

THE INVISIBLE HAND

RUTGERS
LIBERTARIANS
FALL 2011

Restore Liberty



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Libertarianism by Kevin Rutter

A word believed to be so conceptually elusive and commonly misconstrued that few fully understand it. And that is a shame, because at its roots, libertarianism lies so close to what the majority of Americans believe. Not what the media would have you believe, not what your parents have taught you, not what is praised and engrained through our public education system, but rather what deep down, we know is the correct political structure. Libertarianism is what would cause our nation to thrive both economically and socially, through a system that not only allows, but supports and respects freedom.

However, before I can get into the details of what libertarianism *is*, I feel compelled to state what libertarianism *is not*. Libertarianism is often portrayed as a radical fringe group of either the Republican or Democrat political parties. This is not the case. Although often viewed as a political continuum from Republican to Democrat, libertarian beliefs take the best of each, proving that it is not only possible, but also preferable to seek both economic and social freedom. To settle for one or the other in the current political two-party system is to be satisfied and complacent with 'just enough', which is something that no American should embrace. Libertarianism is also not a recent movement. Although it may have not had this title, traces of libertarianism can be seen in some of our founding fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin. Through this publication, our goal is to return to these tried and tested

principles, in order to show that such a system can (if given the chance) work.

Libertarianism is a full and unrelenting trust in the free market, a realization that the free market will always be more effective than government economic intervention. Libertarianism is the stance that all humans have basic liberties granted through the Constitution, and that these liberties should in no circumstance be violated. Libertarians think that there should be small and limited government, with sufficient checks and balances to guard against corruption, and excessive force. To put it even more simply, libertarianism is the view that you should be able to do whatever you want, as long as it does not interfere in someone else doing whatever they want. If you think about these basic principles, you will see that they can lead to both a happier and more prosperous America.

Throughout this publication, these various principles will be fleshed out. Through a focus on the free market and libertarian economic principles, it will become clear that through a free market system our nation can flourish economically. Through a discussion on various topics regarding civil liberties, it will become clear that even though America is a terrific example for respect of civil liberties, there are still several current injustices. And through a constant focus on the innumerable benefits that come with a political system that fully embraces freedom, it will become clear that libertarianism is the only suitable candidate for a better America.

Redistributionism

Redistributionism is a fundamentally flawed concept that will inevitably result in an inflationary trend (the destruction of money's value). Money does not have a fixed value that can both be transferred at will and at the same time, remain the same. When money is exchanged, its value is changed. Even without exchange, a dollar to me is different than a dollar to you. While redistribution seems like a noble and benevolent idea, what inevitably will occur is the creation of a more ruinous state for the lower class. When money is redistributed from the wealthy to the lower class, they temporarily have more purchasing power. However, this is quickly diminished because the demand for goods appears to increase without any concurrent increase in supply (production). Merchants perceive that their customers have more money and can afford to pay more, so they raise prices accordingly to increase profit and prevent shortages.

Before long, the economy is restored to its previous (or an even worse) state. As many in the past have pointed out, inflation is a particularly nasty tax and leaves everyone worse off due to the unpredictability and instability it causes. After redistribution, both the rich and the poor have less. If earned money is left in the earner's hands, the wealthy can and will invest in productive enterprises; they have



nothing else to do with their money. Whether it is new houses, financing an inventor, or a new business that will lower prices, it will lead to the betterment of all and a general increase in the standard of living.

<div>  STATIST TROLL BINGO  </div>				
I work within the system to change things.	Without govt, the poor would die on the streets.	Rights come from society/govt.	If you don't vote, you can't complain.	If there was no army, you'd be speaking German right now!
You don't want ppl to own NUKES, do you??	If you don't like it, move!	Direct democracy will save us all!	Without police/law, ppl would just kill each other!	MARKET FAILURE!!!
Who'd build the roads?	Government is a "necessary evil."	FREE SPACE but remember: TANSTAAFS	Anarchy can't possibly work!	We need to preserve our culture.
Taxation is a payment for services.	Anarchy has never existed in human history!	We just need to reform the system.	Some wars were justified, really, I swear!	Soldiers protect our rights.
"Support the Troops" "God bless America"	They hate us for our freedoms.	Breaking the law is immoral.	Obeying the law means you support it.	Paying taxes is consensual. 

Devaluation of Currency by Andrew Giustina

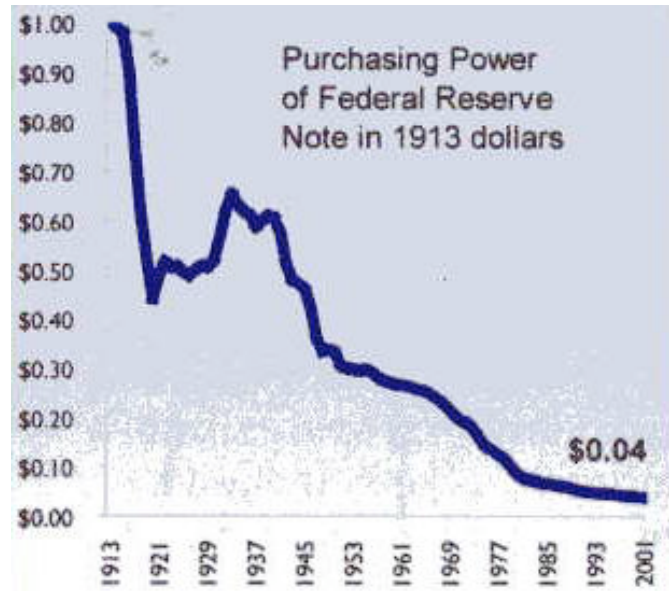
The devaluation of the currency is a real problem in our current economy. You could make the argument that it is the root of the recent financial crisis. Many believe that there is more hardship ahead if the dollar continues to lose its value.

What is the devaluation of a currency? It is pretty simple, a single dollar can buy you less than it has in the past. So one dollar today can buy you less goods than it had in the past. Look at the costs of stamps and gum: Not too long ago stamps cost 32 cents each, now they are 47 cents each. A dollar can buy only 68% of stamps that it previously was able to purchase. Similarly gum used to be 25 cents a pack and is now 35 cents a pack. A dollar today can buy 71% of the gum it used to be able to buy.

It is very easy to say that prices have naturally risen over time; however, this devaluation can be attributed to one main source, The Fed increasing the money supply. Economics is entirely based on supply and demand.

When supply goes up faster than demand, prices go down. That is what has happened with the dollar. The money supply has gone way up, yet demand for the dollar has not increased at nearly as high a rate. Therefore, the price for a dollar, or the purchasing power of a dollar,

has gone down. As the purchasing power of each person goes down people have less wealth.



Why has the government allowed the dollar's value to decrease so much? It is simple, a politician's number one goal is to get reelected and politicians that raise taxes are not reelected. The government spends more money than it takes in. Thus, the government has built up huge debt. Also, no politician argues and advocates spending less money. If you give a politician a dollar, they will spend a dollar and thirty cents.

There are tricks politicians have to pay back debt. If the Federal Reserve prints more money, say to the point where a dollar is



worth 50% of what it used to be worth, the debt will seem to have effectively dropped by 50%. Sounds great, however what has happened is the government has created its own wealth by diminishing the wealth of everyone else. So even though the government was able to pay back the debt, the American people have lost a lot of their wealth. This trick is essentially a hidden tax. Since everyone gets poorer at the same time, and people are not physically writing checks to the government, the American people do not realize that they are getting taxed.

This scam has been happening since the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913. 98 years later, the dollar has lost 97% of its value. The staggering truth is that a dollar today can only purchase 3% of what it could in 1911. If it cost 25 cents for gum in 1911, it

would cost \$8.33 today. Conversely, a \$500,000 Ferrari would only cost \$15,000 in 1911.

The devaluation of a currency is similar to, but not the same as inflation. In a real free market economy (currency based on gold standard), goods get cheaper over time. People are constantly finding more efficient ways to make a product and more competition enters the market place, driving prices down. So over time goods are supposed to get less expensive. However, ingrained with the fallacy that inflation is normal, prices will go up over time. The dollar will get weaker over time if the money supply increases, thus they can buy less so it takes more dollars to purchase goods and services.

James J. Hill and Private Railroads by Vighnesh Raman

Many people believe that railroads are a government project, especially since many modern high-speed rails are state-funded. Historians also credit government aid as being necessary for the creation of the transcontinental railroads. They also believe that the late 19th to early 20th century saw the rise of Robber Barons, some of who used railroads as their business of choice. The term Robber Baron dates back to the 12th century and refers to a person (either feudal lords or capitalists) who engages in unethical business practices (at the expense of the public) for personal benefit.¹ However, James J. Hill was neither a robber baron, nor did he take government aid, and yet he managed to build the most efficient

transcontinental railroad of his time, the Great Northern.

What distinguished Hill from the true Robber Barons was that he was a market entrepreneur while they were political entrepreneurs. A market entrepreneur gains success by satisfying the customer (with cheaper and/or higher quality products/services), while a political entrepreneur lobbies the government for aid or to have them impose restrictions on competitors. Hill's Great Northern railroad stood in contrast to the government aided railroads, the Union Pacific, Northern Pacific and the Central Pacific, all of which accepted, and sought government aid. Hill was very clear about his view on government aid. "The

¹ "Robber Barons Definition." *Investopedia.com - Your Source For Investing Education*. Investopedia. Web. 01 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/robberbarons.asp>>.

government should not furnish capital to these companies, in addition to their enormous land subsidies, to enable them to conduct their business in competition with enterprises that have received no aid from the public treasury" (James J. Hill). In his view, it wasn't just for the government to aid some companies with the public's money to help them compete against those that were more self-sufficient. He would eventually come out on top of his competition without government aid.

Hill entered the railroad business when he and several business partners purchased a bankrupted railway in Minnesota. That railway was once part of the Northern Pacific and would become the basis for the Great Northern. The Northern Pacific's bankruptcy was the result of reckless building that stemmed from a desire to acquire more subsidies. This resulted in hasty track laying and shoddy workmanship. Hill proved his talent in managing a railroad by instructing his crews to lay track twice as fast as the Northern Pacific without sacrificing quality. By micromanaging all aspects of his railroad, he could find ways to cut costs and pass those savings on to consumers in the form of lower prices.



Being a market entrepreneur, Hill realized that his success was dependent on the success of his customers and often tried to build up the communities around his railroads. He even made a deal with immigrants, agreeing to take them to the Great Plains for only \$10 if they agreed to farm near his railroads. Unlike the political entrepreneurs who were more beholden to government, Hill was beholden to his customers and this prompted him to ensure that they got the best deals. With their business dependent on government subsidies as opposed to private consumer support, the executives of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific spent large sums of money on politics, something Hill paid little mind to.

When compared, the Great Northern stood as a superior railroad from its rivals, the Central and Union Pacific. Hill only used the best materials to build his railroads, to ensure that the tracks could withstand the harsh Midwestern winters. Thomas Durant, the Union Pacific Vice President and General Manager, stressed "speed, not workmanship" (Burton Folsom), which resulted in the use of substandard materials (like fragile cottonwood) for the construction of the railroad. This resulted in having to rebuild sections of railroad in the spring after winter damage. The government subsidized ones were too focused on acquiring subsidies, while Hill's railroad maximized efficiency and quality to become one of the "best constructed and most profitable of all the world's major railroads," (Michael P. Malone). Of course, rebuilding sections of track would add to the costs of the government subsidized railroads, cutting into whatever profits they made. As a result, Hill's Great Northern was the only transcontinental railroad that never went bankrupt.

Another aspect to the inefficiencies of government-subsidized railroads was the

distorted incentives created by the subsidy program. For every mile of track built, Congress would give these companies land, as well as a loan (\$16,000 per mile on flat land, \$32,000 for hilly terrain, and \$48,000 per mile in the mountains). These incentives led railroads to build the longest routes possible, routes that twisted and turned and likely sought out mountains and hilly terrain to take advantage of the higher subsidies for building in those areas. The government influence meant that these companies would also have to build uneconomical tracks to communities represented by influential congressmen in exchange for further support.

Hill being independent from government aid was able to seek out the most economic pathways (perhaps the beginning of route optimization), preferring efficiency to everything else. In Burton Folsom's words, "Hill's quest for short routes, low grades, and few curvatures was an obsession. In 1889, Hill conquered the Rocky Mountains by finding the legendary Marias Pass. Lewis and Clark had described a low pass through the Rockies back in 1805; but later no one seemed to know whether it really existed or, if it did, where it was. Hill wanted the best gradient so much that he hired a man to spend months searching western Montana for this legendary pass. He did in fact find it, and the ecstatic Hill shortened his route by almost one hundred miles." He didn't purposely lengthen his routes for more subsidies, nor did he have to build special routes to placate congressmen. While the Union Pacific went bankrupt in 1893, the Great Northern was still going strong.

After hearing about Hill's success, one might ask why his Great Northern has not survived to the present. Why is Amtrak (a government owned corporation) the dominant train service in America today?

The answer lies in government regulations, passed with the intent of protecting consumers from Robber Barons. Hill would unfairly be lumped in with the Government Subsidized railroads (who were the real Robber Barons) in complaints about monopoly pricing and corruptions (which were rampant in the subsidized railroads). This resulted in the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, which banned rail rate discrimination and the Hepburn Act of 1906, which made it illegal to charge different rail rates to different customers. These laws forced Hill to charge the same high rate to all his customers, and prevented him from engaging in price-cutting. He could no longer give immigrants special deals to build up communities around his railroads (which had helped improve his own business). The Interstate Commerce Commission would eventually seek to micromanage all aspects of the railroad industry, further hampering its efficiency.

The story of James J. Hill and his Great Northern shows that it was possible to build a transcontinental railroad without any form of government aid, and those railroads were of better quality and better for consumers. Of course it would be much harder, if not impossible, to start up another large private railroad in the US in the present day. However, it is government regulation and not lack of ability in the private sector that is to blame. Provided that the government sticks to its only legitimate role, (protecting people from force and fraud), a new private transcontinental (perhaps high speed) railroad could emerge and provide great service at lower cost. A railroad (in fact, any currently subsidized business) like that would be more accountable to the public that pays it than any public one would be.

Source: DiLorenzo, Thomas J. "The Truth About the "Robber Barons" - Thomas J. DiLorenzo - Mises Daily." Ludwig Von Mises Institute. Ludwig Von Mises Institute, 23 Sept. 2006. Web. 19 Oct. 2011. <<http://mises.org/daily/2317>>.

Child Labor: A Look at a Statist Scare Story and How to Show It Baseless

We free marketists argue that there should be no government involvement in the economy. No arbitrary laws restricting trade. One such law, present in all industrialized countries, involves “child labor”. The term “labor” usually conjures up the thought of hard work, sweat, and toil. Statists argue that it is necessary to forbid such a possibility so that young, vulnerable children are not threatened or abused by it. We argue that there should be no such restrictions and statist think we are mad. However, like most statist arguments, this is completely ignorant of reality and the needs of society.

If we look at history, when child labor laws were first instituted, they were pushed for principally by unions. No one can say that unions were needed for the safety of children, and this probably is partially the case, but there is more behind it. Child labor is cheap. The unions wanted jobs and wanted better pay. If they were successful in eliminating a cheap group of workers, employers would be forced to hire them and pay higher wages (due to experience, expectations, etc). So, it is no surprise that unions would actively campaign to bar children from jobs and pack them into schools.

First, we should ask if this type of feared child labor even could exist in our advanced society. Think for a minute. Try to imagine children being thrown into mines or factories to slave all day for terrible wages in our society. Forgetting the point that such jobs are in sharp decline in developed countries, who would subject their children to this? Most people would rather starve so their children could live. It is only as a last resort that children are sent off to work.

But is the possibility of child labor still valid? Indeed, who did not grow up doing one chore or another, perhaps with compensation? But we never deem this child labor (or slavery, if not paid) and laws restricting such do not apply to families.. If it is acceptable for a child to do chores in a house, why can't they do other tasks outside the household for compensation?

Why should children be forbidden from acquiring valuable experience early, as well as money? They will learn the value of a dollar from a young age and be able, later in life, to make more educated decisions than an individual who has not had such a past. As for experience, the more one acquires, the more they will be paid. So, when as believers in the free market, we argue for the elimination of minimum wage and child labor laws, the net effect will be that everyone will be paid more. Twelve-year olds



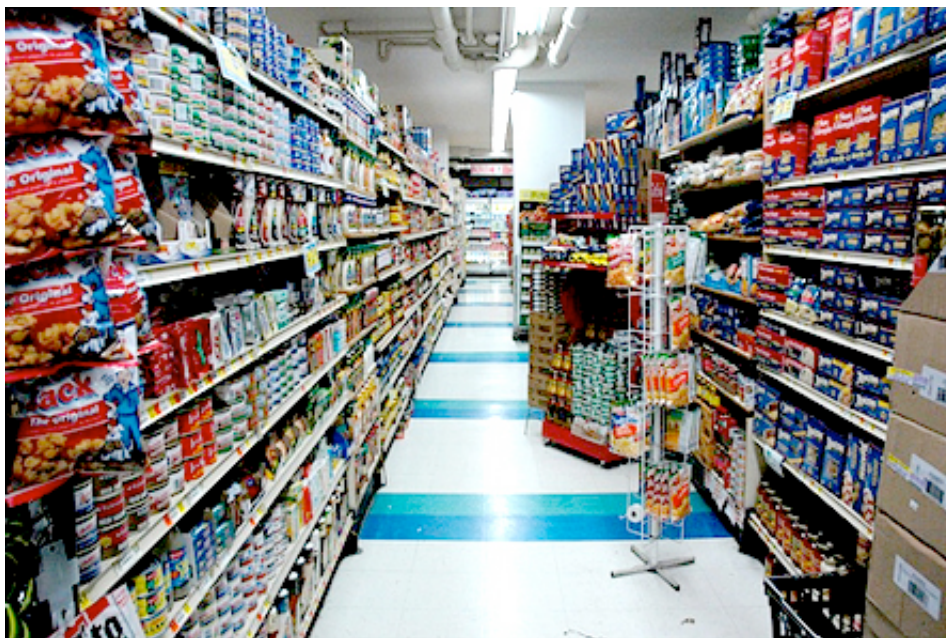
will get \$4 an hour instead of \$0. Eighteen year olds, with six years experience already, will get \$10 an hour, or more, instead of the current minimum of \$7.25. A third benefit,

related to experience, is the people skills the child will acquire earlier. Whether employed by a friend, neighbor, or stranger, the child will learn how to interact with their fellow man. The child will also develop networks that will help them secure future jobs.

A parent cares for their child greatly and wants what is best for them. They clearly would not send the child off into the mines. Nor are they likely to allow a child under ten or twelve to work, unless truly necessary. So

service to customers, but is usually done by an older worker paid at minimum wage. This creates a great expense for the store that prevents many stores from providing this service to potentially happier customers. It is not worth \$7.25 an hour to put things into bags and load a cart. A child can do this task for \$4 an hour, be satisfied with that wage, and observe how to be a cashier.

Why are we denying our children these valuable opportunities? Why are we stifling



where will a child work, if not mines or factories? Well that is open to much discussion, but here are some examples. A child seeking experience could do chores for a neighbor. Perhaps they are good at cleaning houses. One day, they could own a housecleaning business. Who doesn't want their child to be an entrepreneur

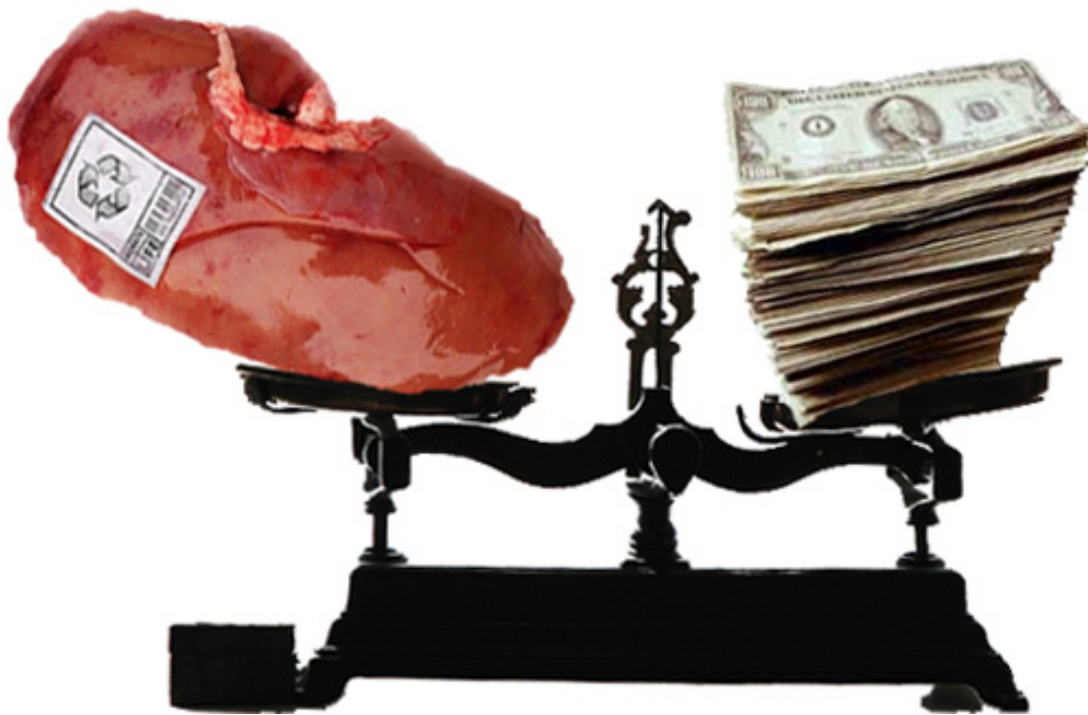
Alternatively, the child could work at a store, doing simple jobs, such as stocking shelves or bagging groceries. The former is already done by all stores and is quite simple. So why have an older, experienced worker do it when a younger person is fully capable? The latter is present at some stores and is a great

our economy that could have more consumers, better educated consumers, better wages, better this, and better that? Because of some irrational fear that child labor means mine and factory work? This is complete nonsense and can really only be laughed at. Statists have no faith in parents to know what is best for their children. Legalizing something does not mean it will occur. Perhaps most parents will be against their child working, but maybe a few see the benefits and are supportive. Their children are being denied a great opportunity to advance their lives earlier and further than others.

Organ Selling by Neil McGettigan

Enticing people to give a bag of plasma is not easy, yet every year at Rutgers several blood drives are held, and people out of good will give even if doing so involves being pricked and the loss of their stamina. Blood Bank tee-shirts, plastic bracelets and stickers have to be given out as medals of noble sacrifice, however it usually the pleas of attractive sorority/fraternity members that bring people to the sterile table. Though it is

saying that a product/service “will cost you an arm and a leg” is a colorful metaphor for a costly purchase and demonstrates that within our society the selling of the body or its parts is viewed in a negative manner. Though arms are not as commonly traded, kidneys, livers and other organs are moved on the black market every day, given willingly² by cash starved people in backroom operations.



frowned upon, blood can be sold legally for cash, its prohibition has lifted out of dire necessity, and the charitable whim of donors did not match actual demand. Though blood can be legally sold for cash in the US, organs, bone marrow and other tissues cannot. The

Take the case of bone marrow for instance. Acquiring it is not as easy as being pricked. You must be properly medicated to ensure enough blood cells are drawn from your marrow. Side effects from this are often bone and muscle aches, trouble sleeping nausea

² The author acknowledges that some organs are harvested without consent through kidnapping and murder; in this article I will be referring to the more numerous coessential transactions. However just like narcotics, violence would probably be non-existent in this market if the trade were legalized.

and vomiting. Other than family members, few are willing go through such an ordeal. Sadly, in some cases family members are not the right blood type, so other sources have to be found. Finding and convincing strangers to go through this painful procedure is difficult. Before you say, "I would gladly do this if it meant saving a life," think of all the blood banks you have walked by because you had better things to do. Finding a suitable match is much easier when numerous willing donors come forward on their own. If the government allowed people to buy and trade bone marrow less would needlessly die.

Over 4,500 of the 60,000 people on the kidney

are loopholes allowing you to "compensate" donors, thousands of people spends tens of thousands of dollars every year flying both themselves and their prospective matches to foreign operating tables. The donors, usually out of work men from South Africa, Brazil and China, are paid in sums ranging \$6,000 and \$20,000, plus travel and hospital costs. Though conventional "progressive thought," labels this is pure exploitation, these "illicit" transactions benefit both parties. The ill who have spent years on dialysis can once again live normal lives, and the amount of money the donors are compensated is often equivalent to a decades' wages, though the surgery will physically weaken them, they



donation list died in 2008 while waiting for a suitable match. People with the means will reach outside of the United States for donors; in both Israel and South Africa where there

will no longer have to fear absolute destitution and live comfortably in their country working part time with the security of their nest egg.

Moral Philosophers and bio-ethicists, like the popular Michael Sandel, oppose the selling of organs because of the supposed inequality of the transaction even though outlawing it leaves thousands dead in hospital beds and near destitution on the streets. Dr. Sandel claims that the organ trade puts a price on life, cheapening the value of humanity, and making it an assault on human dignity. However Sandel's arguments seem to avoid the undeniable fact that in order to survive in this world one must make value judgments, often at the expense of other values. For example many people reading this article are procrastinating on something, whether it be a project or essay, this is because at currently this task is valued at a lower level than going on YouTube, spending time with friends, or reading pro-free-market literature. Sustaining life involves acting and making rational decisions, trading a lesser value for higher one, in this case a dying dialysis patient exchanging several grand with a willing person who values the money more than the inconvenience of having one kidney. Sandel's argument is that other people also use his own definition of human dignity. Sandel unlike most libertarians does not see human autonomy and the right of free action as the foundation of human dignity, rather he stresses that individuals belong to society. What this really means depends on who is interpreting the supposed "good" of the community. Such an axiom has lead to, depending on the person prescribing it, benign philosophies like Confucianism to more malevolent ones like totalitarianism and fascism. His ivory tower definition of human dignity probably would not stand up to popular sentiment, I guarantee nearly half of the women currently enrolled in Rutgers, would find more dignity in selling one of their eggs for \$5000 than having to work as a janitor.

Relying simply on the 'good will' of the society has lead to an unhealthy supply. Our fears that the world where organs could be sold and traded legally would be a monstrous one where bounty hunters ripped organs out of people, like in the 2010 movie Repo Men, is unfounded. Just like the drug trade, government prohibition has made things worse. People are needlessly killed and robbed of their organs because of their shortage. The removal of violence and the security of contract enforced by law will lead to a decrease in price since the travel costs of the patient and donor could disappear and the organs could be shipped securely overnight after they are obtained in their own countries. I admit that this will not make a perfect world, but rather a slightly better one. It will reduce deaths, until the government ends restrictions and regulations on stem cells, allowing for a world where organs that match the patient genetically will be available for purchase.

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Gov't Imposing Ethics: Why It Is Never Acceptable

by Kevin Rutter

People have very strong opinions on a wide range of ethical topics in politics, and these strong opinions often turn into policy. There are innumerable examples of the government

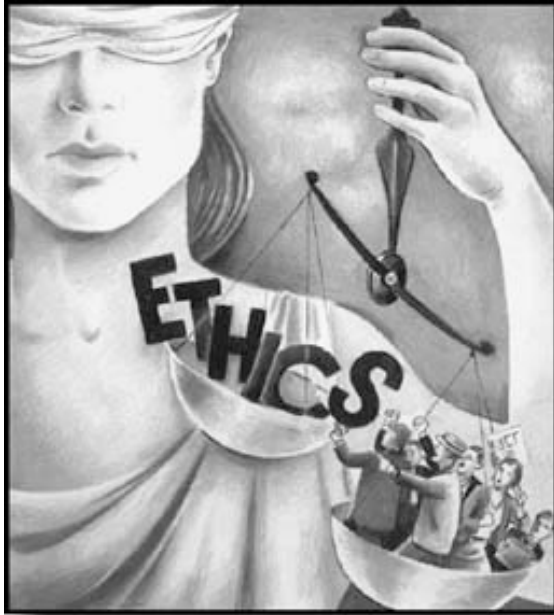


acting as the final voice on what is ethically okay and what is taboo in our society everywhere from the federal government all the way down to the local level. But, there is a major problem with this logic. It is fine to have whatever opinion you want, but when you start to impose what you believe onto other people's lives, that's where you have to draw the line. One only needs to look at history to see how this can go way too far, causing terrible consequences. Two examples are Hitler making it illegal to hide and protect Jews because they were 'inferior', and the eugenics movement saying it was ethically acceptable to stop those with mental disabilities from reproducing. As you can see these are not small concerns, and something that should certainly not be taken lightly.

Just for a second, imagine the impact that a federal policy has on how everyone lives their lives. The effect that a group of

bureaucrats in Washington can have on what we can and can't do in each and every one of our lives is unimaginable! What gives these people in Washington the right to be our ethical judge? Now I know, some of you must be practically screaming by now: the fact that they were voted in by us and speak for our values. But, really, can anyone truly believe that this is how Washington operates? It's a thousand times more likely for this policy to be influenced by party interests, lobbying groups, and even personal agendas. It is fine for a polysci class to speculate and build a model on how government would ideally work, but to just assume that extensive corruption and heavily biased personal interest plays no factor in policy making is simply naïve.

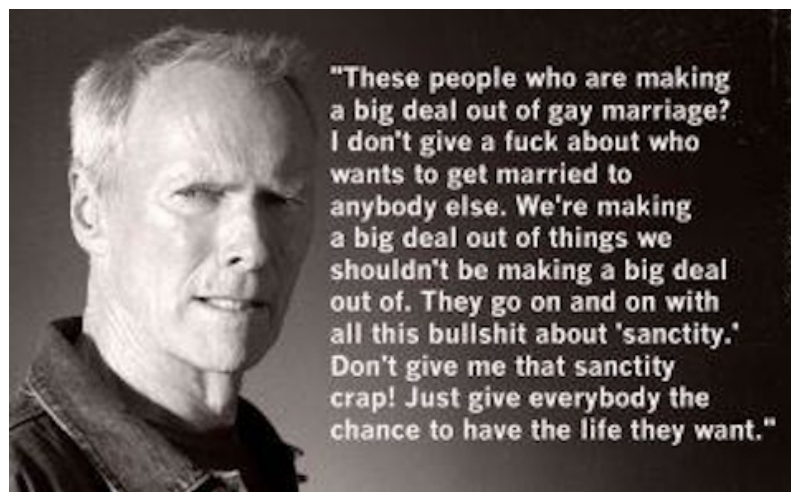
Now I imagine that another counter will be to say that government needs to be our ethical judge, and take a semi-parental view over all of America. Some may argue that government will be best able to decide how we should act, what we can say, and even what we can do in our own individual lives. You often see a similar argument for what the church does for each individual; it provides a set of ethical guidelines for one to follow throughout life. But, as you know, there is a clear separation of church and state spelled out in our country. Now, if there is a separation of church and state in our country, shouldn't there also be a separation between ethics and state as well? Essentially, where we currently stand is this: The government cannot bombard you with a specific religious code and doctrine, but it's perfectly fine if the government is the one projecting their ethical values onto the nation. Why shouldn't the



government's own rules for church and state apply to their own ethical judgments? Essentially the government is creating rules for how we can ethically act, while circumventing their own previous rules and laws on ethical imposition.

Someone could push even further and say, no we still need the government to be our ethical judges for us. To this I say, really? Have you seen the type of actions and ethical behavior that those in government are involved with? Sex scandals, widespread corruption, and insider trading just begin to scratch the surface. At the bare minimum, these people don't even meet their own ethical standards (so assuming you think ethical imposition is necessary), how does that give them the right to an unmitigated rule as our ethical judges?

As for a positive argument, I believe that an individual should be allowed to make their own ethical choices in life, and be able to decide for themselves what they believe is right and wrong. Someone may be quick to say that this would cause complete chaos in real life. However, I have strong doubts against this happening. Just because the government doesn't tell someone what is right and wrong, this doesn't mean that everything they will do is wrong. People are generally rational and will make logical decisions. To have someone else impose their views onto this person's life just takes away personal choice and our basic free will, which is never a good thing. If someone makes an ethical choice because someone else tells them it is the right thing to do, they essentially aren't even part of the decision making process. To completely take the individual aspect out of ethical decision making is a travesty, and something that certainly runs rampant in our current society. People certainly underestimate the decision making capabilities of the individual in this situation, which is where the ultimate ethical decision should be, not in the hands of the government.



Free Speech by Kevin Rutter

Free speech always was, continues to be, and forever will be the voice of the people in this country. It will also remain this way; as long as we make sure that our ability to use it does not get taken away from us, no matter how small the concession. Our right to free speech must be protected completely, and if it is not, it will lead to grey areas that will surely be exploited. Once you make even the smallest concession, you are opening Pandora's Box to allow for bigger and bigger concessions in the future. In this manner, this is no such thing as a small concession of free speech.

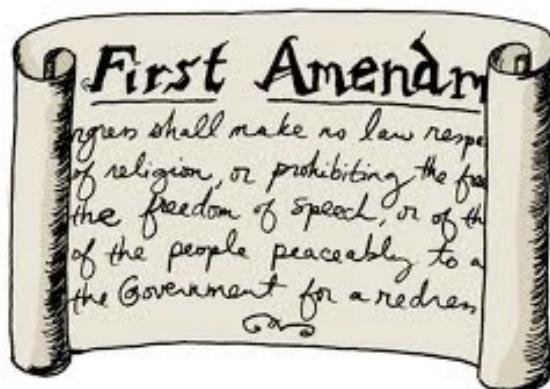
What I am doing right now, writing this article for you to read on my particular political views is free speech. Through the Constitution I am granted the right to be able to voice my particular opinion to you through a variety of media outlets. This does not mean that you have to agree with me, or even pay any attention to me, but as I write this article the right still remains. This is surely a great thing for our nation, a wide relativism on all topics, and an open forum for discussion among these divergent views. But, over time there have been several infringements to free speech, and I'm sure that that will continue in the future.

Before I get into these specifics, I have to spell out that free speech spans far beyond print. Some of these alternative outlets for free speech are radio, TV, the internet, music, or someone shouting on a random street corner. As technology rapidly spreads, the ways that

we can voice our opinion grow even wider by the day. This is a great thing, but as the number of outlets grows, so do the attempts to take this right away.

Why the limitation of free speech happens is pretty simple, and that is that someone does

not like what someone else has to say, and this dislike is so strong, that they seek to silence what the other person is saying. These reasons for dislike could be as vast as the outlets you have for free speech, so that I will not

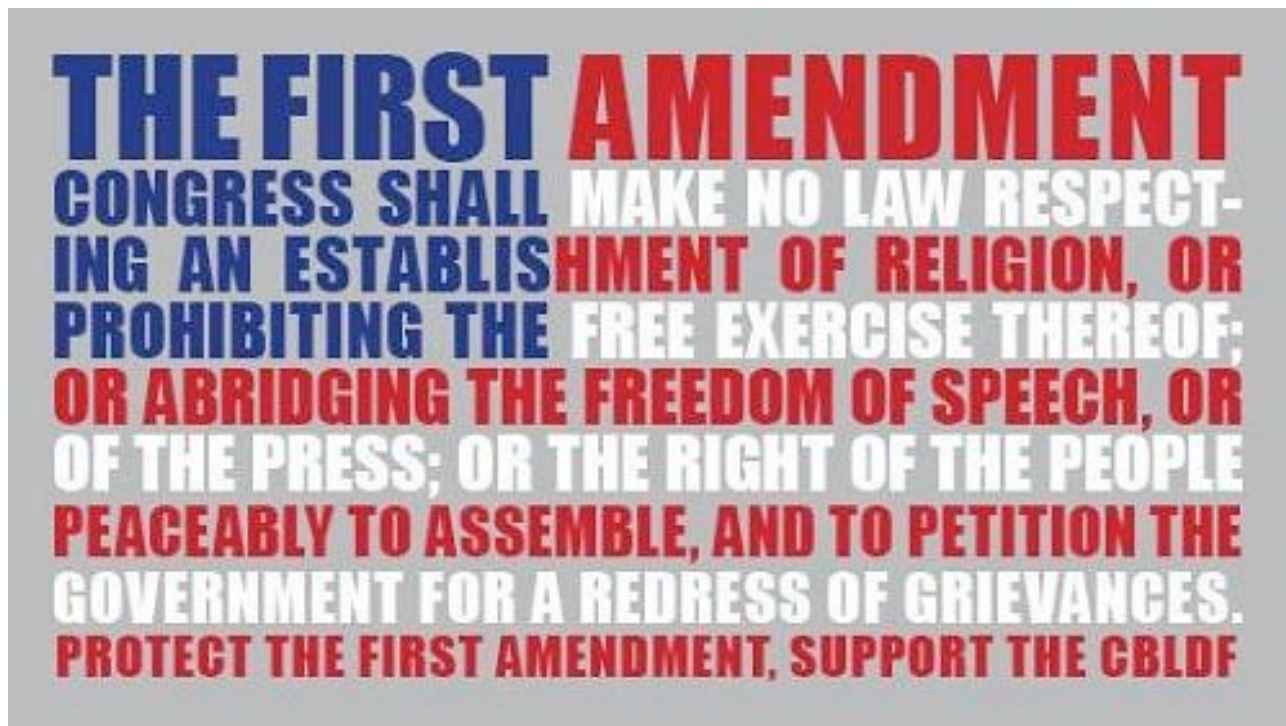


go into. But, what people fail to realize is that trying to silence these opposing views is not the right way to go about this dislike. Often by attempting to silence these views they only draw more attention to them. But, I will make the argument that there is no view so terrible, no show in such bad taste, no song so explicit that it can warrant taking it away completely. Ultimately, if you don't like the view you don't have to pay it any attention, if you think the show is in bad taste you don't have to watch it, and if you think the song is too explicit you don't have to listen to it. As shown in the previous article, the government plays a huge role in this situation, often taking away free speech because it doesn't agree with someone's particular views (again imposing their ethical views on that free speech through actually completely eliminating it).

An objector might say, alright I agree with most of that, but there must be certain

situations in which free speech goes too far. They may bring up an example of kids listening to explicit music, or watching music

another person will consider 'explicit'? While this system theoretically could be applied to new records how would they deal with going



videos of 'questionable taste'. To bring up a historical example, the Parents Music Resource Center attempted to place ratings on records due to them being explicit through talk about sex, the occult, violence, drug use, and a variety other of topics of 'questionable taste'. They argued that a parent should be able to know if the record consisted of any songs dealing with these topics before purchasing it. Because, under this assumption, songs of 'questionable taste' would encourage people to commit these acts of violence, drug use, etc. Now, I imagine you may be thinking, that seems fine, what's wrong with that? Well, a lot is, actually.

First off, who decides whether this record contains 'explicit' material (and what even gives them the right to make this judgment, i.e. imposing ethics on others)? What even is 'explicit' material? How do you know that what one person considers 'explicit' is what

through all of the music in the history of the entire world and labeling that 'explicit' or not? How do we know that songs actually influence behavior (and since the majority of songs are 'love' songs, wouldn't this be a good thing)?

I could literally fill up a whole page with more questions like this, but you get the picture. Honestly, this situation comes down to the parent's decision in the end, and to have the government attempt to make it for them is both lazy and ill-advised. Again, to sum up, free speech is a great thing for this country, and to limit it in any way would be a travesty for what we stand for. And for anyone who still is not convinced and would like to limit some type of free speech, think of how you would feel if someone took away your ability to express your opinions through free speech. Would you be in favor of that?