is it gov't overreach, or private sector failure to create meaningful, well paid jobs that has inverted the pay and perks and pension picture to where gov't jobs are more attractive?

the american worker is in a china syndrome. our pay will continue to deteriorate until it reaches equilibrium with india and china. is that the kind of place the moneyed elites want to live in?

more power to the regular guys getting the gov't jobs.

log in or register to reply

• **Larsky**|[1.13.10 @ 9:54AM](#)|#

"If this system is left to grow unchecked, we will end up with a pale imitation of the free society envisioned by the Founders."

It will remain unchecked as there is not the will or ability to stop it short of 1) bankruptcy, 2)revolution, or 3)a drift into a complacent third world mind set with ever more power to the edutcated elites who will become ever more powerful and as we know: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (See; the EUtopia now in session and growing).

I would place a sizeable sum on door #3.

Have a nice Brave New World.

Thanks

log in or register to reply

• **Larsky**|[1.13.10 @ 10:37AM](#)|#

There is some of this, though less savory, on another scale on the tax consumer side.

I work with less fortunate people of diverse heritage (white, black, brown, etc.) who have devised infinite schemes whereby an able bodied man/woman can get on the dole with SSI, SSI disability, food stamps, etc. It is a high art form. The back usually goes first, but there are a myriad of physical and mental schemes that work. The best doctor to go to receive SSI is well known in the community.

SSI, \$770 per month, is often supplemented by a little dealing on the side in under the counter goods, services and occasionally drug sales. Selling Grandma's Vicoden subscription drugs is hot stuff. And from my police friends I understand that cashing in food stamp cards at willing convenience stores for 10 cents on the dollar is a multi-million dollar growth business.

Indeed some of these afflicted souls are legitimate, but in my experience a vast number of the SSI folks have chosen their lives through incredibly daily bad choices.

I have absolutely no problem with helping the working poor or people down on their luck, but have issues with healthy young people who have decided to game the system to live in squalor and have babies with multiple men and women.

These are all too often the folks filling up our jails with their bad daily decisions whether dropping out of school, not willing to work at low pay-low skill jobs or deciding to take no effective birth control (male and female). There is no plan or future in this world, only getting up sometime during the day or night and getting on with what the next minute brings.

I realize the average person has no knowledge of the underbelly of society and I'm sure the educated elites believe that people like myself discussing this are the real problem and that is OK with me.

All the same it is both sad and annoying to see this underbelly passed on from generation to generation with no end in sight and the Federal Government now demanding that there should be a greater transfer of wealth to help these wayward souls.

My heart goes out to these poor restless souls, but my wallet,,not so much.

Thanks.

log in or register to reply

- **october**[|1.13.10 @ 10:08PM|](#)#

The first post that I've read here that makes alot of sense.

log in or register to reply

- **parclair**[|2.27.10 @ 3:28PM|](#)#

A long time ago, I realized that in any given category, 50 percent are below average. I've been watching disasters, and come to the conclusion that 80 percent of us will always have to help the remaining 20 percent. (That is, if we are actively compassionate.)

log in or register to reply

- **Karl**[|1.13.10 @ 12:01PM|](#)#

Public pensions setting up for \$2 Trillion bailout

log in or register to reply

- **Red in Denver**[|1.13.10 @ 12:57PM|#](#)

It seems all politicians do whatever they want to do with impunity. Although in the internet age, there does seem more potential for backlash, the best we can do is vote them out of office AFTER they've passed whatever legislation they want.

There should be a way we could chop them off at the knees BEFORE they can get their special deals pushed through.

log in or register to reply

- **Kate**[|1.13.10 @ 3:17PM|#](#)

What to do...what to do. I don't know about you but it is making a lot more sense to just quit working so hard, like just work part time, get in a low low tax bracket and take it easier. A lot easier. Especially feasible when the government starts paying for our health care. While I might not do this, I see many many young people adopting this "strategy". If you can't beat em, join em. There is no way they are going to put in 10 hour days to pay for lavish pensions, cadillac healthcare and perks for government workers. They would sooner just work at some coffee place and spend the rest of the day hanging out. And so goes the recession/depression.

log in or register to reply

- **Steve Premo**[|1.13.10 @ 3:34PM|#](#)

Here's one data point: I am a lawyer who has been working for the government for over 20 years. I am not in a union, and not protected by civil service. I am at the top of my pay scale, but although I have close to 30 years experience as a lawyer, I am paid less than many large firms typically pay people just out of law school. I do, though, have generous leave, benefits, and retirement.

So I am one of the "traditionalists," I guess, in that I am paid considerably less than lawyers in the private sector, but I stay because I enjoy the work, and also because I have been promised a generous retirement package. If my retirement benefits were cut, I would consider that a breach of the agreement that I have been faithfully performing for many years.

log in or register to reply

- **Steve Premo**[|1.13.10 @ 3:37PM|#](#)

By the way, I am in California.

log in or register to reply

- **John and Dagny Galt**[1.14.10 @ 10:46AM](#)|#

Dear Steve,

You are a bureaucrat, a tax feeder, and a vital component of the Mobocracy Looter Minions. Taxation is theft and robbery under some supposed color of law. Your supposed retirement package will only materialize if you continue to support the theft, robbery, and looting of others...to get what you mistakenly attempted to contract for.

You should probably read *Starving The Monkeys* and prepare to provide for yourself when the dollar fails, the stock market collapses, and the Mobocracy Looter Minions take to the streets to riot, loot, and burn the cities while hanging the bureaucrats, jackboots, and mercenaries from the lampposts.

Hey, nothing personal...you can, after all, quit anytime you voluntarily choose and join the rest of the Students and Advocates of the Philosophically Mature Non-Aggression Principle in their peaceful voluntaryist coexistence with each and every other Individual Sovereign Human Being on the planet.

Always remember that there are only two types of human beings

Those that want to be left alone

And those that refuse to do so while they still breathe

And what the looter fears most is being refused, repelled, and destroyed when they attempt their looting which is why they want all their potential victims disarmed and defenseless.

Start *Starving The Monkeys* Today!

Sincerely,

John and Dagny Galt

Atlas Shrugged, Owners Manual For The Universe!(tm)

.

log in or register to reply

- **Steve Premo**[1.14.10 @ 1:32PM](#)|#

You think taxation is theft? I can't disagree, but the real problem isn't people like me, who help ensure that the courts properly protect property rights, constitutional rights, and personal liberty. The big problem is the benefit that the government bestows on some players in the market, distorting the market in favor of big businesses. I see the "(tm)" in your post, and I have to say, intellectual "property" rights, including the copyright on the

book you're shilling for, are a big part of the problem. Why not go for a creative commons license instead?

log in or register to reply

• **dt**|[2.3.10 @ 7:14PM](#)|#

Steve,

Most govt. attorneys have traditionally made less. but with the current legal market, you have to KILL yourself to make that extra 30k that just puts you in a higher tax bracket. No job security, no pension and the work life is miserable. By the way, most lawyers don't make much more than 100k; i'm not making that much and I've been practicing for 10 years in the private sector. Now, even those high paying 150k starting jobs for the .01% are disappearing. Why? Because the private industry cannot just keep going into debt. I agree that you took a salary hit for your generation, but in mine, a government job would be a dream. You will lap the new lawyers in pay easily.

log in or register to reply

• **Robert R.**|[1.13.10 @ 4:00PM](#)|#

Part of me can hardly wait to see what happens when the unfolding Greater Depression wipes out tax receipts, cuts off the states from being able to borrow money, and kills the states' ability to PAY all the government workers for years and years. It'll be fun to watch those who chose to make themselves dependent on government try to deal with the iron laws of economics. That would also be the perfect time for the producers of wealth to have already accumulated a nest egg to live off of to "go John Galt" or retire and withdraw all their tax support for the government system, which so many seem to have gone into solely for the purposes of rape, pillage, and plunder. It will be fun to watch the parasites instead get creamed by the depression, although it will suck that many honest people will also get badly hurt.

log in or register to reply

• **John M**|[1.13.10 @ 4:52PM](#)|#

"and other categories of employees from 1,800 state agencies ..."

The other grotesqueries reported in this article aside, that one fact, if true, has completely ruined my day. Further evidence that good productive tax-paying people slept while times were good, minding our own business, and trying to raise our families, all the while the state apparatus metastasized.

log in or register to reply

- **vulgar moralist**[|1.13.10 @ 10:05PM|](#)#

The present trend is to infantilize the electorate and suck up all moral agency into the government. In other words, we are being urged to become Europeans - the US as a kind of mega-Sweden. As in Europe, elections will of course continue -- but since the elites share the rationalist belief that in politics, as in mathematics, there can only be one right answer, elections will produce fewer and fewer real alternatives.

None of this is fated, though. See "A return to first principles: The argument from morality":

[log in or register to reply](#)

- **Creek Specter**[|1.13.10 @ 10:13PM|](#)#

Oh, I'm quite sure that the public servants of France back in 1789 also thought that there was no "political" way to stop them, either.

Our political and union boss classes might want to hope that the guillotine never becomes popular in this country.

[log in or register to reply](#)

- **John and Dagny Galt**[|1.14.10 @ 10:51AM|](#)#

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Sons and Daughters of Liberty,

There are only two types of human beings.

One type just wants everyone to leave everyone else alone and these humans are students and advocates of the Philosophically Mature Non-Aggression Principle.

The other type refuses to leave others alone and these humans are the Mobocracy Looter Minions with their hords of bureaucrats, jackboots, and mercenaries that perpetuate the perpetration of the loot and booty gravy-train. Please help us and yourselves by ending the rob-peter-to-buy-paul's-vote bread and circuses of the doomed Amerikan Empire.

You are either the one...or the other.

The John Galt Solution of Starving The Monkeys is the only solution. Stop funding and forging your own chains and shackles. What are you leaving for your children, grandchildren, and humanity!?!

The Mobocracy Looter Minions must be allowed to consume everything around them, then each other, and finally themselves. There is no other way. Ayn Rand wrote about it over fifty years ago and it rings as soundly today as it did then.

Get your copy of Starving The Monkeys by Tom Baugh today, before the book is banned and the author is hunted down and Vince Fostered!

Sincerely,
John and Dagny Galt
Atlas Shrugged, Owner's Manual For The Universe!(tm)

.

log in or register to reply

- **Bill Ross**[|1.14.10 @ 11:36AM|](#)#

@John and Dagny Galt

Wrong terminology. Try: Predator / Prey

Civilizations rise (honesty in control) and fall (predators in control) according to our collective choices or tolerance for others who make choices affecting our fate according to the reality of "Mathematics Of Rule"

log in or register to reply

- **Ratko**[|1.14.10 @ 3:56PM|](#)#

The plates are real, and in at least one individual's case do function as Steven Greenhut described. A friend of mine in L.A., who is the polar opposite of his retired detective brother, has the magical plates in question and he's not shy about advertising them as his "get out of jail free card." Having personally witnessed how effective they are, at least with basic rule violations, his description however seems a little inaccurate. An officer's interest in the vehicle/occupants involved in a violation only lasts until the plates are run, making them more like a vaccine that protects against going to jail in the first place.

The rule of law is usually preferable to the law of rulers, unfortunately the rule of law quickly becomes the latter the moment the rule is not equally applied.

log in or register to reply

- **Suck it up Crybaby**[|1.14.10 @ 10:38PM|](#)#

Jerry Brown is the culprit responsible for the State employees being unionized when he was governor in the 70's. If he is re-elected it will be the death sentence for California socially and financially. They will spend this state into the arms of the federal Government controlling the state. www.suckitupcrybaby.com

log in or register to reply

- **parclair**[|2.27.10 @ 3:32PM|](#)#

Yes, and he got a deal. State employees cannot strike. It's illegal. So, in bargaining it's all based on good faith. Which of course, the state has none of.

log in or register to reply

- **government_worker**[|1.16.10 @ 1:41PM|](#)#

I don't know about any other state, but where I work, we do get less than private sector. We have done research in this area for wage negotiations. Yes we have good benefits, as our management likes to use as a reason why we are paid less than private sector. Usually we have good job security, but lately we've been laying off a significant percentage of the workforce. Just like everywhere else. And I can assure you we are NOT protected by any "shield" of any sort here in Ohio. We have had elected officials on TV getting a field sobriety test on the 11 o'clock news. Which we all found just hilarious! Its pretty much like any other job iv had, with a little bit better benefits, and lots of political bull-crap, but that is expected...

log in or register to reply

- **Ronnie Schreiber**[|1.20.10 @ 9:15PM|](#)#

Significant percentage of the workforce? Really?

Government workers have the lowest unemployment rate of any "industry", 3%.

Where's the unemployment rate higher, in Columbus or in Toledo?

log in or register to reply

- **Clara Brandon**[|1.20.10 @ 3:43PM|](#)#

Steven, You sound very unhappy. If you want a better pension and better salary, and you think government jobs are in that category then why don't you get a government job? Of course, you do have to stay on the job 20 to 30 years, which could pose a problem to you. Cops go out there every day with a gun strapped on to protect idiots like you.

If you think you have it so bad move out of the State, or better yet, move out of the Country, and you may see how good you have it in the good old USA. Several members of my family work in the police/fire departments. I am glad no one can get their phone numbers or addresses. As many crazies as there are today, it is better to be cautious, than wait until someone is killed and then say how was the predator able to get to them by looking up their address or phone number. What is the cost to you for having their identity protected? There will always be a few rogue cops out there who get most of the attention, but compared to the number of cops there are it is a very small number. Maybe

you would like it better in Mexico. There are always going to be exceptions to the rule with some people not doing his/her job whether public or private sector.

Unions have lost much of their power. They are necessary because some companies, prior to unions, treated employees like crap. Maybe you think we should go back to slave days.

We are no longer in 1946, and nothing today is like it was in 1946, many things for the better, a few for the worse. Maybe we can find a time machine to send you back to 1946.

It is good that people, such as yourself, write articles such as this one, because most people have more serious problems, unemployment, losing their homes, illegal immigration, education for their children. Did government cause a lot of these problems? Yes, definitely, but much higher up government, not the police and fire fighters who go out there 24/7 to protect you. If we didn't have bad people and people trying to cheat the system, the number of government employees would decrease greatly. If you want to write an article that points a finger, deservedly, to the top government officials who think they should have control over our lives, then you would have gotten a totally different response to you article.

log in or register to reply

• **Ronnie Schreiber**[1.20.10 @ 9:20PM](#)#

"Cops go out there every day with a gun strapped on to protect idiots like you."

So nice to know that LEOs and their families hold the people who pay their salaries in such high regard.

Just so you know, though, statistically being a garbageman is a more dangerous job than being a cop.

Considering the number of criminal cops there are out there, I'm more worried that police can access my private information than I am that someone might figure out that the driver who did a hit and run on their car is a cop's wife.

Do you think cops and their families should get "professional courtesy" on traffic stops?

log in or register to reply

• **Concerned Taxpayer**[1.22.10 @ 11:04AM](#)#

Sounds like he wrote the book "How to Lie Using Selective Statistics."

log in or register to reply

- [allan|1.23.10 @ 10:45PM|#](#)

How right you are! This guy is living on a different planet.

log in or register to reply

- [Chief1942|1.29.10 @ 3:52PM|#](#)

Everything in that article is a reality. Having said that, I would direct any complaints to the voters who keep electing politicians who are in the pockets of Public Service Employee unions, usually and historically Democrats. One need only read the article and excise out instances when the "trend" was supported and promoted by Democratic legislators to see precisely where the problem is. The GOP is eternally accused of being in bed with corporate America, and to some degree that accusation has merit, but it is no secret as to who the unions are beholdng to and vice versa. Had Mr. Greenhut and others of his kind, been as focused on this issue when they were championing their progressive/socialists candidates, then perhaps it would never have reached this juncture. But once a Liberal Left ideologue, imbued with all the ideological Leftist trappings one receives in J-School, gets access to the public arena via the MSM, they historically suppress the truth in favor of ideology. Too bad it took Mr.Greenhut so long to actually wake up. Unfortunately , as even he states, it may be too late.

log in or register to reply

- [Robert G Sorbet|2.3.10 @ 8:48PM|#](#)

I do not doubt that 20% to 30% percent of workers in the federal government workforce have spouses also being employed by the federal government. Unfortunately it is impossible to get true statistics because no one in the government keeps track. I thought the federal government was all about diversity.

log in or register to reply

- [John Shaplin|2.23.10 @ 7:23AM|#](#)

State and Municipal employees vote in far larger percentages than any other group. They usually hold the balance of power in every election. No candidate who directly advocates cutting their perks or power can expect to win. So, it is the indifference and apathy of the public and the opportunism of politicians that is driving this problem, not-withstanding the usual complaints about "Big Government" or questionable doctrines about so-called "free market" capitalism.

log in or register to reply

- [Grant Canyon|2.23.10 @ 9:35AM|#](#)

If the problem is that public workers are doing better than private workers, the problem isn't with the public workers or their unions or the federal government, or any of that nonsense. It is the fact that the so-called free-traders (or is it "free traitors") have destroyed the US economy by continuing to screw over American workers, in order to stuff money into their filthy, already overstuffed pockets. If real wages in the private sector hadn't been stagnant for a generation, as the rich got richer by taking the money from the poor and middle class, there wouldn't be this disparity.

[log in or register to reply](#)

• **Mark**[2.23.10 @ 10:54AM](#)|#

I find it amusing that all these folks who don't want to pay taxes, are the first to bitch when they dial 9-1-1 and it takes the paramedics more than three minutes to show up.

[log in or register to reply](#)

• **Michael**[2.23.10 @ 6:58PM](#)|#

So...people want poor public services? Bad roads? Slow paramedics? Inadequate fire stations? No interstate system? No airline regulators making sure our planes stay up? Or do you only want those if they are garrisoned with underpaid, poorly trained private sector drop-outs? I'm sure you all hate the unemployment that is paying for 1 in 10 of your internet connections right now. I am sure you also hate anti-spam regulations or the federal rescue workers that dig you out of your house that wrecked by a tornado. Or who makes sure the power companies get the lights back on in a disaster.

Ah, I get it! You imagine that government workers just push paper! When you drive to work today, think about who built the road, who mandated the seat belt and the airbag, who maintain quality checks on your vehicle, who enacted traffic control, who built the water and power mains below the street that give you fresh water and adequate power, who built the treatment plant that cleans that water, who brought the whole South into the modern era (TVA, anyone?), who set up the streetlights, who responds to traffic accidents, who manages the air traffic you see above you, who built that bridge you just passed over and the drainage ditch that keeps water from flooding the road? Who inspects concrete and asphalt, making sure it's safer than the cheap alternatives private contractors try to slip in? Who made sure 95% of you could read and write on this comment section? No, it's not some secret nefarious plotting Government...it's little "G" government, regular folks working day in and day out making sure that the daily infrastructure of life goes and you get to do what you want without worrying about if your car will get stuck in the mud because no one paved the town's roads. They make a few bucks, some more and some less than other jobs, but why begrudge them it? You use their products. Most folks on here are just dishonest about their dependence on them.

[log in or register to reply](#)

- **Martin**[|2.24.10 @ 6:53AM|#](#)

I suppose those Public Sector pensions do look pretty good, especially if you're one of those who followed the 'market is always right' mantra and saw their privately invested pensions go down the tubes along with the stock market. Meanwhile, the rugged individualist free marketeers in the financial services industry kept their jobs, paid themselves bonuses and got huge government bail-outs.

Oh, and the main reason that George W "preside[d] over an economy in which federal government employment rose more rapidly than employment in the private sector" was his terrible economic policies. Isn't it interesting that the only time that the budget starts to look balanced is under those thieving, feckless, tax-and-spend Democrats?

Halliburton shares all-round!

log in or register to reply

- **David Edelberg**[|2.24.10 @ 11:36AM|#](#)

The pensions may be too high and unfairly distributed but the employees are entitled to them. California needed better actuaries to get the numbers right.

The real "looters of the public treasurer" are the citizens of California who endlessly voted against tax increases so their treasury never was able to get replenished.

Now that their state is going down the tubes, everyone wants a fall guy. "Let's sock it those retirees! Let's stop their pensions!" Oh, Jeez!

log in or register to reply

- **Dave Minnich**[|2.24.10 @ 1:52PM|#](#)

-Don't pay taxes

-Don't pay debts

-Be as unproductive as possible

-Then let the evil f----- fall

No bullets needed. Leaderless Passive-Aggressive resistance.

log in or register to reply

- **Michael Dorfman**[|2.26.10 @ 8:26PM|#](#)

We cannot expect the Labor Unions to be better and moral than shareholders and free market itself. Our society driven by greed, and this corrupt everything.

log in or register to reply

- **Hart Ford**[|3.3.10 @ 3:01PM|#](#)

In Illinois, the public pension system is about 50% funded. I have two public "servant" friends, one in city government and one a teacher, 54 and 55, each of whom will retire next year with full pensions, with guaranteed 3% raises, after 30 years. We in the private sector will work at least an extra ten years to help pay for these outrageous benefits. My one friend, who is making \$160,000 as a teacher this year [for 8 months of work], will have a guaranteed pension of over \$100,000 a year. Assuming he lives till 86, that will be a \$3 million-plus pension.

How can this happen? The Illinois taxpayers pay for these pensions, but the teacher compensation on which they are based is negotiated by the local school district. The National Education Association, the teacher union in the state, is smart enough to know that school districts like to have teachers retire early so that they can hire a new teacher at \$30,000 to replace a retiring teacher earning \$160,000.

The District, abetted by the Union, gives teachers incentives to retire early! This "saves" the District money [though all the money comes from their taxpayers, obviously] on that teaching position. But, obviously, it costs Illinois [taxpayers] money because a teacher retiring at 56 will draw their golden pension for 10 more years than a teacher who retires at 66.

So, not only is the yearly amount of these pensions [and of many of these teacher salaries, despite what you hear] outrageous, but the cumulative cost of them is bankrupting our state and impoverishing us taxpayers and our children.

Can anyone explain to me why we as taxpayers would allow our government employees--local, state, or school--to have such a fantastically better pension deal than any of us have ourselves? So that we can work longer to make them happy?

Reknown awaits the politician who rises up to save us from this nonsense, and from ourselves

[log in or register to reply](#)

• [abercrombie milano|5.27.10 @ 2:23AM|#](#)

My only point is that if you take the Bible straight, as I'm sure many of Reasons readers do, you will see a lot of the Old Testament stuff as absolutely insane. Even some cursory knowledge of Hebrew and doing some mathematics and logic will tell you that you really won't get the full deal by just doing regular skill english reading for those books. In other words, there's more to the books of the Bible than most will ever grasp. I'm not concerned that Mr. Crumb will go to hell or anything crazy like that! It's just that he, like many types of religionists, seems to take it literally, take it straight...the Bible's books were not written by straight laced divinity students in 3 piece suits who white wash religious beliefs as if God made them with clothes on

[log in or register to reply](#)

• [wfgrf|5.29.10 @ 9:47PM|#](#)

The District, abetted by the Union, gives teachers incentives to retire early! This "saves" the District money [though all the money comes from their taxpayers, obviously] on that

teaching position. But, obviously, it costs replica IWC Illinois [taxpayers] money because a teacher retiring at 56 will draw their golden pension for 10 more years than a teacher who retires at 66.

log in or register to reply

- **Vicky**[|7.12.10 @ 8:08PM|](#)#

These are class issues, and a bit complicated

log in or register to reply

- **angelo**[|8.20.10 @ 1:10PM|](#)#

why do we people always blame others for what is happening to us. everyone is to blame including ourselves. we all know what the problems are, we dont have to say it again and again. is there anyone out there that has solutions? or should i say better solutions?

log in or register to reply

- **weadaw**[|8.21.10 @ 4:32AM|](#)#

blame others for what is happening to us. everyone is to blame including ourselves. we all know what the problems are

log in or register to reply

- **tractor supply store locator**[|8.30.10 @ 8:26PM|](#)#

For that matter, it's easy to assume that when President Obama began addressing national security policy, he accidentally picked up John McCain's platform instead of his own. Critics suspect Obama is a closet Muslim. But maybe his real secret is that he's a closet Republican.

log in or register to reply

- **surpa shoes**[|9.2.10 @ 4:53AM|](#)#

At all levels, state and local government employment grew by 13 percent across the United States from 1994 to 2004.

log in or register to reply

- **Anold**[|9.25.10 @ 10:20AM|](#)#

It is important to bear in mind that political campaigns are designed by the same people who sell toothpaste and cars.

Regards,
Social Media Marketing Services

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- **newtony**|[9.25.10 @ 8:56PM](#)|#

Thank you for this excellent article. I must say I was shocked to hear about the immunity program that government workers enjoy. The initiation of the program to grant immunity was not even based on any actual precedent, only the possibility of harassment. In other words, from the beginning it was a trumped-up excuse rather than a real reason. What is more disturbing is that the program then evolved into some kind of fringe benefit for working for the government. It seems that the traffic laws only apply to ordinary citizens, not government employees. You're quite right, it has become a class system, with a privileged upper class and an ostracized lower class.

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- **Drain Wizard**|[9.27.10 @ 4:51AM](#)|#

Here in the UK is just as bad! The people in power are muppets at times. We were doing drain unblocking in belfast when the road just fell in! Crazy! These people do not know what they are doing. The belfast teeth whitening company had to close for 3 days as a result!

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- **local auto insurance**|[10.2.10 @ 5:46PM](#)|#

I lived in South America and there is even worse, this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed before it gets completely out of control like there.

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- **Madden Xbox Cheats**|[11.17.10 @ 11:45AM](#)|#

Welcome to America, Big business and Big government.

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- **political forum**|[11.21.10 @ 4:27PM](#)|#

If some public employees have some perks they shouldn't, then ask to take them away, don't try to act like this country has become North Korea because a bureaucrat has a special license plate.

Reggie's political forum

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• **Bad Habit**[|12.25.10 @ 1:34PM|](#)#

It's easy to assume that when President Obama began addressing national security policy, he accidentally picked up John McCain's platform instead of his own. Obama is a closet Muslim. And that is what is driving this country into the ground.

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• **Pieter van der Heyden**[|2.19.11 @ 7:04PM|](#)#

Remember those faces . They live in your Community.I; have worked in union jobs when I was laid of I still had to pay my Dues . When I retired they told me I could not collect What I paid in for Because I did not have enough hours due to my layoffs. they took thousands out of my pay each month for 17 years and they told me when I turned 65 I did not deserve my pension .they gave me two weeks to come up with a answer why I should get my pension. as of today I am 72 I have not received a Penny. they told me the case is dropped. this is your union in Los Angeles. Food workers Beware.this can and will happen to you.

They had two union reps who stole our dues they still have there pension I who worked for it did not get anything .

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• **Done Deal**[|3.31.11 @ 8:00AM|](#)#

This is such a crucial topic which everybody should take seriously. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people out there who ignores this issue and they are happy to live off in their selfish. Either way, it's a well-written article Steven.

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• **gps coordinates**[|4.20.11 @ 12:25PM|](#)#

this is why are country is doing downhill. too many of the people that are suppose to be leading our country just want to exploit power for their personal agendas.

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- **Hotels in Frankfurt**[4.21.11 @ 5:04AM](#)|#

I think you have produced several truly fascinating points. Not too many others would really think about this the way you just did. I am very impressed that there is so much about this subject that has been revealed and you made it so nicely, with so considerably class. Brilliant one, man! Very special things right here.

log in or register to reply

- **John**[4.22.11 @ 6:46AM](#)|#

6.5 state and local government employees per 100 citizens now - I can't imagine what the figure in Northern Ireland is like. It seems nearly half the population are in the civil service printing Belfast by printers belfast

log in or register to reply

- **Nikon d5110**[7.22.11 @ 6:04PM](#)|#

It is a messed up world we live in where those that are supposed to serve us become our masters.

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- **europa travel guide**[9.13.11 @ 3:33PM](#)|#

what a joke. this is why our country is in so much debt.

log in or register to reply

- **alsq3**[11.25.12 @ 9:59AM](#)|#

Yes, rank has its privileges, and it's clear that government workers have a rank above the rest of us. Ordinarily, if one out of every 22 California drivers had a license to drive any way he chose, there would be demands for more police power to protect Californians from the potential carnage. But until the newspaper series, law enforcement officials and legislators had remained mum. The reason, of course, is that the scofflaws are law enforcement officials and legislators.

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- **anelinamartin@gmail.com**[4.23.13 @ 12:14AM](#)|#

I am completely agree with you. Public servants are behaving as they are superior and we are inferior. top Motorcycle Gloves

log in or register to reply

- [alaamiah|12.4.13 @ 10:46AM|#](#)

Online archive of anarchist group Class War Federation's theoretical journal, of which there were five issues from 1987 to 1992. We do not agree with it all but reproduce it for reference.

log in or register to reply

- [alaamiah|12.4.13 @ 10:49AM|#](#)

The fifth and final issue of the Class War Federation's theoretical journal The Heavy Stuff, from 10 July 1992, with articles about Europe, Northern Ireland and more. Cleaning Company

log in or register to reply

- [leoig|12.25.13 @ 10:41AM|#](#)

Yes there was and still is in professional ranks.

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- [alamirfathy|4.10.15 @ 11:07AM|#](#)

It's a two-tier system in which the rulers are making steady gains at the expense of the ruled. The predictable results: Higher taxes, eroded public services, unsustainable levels of debt, and massive roadblocks to reforming even the poorest performing agencies and school systems. If this system is left to grow unchecked, we will end up with a pale imitation of the free society envisioned by the Founders.

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- [aboshady|10.20.15 @ 3:42PM|#](#)

In its embarrassment, the city council voted against the deal at the last minute, but only after council members publicly chastised Nelson, accused me of libel, and vowed to come back for more when the timing was right. One Republican councilman couldn't figure out what the fuss was all about, given that the council enhances public employee pay and pensions all the time.

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