

2009 PROGRESSIVE REVIVAL

BOOK OF ESSAYS

The Climate Change Challenge
by Gary Allison

It's not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what's required.

Sir Winston Churchill

British politician (1874 - 1965)

It is widely accepted among reputable scientists with the appropriate expertise that global warming has been occurring at an increasingly rapid rate over the last 100 years and that human activity producing greenhouse gases has been a significant contributor to this warming. There is also wide consensus among those with appropriate expertise that without action to reduce significantly human caused greenhouse gas emissions the environmental, bio-diversity, health, economic and geo-political consequences of global warming will be catastrophic.

Unfortunately, the United States, which is the leading contributor of greenhouse gases, has failed to take significant action to reduce greenhouse emissions. The U.S. was one of the original 84 Signatories to the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, but it is not among the 184 Countries that have accepted/ratified the Protocol and begun implementing policies to meeting their Protocol obligations.

Global Climate Change is a complex subject that cannot possibly be given appropriate coverage in a few pages. But, Progressives believe that Global Climate Change is perhaps the most important moral, strategic, and economic challenge ever faced by human kind, the United States has a moral duty to lead in finding ways to mitigate Global Climate Change damage, and the United States' future prosperity depends upon it leading the Green Revolution necessary for meeting the challenges of Global Climate Change. Below are links to important websites and studies that will provide you with the apolitical information that supports the Progressive view of Global Climate Change. Key summaries of this information are provided.

Perhaps the best lay source of information about Global Climate Change, its reality, its dangers, and what can be done to mitigate it is found in Thomas L. Friedman, *Hot, Flat & Crowded* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2008). Friedman challenges us to imagine what the earth will become if every nation on the earth sought to replicate how we live our lives in the United States (*HFC*, pp. 53-76). The answer is that the earth's life-sustaining capacity could be damaged beyond repair. Friedman also gives us a tour-de-force explanation about how our failure to control energy consumption, the leading cause of greenhouse gases, has financed the most anti-western, anti-democratic movements and leaders, ranging from Saudi Arabian support of militantly fundamentalist Islam to a rejuvenated KGB style leadership in Russia to spreading Castro-ism in Latin America (*HFC*, pp. 77-110). Friedman's chapter on Global Weirding provides a fast-paced narrative that presents the complexity of Global Climate Change through easily understood and compelling stories of how persons ranging from scientists to NRA hunters are documenting proof of Climate Change (*HFC*, pp. 110-139). In his chapter The Age of Noah, Freidman provides a shocking account of our world's rapidly declining biodiversity and the dangers to all species, especially of the human kind, this decline presents (*HFC*, pp. 140-153). Freidman also documents the grinding energy poverty that afflicts much of the world's population and suggests that the answer to Global Climate Change cannot be to deprive forever these disadvantaged peoples of the benefits of economic development (*HFC*, pp. 154-169).

Most importantly, in a chapter that begins the second half of his book—the half that suggests ways for the U.S. to meet its moral obligations to lead on mitigating Global Climate Change—he states an inspiring case on how the U.S. can prosper only if it undertakes to lead on Global Climate Change and why it's in our interest to do so even if Global Climate Changes turns out to be a hoax (*HFC*, pp. 170-199). Hint: The key is to undertake aggressive initiatives to produce Clean electricity, become much more energy efficient, and conserve important natural environments, habitats and resources.

Below are links that will enable you to see the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention on Climate Change and which nations have ratified it.

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/status_of_ratification/application/pdf/kp_ratification.pdf

The link below provides you with the latest UN Population Division Report on population projections to the year 2050. It illustrates graphically the challenge of simultaneously providing decent lifestyles for many more billions of human souls while mitigating the causes of Global Climate Change.

http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2006/WPP2006_Highlights_rev.pdf

The links below take you to vital information from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Greenhouse Inventories which document the levels and sources of U.S. greenhouse emissions.

Key figures to note are that energy-related activities account for 86% of U.S. Greenhouse emissions, and electric power generation is the largest greenhouse emission activity (33%).

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/usinventoryreport.html>

http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/downloads/08_CR.pdf

Pew Center on Climate Change links lead to great information on the causes and effects of Global Climate Change and what can be done to mitigate them. It presents, among other things, a daunting overview of what must be done to insure that our children and grandchildren have as safe as possible environment in which to live.¹

<http://www.pewclimate.org/>

<http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/Climate101-Complete-Jan09.pdf>

¹ • Producing two billion cars that travel 60 miles per gallon of gasoline instead of 30 miles per gallon
• Build two million 1-megawatt wind turbines to displace coal power
• Build 700 gigawatts of nuclear power to displace coal power (twice current global nuclear capacity)
• Decrease car travel for two billion 30 mpg cars from 10,000 to 5,000 miles per year
• Capture and store greenhouse gas emissions at 800 large coal plants
• Improve energy efficiency by one-fourth in buildings and appliances
• Produce 100 times current U.S. ethanol output

UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change links below present the reputable scientific consensus that Global Climate Change is real, human activity has caused a significant part of it, and changes can and must be made to green house emissions causing human activity. These reports have been attacked by Global Climate Change Deniers as political statements that ignore true science. But, Thomas Friedman documents that any political altering of science in these reports serves to lower, not increase, estimations of Global Climate Change and its impacts (*HFC* pp. 121-122).

<http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/index.htm>

<http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/assessments-reports.htm>

http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf

The links below are to Sigma Xi's *Confronting Climate Change*, which provides perhaps the best articulation of how human behavior can and should change to mitigate the causes and effects of Global Climate Change.

<http://www.sigmaxi.org/about/news/UNSEGOonline.pdf>

http://www.globalproblems-globalsolutions-files.org/unf_website/PDF/climate%20_change_avoid_unmanagable_manage_unavoidable.pdf

The links below are to the InterAcademy Council Report entitled *Lighting the Way*. This report provides an in-depth analysis of how the world can make “the transition to a sustainable energy future The concept of energy sustainability encompasses not only the imperative of securing adequate energy to meet future needs, but doing so in a way that (a) is compatible with preserving the underlying integrity of essential natural systems, including averting dangerous climate change; (b) extends basic energy services to the more than 2 billion people worldwide who currently lack access to modern forms of energy; and (c) reduces the security risks and potential for geopolitical conflict that could otherwise arise from an escalating competition for unevenly distributed energy resources.”

<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/Object.File/Master/12/096/First%20half.pdf>

<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/Object.File/Master/12/100/Second%20half.pdf>

Having review much of these materials above, and many more, I would make three critical recommendations for a Progressive U.S. Global Climate Change:

- **Confront U.S. energy users with the true costs of their energy consumption activities though a broad based carbon-tax on all forms of fossil-fuel use.** This tax not only will greatly reduce the use of fossil-fuel consumption, it will also generate revenue that can be used to finance aggressive research and development of green sources of energy, mass transit, and energy subsidies for those who cannot afford energy at the higher prices.

- **Resist the temptation, foisted on us by apologists for the coal and nuclear power industries, to develop clean coal technologies (there is no such thing) and nuclear power plants.** This was perhaps an appropriate interim strategy when it was first proposed by President Carter. But, it was intended only to get us from the energy crises of the late 1970s to about 2010. It was widely believed in the late 70s that aggressive research and development would produce cost effective reliable green sources of energy such as wind, fuel cells and solar technologies by 2015. The Reagan Revolution and ascendancy of Republicans in Congress gutted these programs. Nevertheless, each of these technologies is on the cusp of commercial use, with photovoltaic cells currently cost effective for many applications. With renewed focus on R & D, these technologies could be available for mass use by 2030. New coal and nuclear power plants take 8 to 10 years to construct, and they have useful lives of 40 years. Now is not the time to develop dangerous and polluting 20th Century technologies that are likely to be displaced at great expense by 21st Century Green technologies. See information provided by links below.

<http://www.seia.org/>

http://www.seia.org/cs/federal_issues/renewable_portfolio_standards

<http://www.ases.org/>

<http://www.awea.org>

<http://www.hydrogenassociation.org>

<http://www.fuelcells.org/>

<http://www.re-energy.ca/>

http://www.25x25.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

http://assets.openers.com/rpts/RL34162_20070906.pdf

- **Initiate aggressive energy efficiency measures to make our homes, buildings, and means of transportation as energy efficient as possible.** The U.S. can almost immediately take cost-effective steps to make our energy consumption activities more efficient. Just emulating the many ways European countries have made their homes, buildings, heating, air conditioning, water heating more efficient would save billions of \$ and reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly. See the information provided in the links below:

<http://www.cee1.org>

<http://www.ase.org/>

<http://www.aceee.org/>

Our Health Care Crisis

by Jim Fluegel

Healthcare systems in the USA are highly individualized, institutionally fragmented and extremely costly to operate and maintain. Healthcare services are not available for many children and families, due to program eligibility considerations or financial resources. Healthcare systems have numerous payer options and complicated payment and reimbursement requirements. They are primarily focused on disease care, and treatment for critical care or chronic conditions. They are difficult to situationally navigate, exist as an informational and record-keeping nightmare, and are controlled nationally by only a few corporations. The system is not working effectively or efficiently for the vast majority of Americans, not for the hospitals, only for the insurance companies. Why should citizens with fixed, limited, or even middle incomes in the USA in 2009, have to choose between healthcare or shelter or food or heat? We are in a healthcare crisis in America. There are some conglomerates, lobbyists, and/ or politicians, who have their priorities and their ethics way out of whack!

Insurance conglomerates control healthcare costs and profitability, manage medical options and decisions for patients and medical personnel, define the procedures they will approve or disapprove, pay at specific levels of reimbursement- if any, prioritize which medicines they approve, deny, discount, etc., based on cost analysis and pharmaceutical company practices, and strictly adhere to a required profit margin. The fixed charges for medications, medical services, and supplies are bloated, inconsistent and arbitrary, in my opinion. Hospitals pay for expensive CAT scan equipment in a short period of time, with charges of \$1750 per scan, and then continue to charge the same fees to offset other cost center expenditures in the facility, once the machine is paid off. It's analogous to paying for the Turner Turnpike 13 to 25 times since it was built, to cover the rest of the turnpike system. It's much like a 'fox in charge of the hen house' type of situation. And, like in so many systems, dollars are of primary importance, patients take second-class status, and ethics are 'the elephant in the room' or in the next building down the street.

We need a system that is available to all, that is easy to access and navigate, that features electronic records for multiple access points, and one that is a universal, single payer system. Citizens should be able to continue participation in their current plans, if they have them, with access and treatments decided by their doctor and them. Where should the focus be in the ideal healthcare system? How about being centered on the patient? There are so many variables and the system is so spread out and difficult to navigate, that there are almost too many obstacles to overcome in reinventing the system. But "Yes, we can," overcome them. We are going to have to contact our legislators many times to express our assertive sentiments on votes, when the time comes. There are numerous factors that should be reconfigured in the new national plan. Malpractice insurance is too costly for physicians. "Single payer system" is the most important ingredient of the new system. Care should be founded on wellness and preventative medical practices and principles, followed by developing and consistently following best practices in treatment paradigms. None of these issues are preferred or chosen by insurance companies "because they have never done it that way". Following that set of practices however, care should actually cost less, because it would be easier and less expensive to treat simpler health problems or issues on a preventative basis. It is common sense. It's too easy.

This is an American problem that requires an American solution. This problem should NOT be about lobbyists, Democrats and Republicans, in any of the related combinations or permutations. Please consider the following statistics that describe the depth and breadth of the healthcare crisis.

*"Nearly 47 million Americans, including 9 million children, lack health insurance. Nearly 11 million Americans spent more than a quarter of their salary on healthcare in 2007. About 100,000 Americans die from medical errors in hospitals every year. Prescription drug errors alone cost more than \$100 billion every year. One quarter of all medical spending goes to administrative and overhead costs, and reliance on antiquated paper-based record and information systems, increases these costs." Obama'08

*Healthcare is expected to double in the next two years. "Over 75% of total healthcare dollars are spent on patients with one or more chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure."(Gerald Anderson, Robert Herbert, Timothy Zeffiro, and Nikia Johnson; "Chronic Conditions, Making the Case for Ongoing Care". More than half of Americans that have serious chronic conditions have 3 or more physicians, which leads to duplicate testing, conflicting treatment advice, and obtaining prescription drugs that will not be monitored for interactions by multiple physicians. Electronic records would resolve these matters.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that 1 in 3 children born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime. Five chronic diseases- heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes- cause over two-thirds of all deaths each year. See CDC website noted below.

We need to remedy several other issues when we reinvent the healthcare system in the United States. We need to make it illegal for drug companies to charge us an additional 67% premium on certain medications that are not charged by them in Canada and the UK. We need to continue to emphasize development and production of generics. We need to re-do the Medicare Drug program to be real on prices, to re-price and save a reported \$30 billion in funds for medications. We need to find the fraud in Medicare programs and put the perpetrators or is that perpe"traitors" out of business.

We can take advantage of this opportunity in 2009 to solve many issues at one time. We have got to put lobbyists and politics aside and get busy with American healthcare changes for American people. What is not right with constructing a significant paradigm shift to re-design the system so that it works for all of us?

You can look at 5-star ratings for nursing homes and hospitals. See that Medicare and other interesting websites noted below.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/factsheets/Prevention/pdf/diabetes.pdf>;

<http://www.medicare.gov>; <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/healthcare>;
<http://ahrq.gov/news/ulp/pharm/pharm2.htm>;

PUBLICLY FINANCED ELECTIONS

by Greg Bledsoe, Chair Just Progress

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Clean Elections is a practical, proven reform that puts voters in control of elections. Rather than being forced to rely on special interest donors to pay for their campaigns, candidates have the opportunity to qualify for full public funding which ends their reliance on special interest campaign cash. Being freed from the money chase means they have more time to spend with constituents, talking about issues that matter to them. When they enter office, they can consider legislation on the merits, without worrying about whether they are pleasing well heeled donors and lobbyists.

In the U.S. Congress, Sens. Dick Durbin (D_IL) and Arlen Specter (R_PA) have introduced [the Fair Elections Now Act](#) which provide full public financing for Senate candidates. A companion bill in the House is also expected soon. **Clean Elections is law in seven states and two cities: Arizona; Connecticut; Maine; New Jersey; New Mexico; North Carolina; Vermont; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Portland, Oregon.** Activists in 28 states are working to advance full public financing. See: <http://www.publiccampaign.org/>

In Oklahoma our own State Senator Kenneth Corn, (D), SD 4, http://oksenate.gov/Senators/biographies/corn_bio.html, has reintroduced SJR 33, http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/2009-10SB/SJR33_int.rtf which is modeled on Arizona's pioneering public finance law. Senator Corn has announced he is running for Lt. Governor in 2010 and has included public financing of clean election as part of his campaign.

While there is little hope that SJR 33 will be put before the people for a vote by the Republican dominated legislature, Just Progress is proud to join with others, such as the national public interest group Public Campaign, <http://www.publiccampaign.org/> to begin the process of placing public financing before the people through an initiative petition drive.

The following is an Executive Summary of a report prepared by Public Campaign's Nancy Watzman showing how Arizona's Public Financing Election Law has promoted small donors and transformed and cleaned up their state politics, particularly increasing the diversity of those who contribute and participate in the electoral process. You can read the complete report at Public Campaign's web site.

From Public Campaign: <http://www.publiccampaign.org/alloverthemap>, used by permission

All Over The Map: Small Donors Bring Diversity to Arizona's Elections Executive Summary

There is a buzz in the air among those who follow politics about the increasing importance of small donors in elections. It's true that in some races in some places, small donors are contributing at greater levels than they have previously. This can only help engage more people in politics. However, the larger story is that the great bulk of campaign contributions still come from big donors.

In sharp contrast, under Arizona's Clean Elections law, candidates may build their entire campaigns on the participation of small—\$5—donors.^[1] Candidates who wish to take part in the system must raise a set number of these \$5 contributions from Arizona residents. They then qualify to receive a public grant to run their campaigns. Once they accept this grant, they must abide by strict spending limits and can no longer raise any private money for their campaign.^[2]

This study for the first time examines the demographic profile of \$5 qualifying contribution donors in Clean Elections gubernatorial campaigns in Arizona over the course of two election cycles. We demonstrate that Arizona's qualifying contribution donors have a different profile than typical big donors giving to Arizona campaigns for those candidates who opt into the private system. They are more diverse racially and ethnically, as well as economically and geographically. This makes intuitive sense. We know that overall big donors to political campaigns tend to be wealthier and less diverse than the rest of the population.^[3] It would follow that small donors to campaigns would be more widely spread out among neighborhoods where people tend to have lower- to mid-level incomes.

These findings underscore the importance of public financing systems in encouraging wider political participation by such donors. To conduct this analysis, we examined the \$5 qualifying contributions collected by Arizona gubernatorial candidates in the 2002 and 2006 elections, comparing and contrasting them with contributions raised by candidates running with funding from private sources—more than 67,000 contributions in all. We analyze these data by zip code alongside U.S. Census data to determine the racial, ethnic, geographic, and economic characteristics of these donors.

In nearly every category we looked at, Clean Elections \$5 donors more accurately represent the diversity of the state than the private system does:

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

- **Race/ethnicity.** Clean Elections small donors are more racially and ethnically diverse than big donors giving to privately funded candidates. In particular, areas where Latino populations are concentrated provide more contributions from Clean Elections small donors than they do to privately funded campaigns. Clean Elections candidates collected twice as much, proportionately, of their contributions from zip codes with the highest percentages of Hispanics than did privately funded candidates. In the zip codes with the lowest percentages of Hispanics, privately funded candidates raised proportionately better than a third more of their campaign cash than Clean Elections candidates did—9.5 percent versus 6.8 percent. Zip codes with the highest percentages of American Indians in the state also provided more contributions, proportionately, for Clean Elections candidates than for privately funded candidates.

Economic Diversity

- **Income.** Clean Elections small donors are drawn from populations on the lower and middle parts of the income scale as compared to big donors giving to privately funded candidates. Neighborhoods with median household incomes up to \$50,000 were a larger source of contributions for Clean Elections candidates than for privately funded candidates. In contrast, neighborhoods with median household incomes over \$50,000 were a lucrative source of contributions for privately funded candidates. Privately funded candidates received 62 percent of their contributions from these more affluent zip codes, nearly double the 32 percent figure for Clean Elections candidates.
- **Blue collar.** Clean Elections donors are more likely to live in areas where people work in “blue collar” professions than big donors giving to privately funded candidates. Zip codes with the highest concentration of blue collar workers were the source of more than 2.4 times more qualifying \$5 contributions for Clean Elections candidates, proportionately, than they were for big contributions for privately funded campaigns. In contrast, zip codes with the lowest blue collar populations contributed 11.5 times more, proportionately, to privately funded candidates than they did to Clean Elections candidates.

- **Home value.** Clean Elections candidates collected more of their contributions, proportionately, from areas where housing prices are lower than privately funded candidates did. The most extreme contrast was in zip codes where median home values were \$200,000 and above. Here, privately funded candidates collected 3.4 times more of their contributions, proportionately, than Clean Elections candidates did.
- **Poverty.** Clean Elections donors tend to come from areas where there are greater levels of poverty than those areas inhabited by big donors to privately funded campaigns. Overall, Clean Elections candidates raised more proportionately—1.9 times as much—than privately funded candidates did from zip codes with high levels of poverty. On the other end of the scale, zip codes with the lowest concentration of people living in poverty were the source of 1.6 times as much campaign cash, proportionately, for privately funded candidates than for Clean Elections candidates.

Family Concentration

- **Female-led households.** Areas with higher levels of female-led households are more widely represented among Clean Elections small donors than they are by big donors to privately funded campaigns. The pattern was most dramatic at the extremes. In neighborhoods where three percent or under of the households were headed by women, privately funded candidates raised more than 2.2 times as much cash, proportionately, than Clean Elections candidates did. In contrast, in zip codes where the concentration of female-headed households was seven percent or higher, the scenario was almost exactly reversed. Clean Elections candidates raised more than 2.3 times as much, proportionately, from these zip codes as privately funded candidates did.
- **Households with young families.** Neighborhoods with high percentages of families with children under 18 accounted for larger percentages of Clean Elections \$5 donors than big donors to privately funded campaigns. Neighborhoods where 35 percent or more of the households have children under age 18 were the source of proportionately more small contributions to Clean Elections candidates than they were for big contributions to privately funded candidates—30 percent versus 21.8 percent.

Geographic Diversity

- **Rural versus urban.** Rural areas are more widely represented by Clean Elections small donors than they are by big donors to privately funded campaigns. While all the candidates collected more of their contributions from urban areas, Clean Elections candidates collected 1.5 times as much, proportionately, from zip codes with higher rural populations—15.7 percent of their contributions, versus 10.5 percent.
- **Statewide distribution.** Clean Elections small donors and big donors to privately funded campaigns alike came disproportionately from Maricopa and Pima counties, where more than three quarters of the population live. However, the reliance on the two counties was much more extreme for privately funded candidates than it was for Clean Elections candidates.
- **Out-of-state influence.** By definition, Clean Elections \$5 donors live in Arizona. Privately funded campaigns, however, collected a significant proportion of campaign cash from out of state.

Looking closely at individual candidates, some particular patterns also emerged. For example, Len Munsil, the GOP gubernatorial candidate in the 2006 general election, raised more of his contributions from middle class neighborhoods than his opponents did. Prior to his candidacy, Munsil headed the Center for Arizona Policy, a conservative, Christian-oriented organization. Alfredo Gutierrez, a Democratic candidate in the 2002 primaries, raised three times as many contributions, proportionately, from zip codes with a high Hispanic population than any other candidate, Clean Elections or privately funded.

[1] In 2006, gubernatorial candidates were required to collect at least 4,200 \$5 contributions in order to qualify for the Clean Elections program.

[2] While they work to collect their qualifying contributions, Clean Elections candidates may raise a small, set amount of “seed money” from private contributors. They may also contribute a set, small amount of their own money to their campaigns.

[3] See, for example, this 1998 study on donors to congressional campaigns:
www.opensecrets.org/pubs/donors/donors.asp.

**OUR SOCIAL SAFETY NET:
RESTORE THE FLOOR**

by Marilyn Clarke

In his inaugural address, President Obama called for a new era of responsibility. He spoke of the common good, empathy, human needs, and scientific thinking. As Progressives we are organized to uphold proposals to implement a new agenda. In matters concerning human services, the neglect of and hostility toward basic human needs during the Bush Administration has badly skewed our understanding of what is wrong and what is doable. I submit that a Progressive agenda will restore a floor that meets the basic health and income needs for all citizens.

The real and enduring Reagan Legacy could be termed the erasure of empathy. Prior to the Reagan Revolution, there was a sense of a common good. Entitlement enacted under the New Deal recognized the worth and dignity of those unable to care for themselves due to age, illness, or misfortune. Social programs were devised in terms of human needs rather than the requirements of specific industries or institutions.

Under Reagan, the new paradigm was that one no longer needed to be concerned about anyone other than oneself. Greed was good. The very idea of a common good was attacked relentlessly. A drumbeat of disgust was directed toward groups seen as parasites who cause social problems: welfare mothers, Medicare cheats, fakers of disabilities, sex offenders, drug addicts.

This demonizing of scapegoats drew attention away from systemic societal-based causes of social problems. All persons served by programs within our social safety net were deemed to be moral failures. As a consequence, public policy shifted from a human needs orientation to a punishment mentality. Simplistic explanations were imposed on a complex reality. Social welfare and the common good were vilified as serving outcasts through failed and corrupt programs.

The culmination of this demonizing process was President Clinton's abolition of "welfare as we know it." Thus, our most important social safety net, minimum subsistence support for those in need, was torn asunder and all our social service programs increasingly been administered in a punishing, capricious and totalitarian manner.

The current social safety net is much worse than the one it replaced. Its focus is on getting recipients of aid into the work force within certain limited time frames instead of supporting the welfare of families. Mothers are required to put young children into questionably safe daycare so they can participate in training programs that prepare them only for menial jobs. Their health care and food security benefits can be taken away at the whim of their caseworkers. They and their children internalize the message that they are worthless.

Progressives need to stand up for the welfare of all our citizens, especially of mothers and children. Children need to be well cared for and loved for themselves. The floor of our social safety net needs to be restored so our nation once again tends to the common good.