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those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it®



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The Welfare State

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"A government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul."

~ George Bernard

Shaw

Shouldn't those advocating the United States continue its ever-expanding welfare state look more closely at what is happening in Europe under the staggering weight of its "cradle to grave" welfare mentality? Though it sounds charitable and caring, is "cradle to grave" welfare possible? How long can you sustain giving people more than they earn? When you pay people to do less, don't they do less and continually demand more?

And even if we ignore the history of failed welfare states, don't we have a problem with our Constitution? Creating a welfare state is not one of the enumerated powers of Congress, nor was it intended to be, despite the Supreme Court so eloquently massaging the words of the Constitution to make it say what it wanted.

James Madison, the fourth US President, reminded us of the government's constitutional limitations saying, "Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government." And one of the last Presidents who understood this constitutional limitation of the federal government was Grover Cleveland. I suspect he read the Constitution rather than blindly deferring to the politically appointed Supreme Court "expert" to tell him what it said, because he refused to allow Congress to expand beyond its

constitutionally limited powers, saying, ". . . though the people support the Government, the Government should not support the people."

I doubt he could tolerate our modern federal government usurping the power of the Constitution from the states, making the states and the people subservient to it, while expanding its power and the personal wealth and power of those we elected to serve us.

In H.L. Mencken's book about Cleveland, *A Good Man in a Bad Trade*, he described those who have followed Cleveland, saying, "The Presidency is now closed to the kind of character that he had so abundantly." Haven't the actions of many Presidents and Congresses, with the help of politically appointed Supreme Court justices, modified President Cleveland's statement to now say, "The people are to support the Government, which in turn will support the people (in exchange for votes)?"

Our leaders continue to believe we will never run out of Peters to pay Pauls, convinced Margaret Thatcher was incorrect when she said, "The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money." Maybe this is why the European welfare states are failing. Can't we recognize the problem when we view the sometimes-violent protests occurring across Europe whenever a government finally realizes it cannot continue to give people more than they earn? They ran out of Peters, and the Pauls think that is unfair.

Though uncomfortable to consider, are we that different from those demonstrating Europeans? If we were honest with ourselves, don't each of us have a dollar amount that would allow us to justify taking "free" money from the government rather than working? And might we protest just as vehemently if our gravy train stopped?

Lawrence Reed, president of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, suggested that Cleveland, along with President Van Buren, would define antipoverty as "liberty," further defining liberty as "self-reliance, work, and entrepreneurship; civil society, a strong and free economy; and government confined to its constitutional role as protector of that liberty."

Aren't these words more constitutionally compatible than "welfare state," "entitlement," "cradle to grave," and "free money?" Was Reed correct saying, "Our Founders knew that a government that . . . confuses rights with wants will yield financial ruin at best and political tyranny at worst?"

Does a welfare state remove people's pride and self-sufficiency, reducing them to indentured servants to the government? Does a welfare state replace people's independence with voting for whoever promises them the most for "free?" Does a welfare state help people get back on their feet or does it make sure people can never get back on their feet?

Dr. Bosley's book titled *The Truth as I See It®*, *Idaho Common Sense®* is hardcover, 374 pages, \$24.95 – available at www.craigbosley.com. To contact him directly, you can email him at craig@craigbosley.com. His columns are available at www.craigbosley.com.