DOWNLOAD PDF THE MYTH OF THE WELFARE STATE

Chapter 1 : The Myth of the Exploding Welfare State | HuffPost

The Myth of the Welfare Stale is a basic and sweeping explanation of the rise and fall of great powers, and of the profound impacts of these megastates on ordinary lives. Its central theme is the rise of bureaucratic collectivization in American society.

Need-based assistance in the U. Welfare recipients are also often assumed to share a range of undesirable characteristics, most of which have racist and classist undertones. We need to dispel the myths surrounding government benefits so we can truly understand the value of welfare, the humanity of those receiving it and the improvements that could be made to better support those in need. Below, we explore six common welfare myths, which you can consider thoroughly debunked. People on welfare are unmotivated and not working. Low-wage jobs strain the welfare system: Some programs, like TANF, actually operate under the expectation that families are working but need temporary assistance to become financially stable. Many argue the problem is really income inequality, which leaves minimum wage earners struggling to afford basic needs, and therefore reliant on public assistance. Welfare recipients are mostly people of color. Considering systemic inequalities that put people of color behind white people in terms of wage earnings , this somewhat even distribution of need-based aid is actually concerning. Due to racism in the wage system, people of color should theoretically receive more governmental assistance. The law is so cruelly structured to incentivize non-participation or to actually exclude participation. Undocumented populations are stealing welfare benefits from citizens. Undocumented populations are ineligible for all welfare programs, except emergency medical care. Even for immigrants who are now legal residents, federally funded programs have strict criteria for participation. For example, food stamps are only available to immigrants with legal status who have lived in the country for five years, are receiving disability-related assistance or are under 18 years old. Some programs also allow states to make their own guidelines for immigrant populations, leading to disparities in assistance from state to state. Her origin can be traced back to a Ronald Reagan campaign rally in , where the former president said , "In Chicago, they found a woman who holds the record. TANF programs, for example, have a federal lifetime limit of five years. Welfare offers basic support to provide families with the bare necessities, if even that. Many families on welfare are simply looking to use government assistance as a way to build up their finances during tough times, with the goal of getting back on their feet. Welfare programs are eating up valuable tax dollars. Almost half of ChildCare workers rely on public assistance. Benefits per family are minimal, still leaving many scrambling at the end of the month to afford their expenses. These programs are helping families survive, not thrive.

Chapter 2 : Smashing The Myth Of America's "Stingy" Welfare State | Zero Hedge

The myth of the link between the welfare state and the debt crisis is one such mantra. It posits, roughly, that the excessive welfare state has been responsible for out-of-control public spending.

But the two are barely related. Five years have passed since the advent of the current crisis, and while the beast has since morphed from a financial crisis into a confidence and debt crisis, some mantras have become so deeply engrained into our collective psyche after loud proclamations and endless repetitions that they feature is almost any discussion about the future of the economy or, for that matter, the future role of the state. They have assumed the status of self-evident truths and have reduced public discourse to the squabble over fitting solutions. The mantra itself is taken for granted. The myth of the link between the welfare state and the debt crisis is one such mantra. It posits, roughly, that the excessive welfare state has been responsible for out-of-control public spending and must be cut back down to size in the name of fiscal sustainability. This discussion is especially nascent in Europe, where austerity has become the name of the political game. Already in February , the German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle proclaimed to a domestic audience , "Those who promise effortless prosperity to the people are inviting late-Roman decadence. Similar sentiments are echoed by leaders across Europe: We must look no further than across the English Channel, where British Prime Minister David Cameron recently argued in a speech on the welfare state that "for far too long in this country, people who can work, people who are able to work, and people who choose not to work: In Greece, the government has stated that it will more thoroughly examine the wealth of welfare claimants, which sounds legitimate and reasonable but is usually a euphemism for hidden welfare cuts: For the reduction of the size and duration of unemployment benefits, for the Greek 22 percent cut to the minimum wage, for the restriction of collective bargaining powers in the US on the state level, for the privatization of health care in Britain or for health care cuts in Ireland. The argument is always the same: In light of heavy public debt, such welfare expenditures have allegedly become unsustainable. The welfare state entrenched promises and entitlements that it cannot guarantee any longer. The cuts, we hear, are no vicious payback campaign against the working class but simply a reminder of harsh realities. We can rely on data to check whether generalizing claims about the unsustainability and inevitable death of the welfare state hold up. We can even submit the alleged link between crisis and welfare expenditures to empirical scrutiny. Simply put, the relation between welfare costs and GDP tells us whether a country can afford its welfare state. As long as the economy grows economists use GDP growth as a proxy for economic growth , welfare expenditures can grow as well. When more money is available, more can be spent -- for example, to finance social programs or public health initiatives. Whether that money is indeed spent wisely is a political question, not an economic one. According to the OECD, welfare expenditures in its 34 member countries rose steadily between and , but the increase in costs was almost completely offset by GDP growth. More money was spent on welfare because more money circulated in the economy and because government revenues increased. In , just before the financial crisis kicked into full gear, they had risen to 19 percent -- a manageable increase. In Germany, the National Office of Statistics reports that welfare costs rose from During the same time, however, welfare expenditures as a share of GDP barely increased, from This trend is even more obvious if we discount the first two years of the crisis which saw an increase in welfare spending as unemployment rose and social problems became more pronounced and focus on the years between and Again, German welfare expenditures increased, but their share of GDP actually declined from Measured in relation to the overall wealth of the country, welfare costs decreased. Another factor to consider is the increased reliance of governments on private welfare savings -- a decision that has itself come under scrutiny from several economists -- that has already reduced the role of governments for providing pensions or healthcare and has shifted welfare costs from the treasury onto the citizen. Public debt has risen quite significantly since , especially in the eurozone. The average debt increased from 80 percent of GDP to 87 percent, and countries like Greece and Ireland saw much larger increases. According to data by the OECD, industrialized countries tend to carry the largest debts -- the G7 now average gross public debt of over percent of GDP. The American economist Paul Krugman recently published a graph that plots state spending against interest rates. If it were true that higher state expenditures increased the fiscal precariousness of a country, an extensive welfare state would presumably correlate with higher interest rates for government bonds. Investors would demand higher returns for riskier investments, and the government would have to pay higher interest rates on its debt. To make a long story short: Again, no correlation exists. Almost all eurozone countries fall in the interest rate range between two percent and four percent, regardless of whether state spending amounts to 41 percent of GDP Slovakia or to 58 percent Denmark. At the same time, countries with similar levels of public spending around 50 percent face drastically different interest rates, from Sweden 2 percent to Greece 18 percent. We cannot explain the fiscal problems of countries like Greece with the size of their welfare state. Instead, it is more likely that the housing bubble in the U. While the welfare state cannot be held responsible for the current crisis, another important argument remains: Demographic change will make it unsustainable in the future even if it remains viable at present. Between and , life expectancy rose by several years in most industrialized countries while the average retirement age continued to decline -- by as much as nine years in France. Fewer young people finance the retirement of more old people, who are also reliant on their pensions for longer. A reader pointed out that the precise extent of demographic shifts is disputed, but the principal point remains valid. But this is no full-scale argument against the welfare state: It is first and foremost an argument for pension reform. Current forecasts expect costs of unemployment insurance, subsidies for families and anti-poverty programs to remain steady until the end of the century. Heath care costs will rise: The Congressional Budget Office expects an increase of around 10 percent of GDP but also concludes that the increase could be offset by changes to the tax code. If we subtract the additional costs of demographic change, the share of health care costs in America would even decline slightly, thanks to "Obamacare". The sluggish pace of economic recovery and demographic change do pose a challenge. It is misleading to demand cuts to unemployment benefits as unavoidable, or to argue that the job market must become more "flexible" and more reliant on temporary and part-time employment schemes. Yet this is precisely what is happening: The crisis has provided the context in which the dismantling of the welfare state has become politically feasible. We can currently observe the social fallout of welfare austerity in the streets of Athens or Madrid. Warnings against unchecked welfare spending have a long tradition. They are regularly invoked by liberal and conservative politicians - and amplified by the media -- during budget discussions or whenever the discussion focuses on "free riders" and the incentivization of work. Even the social-democratic Left has become enmeshed in this tradition and bound to its myths: The promise of politicians like Ed Miliband in the U. As long ago as , then-chancellor Helmut Kohl argued in Germany that "we cannot secure our future by organizing this country like an amusement park.

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Chapter 3 : The Myth of the Welfare State - Jack D. Douglas - Google Books

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But, the debate of "gutting" social programs will no doubt be used to perpetuate, yet again, the myth that the United States is ruled by libertarian social Darwinists who ensure that no more than a few pennies are spent via social programs for the poor. Now setting aside the question of whether or not social programs are the best way to address poverty, the fact is that the United States spending on social programs is on a par with Australia and Switzerland, and can hardly be described as "laissez-faire. Governments in the United States pour money into social-benefits programs at rates typical to a Western welfare state. While it is true the US is hardly the highest on this list, its social spending is higher than that of Canada, Australia, Ireland, and Iceland, all of which we are often told are far more "generous" countries in terms of their welfare states. Indeed, if the typical American leftist were asked if the US should spend as much as Canada or Australia on social benefits, the response is very likely to be an emphatic "yes. Indeed, the difference between Switzerland and the US in this measure is four-tenths of one percent. The OECD average is According to the World Health Organization, only Luxembourg, Norway, and the Netherlands spend more government money on healthcare per capita. This presents a problem for advocates for more government control of the healthcare system, of course. Often, their line of argument is that Americans are too "stingy" with social health benefits. When confronted with the fact that government spending is quite high, however, they switch tactics, and then declare that if the US adopted a more government-regimented system, then spending would actually be lower. This was a tactic employed by Bernie Sanders. This latter claim may or may not be so, but the one thing we do know is that the US already spends more taxpayer money on healthcare than most everyone else. So, it seems hard to fathom that the "problem" â€” whatever that may be â€” is a product of too little government spending on health care. If advocates for reform want to argue over how the money is spent, let them do so, but the debate should hardly include any proposals to increase government spending. Although, by this measure the US is equal with Japan and the Netherlands. Even many advocates for a reduced federal budget are likely willing to consider ideas that would spend taxpayer dollars more effectively. But are federal dollars actually doing this well? It becomes nearly impossible to make changes in such an enormous apparatus which itself cannot possibly take into account the vast number of different populations and conditions that exist across a place as huge as the United States. Given that the largest Scandinavian nation-state Sweden has At the very least, no government larger than a US state ought to be in the business of social benefits. When it comes to government, bigger has never been better.

Chapter 4 : Chicago Tribune - We are currently unavailable in your region

According to the usual news sources, Donald Trump's new budget proposal "envisions steep cuts to America's social safety net" and will "gut social programs." Most of the cuts were proposed to pave the way for more Pentagon spending. In truth, Trump's proposal doesn't matter, and Congress will.

The Politics of Welfare 80 years of welfare. The stock market soared and the construction business thrived. For most people, life was good. But one day October 29, altered the course of history. The Great Depression was a dark time for American families. Businesses closed and basic necessities were scarce. The most vulnerable members of society, the elderly, children, and single mothers, were barely surviving. Four years after it began, more than 13 million Americans were without a job. With local and state governments running out of resources, lawmakers desperately sought out an answer to the problem. In the years since the idea of welfare has changed little. Roosevelt signed the New Deal in Photo credit The Reader With charitable giving in sharp decline, and local and state resources depleted, everyone looked to the federal government for help. He also called for programs that would provide benefits for poor single mothers and children, along with other needy persons. Through his plan, Roosevelt permanently made the Federal government responsible for the security of all Americans. A decision he soon regretted, as he felt it tore at the very heart of what makes Americans so resilient: To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit. The Civil Rights movement called attention to the economic and environmental struggles of African-American families. In that time, the U. GDP had increased fivefold as American corporations positioned themselves to meet both foreign and domestic product demands. Rural parts of the country, minorities, low-wage and unskilled workers, immigrants, and single mother households were most at risk. Although, the new president had a different idea how to address the issue. Kennedy gives his inaugural address. To the surprise of many, John F. Kennedy was not the type of Democrat that Americans were familiar with. Because of his young age and inexperience, JFK enjoyed few legislative victories. But the ones he did win were significant in changing the landscape of the welfare system. In a special message to Congress, Kennedy affirmed that welfare was not a cure to societal problems: Such a check must be supplemented, or in some cases made unnecessary, by positive services and solutions, offering the total resources of the community to meet the total needs of the family to help our less fortunate citizens help themselves. His beliefs about the purpose of welfare died with him. Johnson assumed the presidency after the death of JFK. However, he would not continue the welfare policies of his predecessor. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity. This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America. Our chief weapons will be better schools, and better health, and better homes, and better training, and better job opportunities to help more Americans, especially young Americans, escape from squalor and misery and unemployment. Overcoming Poverty In , one in four U. Photo credit Washington Times In , 50 years after the War on Poverty began, Project 21 leadership network highlighted its failures. Not only had poverty rates remained nearly the same, but welfare had negatively impacted the groups it was supposed to help. Project 21 spokesman Derrick Green, explains the devastating consequences saying: The result has been several generations of blacks born into broken homes and broken communities experiencing social, moral and economic chaos. It fosters an inescapable dependency that primarily, and oftentimes solely, relies on government to sustain livelihoods. Communities such as the five American cities we listed here , all but decimated under Democratic leadership. He totally contradicted the notion that government could provide goods and services at no cost to anyone. Listen to Friedman explain: As you know, Democrats like Bernie Sanders perpetuate this myth. American workers and business owners foot the bill through higher taxes. Much the same way welfare is funded. Welfare, in a way, is a convoluted game of give and take that literally creates dependence on government. Reagan and Government Dependence President Ronald Reagan disputed the idea that big government was the answer to poverty. According to Reagan, big government was not the answer to poverty. In his State of the Union, the president addressed the need for government and private industry to work together. But just like they do today, Democrats opposed the changes. When it came down to it, Clinton vetoed two GOP welfare reform bills before signing the third into law in Then, also included in the legislation were incentives for states to move people off welfare and into the workforce. Better childcare funding and tougher child support enforcement laws were written into the package as well. Still, nothing really changed. In his second term as president, Obama ended work requirements for welfare recipients. The economy, or rather his economy, was in a recession. Sadly, businesses were crushed under the weight of high taxes and burdensome regulations. Worse still, the job market was dismal and unemployment levels reached new heights. So, sidestepping Congress, which he often did, he issued a new policy directive to the Department of Health and Human Services. That directive, unlawfully we might add, allowed states to waive work requirements. Sad to say, things only got worse from there as Obamacare took hold. You can read more about how that disaster turned out here. With the exception of Clinton, Democrats have a long history of allowing welfare to balloon out-of-control. Thankfully, President Trump is taking a different approach. Trump Photo credit Washington Star-News To get Americans off welfare, the economy must prosper, and the job market must grow. If you think about it, these are things a businessman like Donald Trump understands. Just a few days into his second-year as president, Mr. Trump has taken great strides to end government hand-outs. As a result, the economy is booming and his tax cuts are creating more jobs and community investments. In addition, while he has not taken on welfare reform directly, his policies have already reduced unemployment and the number of people receiving food stamps has declined by 2 million. Additionally, he informed states that they can require able-bodied, working-age adults to work for Medicaid. In any case, you can see that politics has directly influenced the role of welfare in society. Now, nobody thinks that public assistance will end completely. Most hard-working Americans know what it feels like to need a hand-up in difficult times. Ultimately, that kind of welfare is the enemy of everything that makes America great.

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Chapter 5 : The Great Myth of the Welfare State - LewRockwell

The Myth of the Welfare Stale is a basic and sweeping explanation of the rise and fall of great powers, and of the profound impacts of these megastates on ordinary lives.

She cares for not only her kids but also for her mother and disabled brother. Carla, whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, has been trying to find a job for a year and a halfâ€”but with no luck. She lives in an affordable housing community with a strict curfew, so ducking out of her apartment for some fresh air after 8 p. Because she had struggled to find a job on her own, she applied for the TANF Work Program, a state program that connects TANF recipients to "work activities" that satisfy the requirement. Some opportunities in the work program are paidâ€”others are not. If work-program participants quit, reduce their hours or lose their jobs, they are cut off from TANF immediately for two months. She decided to not apply for TANF assistance again. She is one of more than 80 people Aisha Nyandoro, the CEO of Springboard to Opportunities, and one of her colleagues interviewed in the summer of Springboard to Opportunities is a residence service providerâ€”they do not own the communities or housing developments they work in. They offer after-school programming, youth development and job-training programs, and connect directly with families in four affordable-housing complexes in Jackson. PDF Nyandoro said she decided to do the interviews because she was curious about the disconnect between the programs offered for women and families in the communities she works in and how they access those services. The interviews were jarring. The Race Factor Rachel Black, one of the "Becoming Visible" authors with New America, says the report explores the connection between race, poverty and false narratives such as the "welfare queen" myth used against those in poverty. The report traces state and federal policies from Black Codes, used to criminalize black people after the Civil War in the South, to legislation like the Medicaid and Human Services Transparency and Fraud Prevention Act , which Mississippi lawmakers passed in early Both state agencies are using a third-party contractor to implement the system. In Mississippi that is certainly the case. Mississippi is also the poorest state in the nation, with more than 20 percent of the population living below the poverty threshold as a result. High poverty means that the state gets a lot of federal assistanceâ€”but the "Becoming Visible" report shows that those in poverty often do not use the programs intended to help them due to the melee of restrictions people encounter to even sign up for programs. In order to apply for SNAP , a person must have proof of identity, Social Security numbers for all household members, proof of income if employed and proof of residency. Negative stereotypes associated with poverty began in recent decades, Nyandoro said. The "Becoming Visible" report shows, largely through the words of Jacksonians, how the system of accessing assistance is correlated to the negative stereotypes associated with poverty. States can use their TANF funds on a broad range of services from just straight-up cash for people who need it to child care assistance and education activities. A breakdown of those numbers from MDHS shows that the client withdrew 5, applications, and the State rejected 3, due "to the client choosing to not comply. She was told "no. Black said in her review that the State does not evaluate the impact of programs on the families they serveâ€”that impact is not a part of the metrics for how good programs are working. Carla discussed this sentiment in her interview in the report. More like this story.

Chapter 6 : Welfare queen - Wikipedia

The Myth of the American Welfare State And in the s, the Reagan Revolution brought the War on Welfare. With Charles Murray's Losing Ground5 as battle cry and ammunition, conser-.

Living on benefit supposedly destroys the desire to escape from poverty and find work, as claimants become accustomed to the state providing for them. Society can no longer afford to support such people. It appears increasingly in the speeches of Labour politicians. None of these reports were commissioned by the government and they have all sought to establish a new consensus--indeed the Rowntree report featured both John Monks of the TUC and Howard Davies of the CBI on its panel. Yet the reports broadly agree on recommending private pensions and other ways of saving the state money on welfare spending. Field used to be considered a maverick too right wing even for the right of the Labour Party. But since the publication of Making Welfare Work, influential Blairites have been suggesting that Field may go into an incoming Labour cabinet at a senior level. After all, the Labour governments of and both introduced welfare cuts. Those who talk about welfare dependency often use a strange kind of logic. They start from how miserable it is to be on the dole, or a single parent, or a pensioner dependent on welfare, and go on to blame the welfare system for the fact that people are forced onto it. Paying benefits somehow becomes a means of creating poverty. In addition, welfare dependency arguments are based on a number of false assumptions. One hundred and fifty years ago bosses did not need to worry about what happened to retired workers. Life expectancy for tradesmen in Manchester was 20, while mechanics and labourers died at an average age of 17, making it exceptional for workers to survive into retirement. These everyday factors are linked to class. The poorest children in Britain are twice as likely to die from respiratory illness as children from the top social class. As people live longer, the proportion of pensioners to people of working age rises, and so the spiralling costs of pensions and healthcare old people are likely to need more medical treatment are borne by the declining portion of people of working age. All the reports mentioned above discuss the problem of an ageing population, but none put figures on it. In fact the rise in the proportion of pensioners is easily exaggerated. There are currently four people of working age for every pensioner in Britain. By there will be roughly three for every pensioner a 25 percent fall. This demographic change is not simply to do with increased life expectancy, as is often implied, but is also a product of the falling birth rate. As the birth rate levels out, it is projected that after the ratio of pensioners to workers will stabilise and possibly fall. If you add private and public health spending, Britain comes twenty second in the list of industrialised countries with only Greece and Turkey spending less. The US, with no national health service, spends the same as Britain on public health, and the same again privately. Under the Tories pensions have fallen in relation to average earnings, from 20 percent to 15 percent. Even if this link was restored, Will Hutton points out: To maintain the current value of pensions in relation to average earnings would imply taxation rising by some 2. The tax level would then fall as the rise in the population of elderly people declined. This is not intolerable or unmanageable. By this had risen to 59 percentgiven the high levels of poverty among pensioners, few have opted for this out of a taste for the good life. Faced with the declining level of the state pension many people are already turning to private pension schemes. This has proved a disaster because the high administrative charges and commissions eat into private pension scheme contributions. Consequently millions of low paid workers end up worse off. Levels of burglaries, fires and deaths can be roughly predicted and insurance premiums worked out accordingly. If private unemployment insurance existed, the recession would have wiped out any company that had set its premiums the year before. The problem they face is not welfare dependency, but low pensions. While pensioners are failed by the current welfare system, the vast majority would be even worse off under the private pension schemes proposed in order to save the ruling class money. A mushrooming welfare budget? Welfare dependency arguments imply that the option of a comfortable existence on benefits has created a growing class of people cut off from the majority who work for a living, leading to an increase in the welfare budget. In fact it is changes outside the welfare system that have forced millions onto benefits. Between and , as Table 1 shows, real net income improved most for the poorest tenth of the population, and increased by broadly the same amount for the rest.

From to , while the benefits system remained basically the same, the changes in real net income were negative for the bottom tenth and above average only for the top 30 percent. The Rowntree report shows that inequality in Britain is greater now than at any point since the Second World War. A striking example is the massive increase in poverty in London. A look at the 15 local authority districts with the highest unemployment in shows how misleading this picture is. Ten years earlier none was in the top Such a massive increase in unemployment in one city cannot be explained by welfare dependency since living on benefit is no more appealing in London than elsewhere. But the impact of the recession on different areas can explain such changes. Social Security spending was higher in , when the welfare state was very patchy, than in as a share of GDP. Within the welfare budget, one of the areas which has grown most under the Tories is spending on Housing Benefit. Government spending on housing has increased massively at the same time as the quality of housing has generally declined and rents have risen above the rate of inflation. The people who have benefited from this policy are private landlords. Today there are nearly half a million homeless people in Britain, and over 1 million live in homes officially unfit for habitation. At the same time, , homes lie empty,23 and the government will not allow local councils to use receipts from council house sales to build new council housing to replenish housing stocks. As a result of the sell off of council housing, and the lifting of rent controls on private landlords, housing benefit paid to tenants in the private sector has seen a colossal rise. Nearly half the Housing Benefit budget now goes straight into the pockets of private landlords and housing associations. Frank Field might argue that, whatever the causes of the expansion of welfare spending, it is unrealistic to expect taxpayers to foot the bill. After all, the same person will be a net gainer from and net contributor to the welfare state at different times of their life. And the model also suggests that the welfare system redistributes less than it did a decade ago. A culture of dependency? No system of welfare can be independent of values Is it right, for example, that young, never-married mothers, should gain additional income support premiums when few, if any voters think that such behaviour is acceptable, let alone rewardable? The obvious point is that it is not welfare in itself, but the poverty with which people surviving on welfare are faced, combined with the lack of decent jobs, that encourages them to claim as much as they can in benefits. But behind these seemingly innocuous soundbites, the actual proposals are more unpleasant. Field suggests claimants suspected of fraud should be made to sign on three or four times a day, turning them into professional signers on. He informed ministers that only 5 percent of estimated fraud involves false identities, and that ID cards would not prevent all these cases. There are obvious parallels between the introduction of student loans and replacing state pensions with compulsory contributions to private pension schemes. This omission can only be explained by the bad light thrown on some welfare reform proposals by the experience of student loans. A few years after the creation of the Student Loans Company the government was forced to nationalise it as private business lost faith in the potential to exploit an already impoverished section of the population. The company has since been plagued by corruption and inefficiency, while students face record poverty. But nearly one third of the poorest 20 percent of the population are in work or self employed. They lose out on sick pay, holiday pay, and other in-work benefits. Even in terms of their income, many self employed workers are worse off. Of all those people on below average income two thirds of the population , the self employed have lower average incomes than those on income support. Conclusion It is a myth that we can no longer afford welfare. The British economy, is nearly three times larger today than in when the modern welfare state came into being. Compared to other states in the European Union, our welfare system is underfunded. The leading British writer on poverty. Countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Germany were spending about half as much again on welfare as Britain. In the s, when the welfare budget was a fraction of what it is today, the National Government which included Labour ministers forced through a 10 percent cut in the dole while unemployment stood at 20 percent. In the s, when the IMF demanded spending cuts, the Labour government reintroduced prescription charges, though these made only a tiny dent in the budget deficit. Sections of the ruling class want welfare cuts even when money is available elsewhere. At the same time spending on the police went up. This never happened, but the Republicans used the anti-welfare climate created to their own ends. They dropped the part about creating jobs, and made the attack on AFDC a central part of their policy. Many, single parents are trapped on benefit, not by the welfare system, but by, the absence of affordable childcare and the lack of decent jobs. Short of a new expansion in the system which provides jobs and rising living standards, all they offer is to make living on welfare so unbearable that even more people are forced off benefits and into conditions which were common in the last century before the creation of the welfare state. While we fight to make sure such plans never become reality, we have to get rid of the system which has brought us to this point. Notes 1 A Marr in the Independent. Return to Contents page:

Chapter 7 : The Welfare State: Myths & Measurement - The Columbia School of Social Work

Meanwhile, pushing the poor off welfare â€” replacing the entitlement to cash assistance with limited state-run programs that sharply curtailed access to aid for all sorts of reasons â€" had.

Irwin Garfinkel President Obama is the first president since Lyndon Johnson to win reelection after aggressively expanding the welfare state. His critics say that he is trying to bring the nation closer to European-style socialism, where more and more wealth will be transferred from one part of the population to another. These critics further assert that a more generous welfare state will lead to more government waste and further cripple our weak economy. But I would contend that these critics misunderstand the welfare state because of some common myths and mismeasurements. Here are four of the most prevalent myths. The welfare state is a drag on productivity. Critics of the welfare state argue that the taxes required to finance it blunt economic incentives and thereby undermine productivity. While it is true that taxes drag down incentives, the expenditures that the taxes financeâ€"on roads, harbors, bridges and other infrastructureâ€"can increase productivity. The same, of course, holds true for public education and public healthâ€"two large elements of welfare states. Two large plusses combined with even a small negative add up to a large plus. The United States has an unusually small welfare state, which gives us an advantage over other wealthy nations. Of the 14 wealthy welfare states I measured for my book on this topicâ€"including the United Statesâ€"all were strikingly similar in size and structure. The size of the American welfare state is small compared to other well-off nations only if we ignore the fact that our government heavily subsidizes employers who provide health-care benefits to their employees, and compare total welfare-state expenditures to total income in the country. Among rich nations, if size is measured by the ratio of social welfare expenditures to national income, and employer-provided benefits are included, the U. In the United States, most welfare benefits go to the poor and near-poor. In fact, the richest in our society get the largest medical care and housing benefits, with the poorest followingâ€"which means that the working poor, lower middle class, and even the middle class often fall through the cracks. The richest fifth of the population receives housing subsidies through the mortgage interest tax deductionâ€"which is nearly four times the housing assistance provided to the poorest fifth and about eight times the assistance provided to the lower middle and middle classes. The richest fifth get health benefits that are almost twice those of the poorest fifth. The United States is, and has always been, a welfare state laggard. The United States has been less than generous in providing aid to the poor than most other rich nations. We have also been slower to adopt social insurance programs such as national health care. But throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries, this nation led the world in the provision of mass public educationâ€"the most productive part of the welfare state. Since then, however, other wealthy countries have caught up with us in investing in education for the masses, and most have gone ahead in providing early childhood education and care. Why have we surrendered our lead on the educational front, held for over two hundred years, and how will that affect our future economic standing? Policies on government spending should flow from the answers we provide to such questions. As President Obama said in his second inaugural address: No single person can â€¦ build the roads and networks and research labs that bring new jobs and businesses to our shores. His most recent book is Wealth and Welfare States: Is America Laggard or Leader? Opinions expressed on this site do not necessarily reflect those of the School or University.

Chapter 8 : 6 welfare myths we all need to stop believing

With welfare, the US outspends Canada and Australia, and is on a par with Switzerland. On government healthcare, the US outspends nearly everyone. Text version: The Myth of America's "Stingy" Welfare State.

Chapter 9 : The Myth of the Welfare State(s) â€“ The Observer

Myths About Welfare Programs in General A Rasmussen Report survey found that 61 percent of Americans believe that *too many people are dependent on government financial aid. Ironically, many of those with this belief live in states that receive the most aid.*