

“Money for Nothing and Your ‘Chits’ For Free”

☒ I know I’m beating a dead horse here, but I just can’t help myself.

I run a law office which operates in Washington and California. I keep calendars, meet deadlines, know in which court my husband is expected to be, and do tons of paperwork. When I order supplies, I know exactly what I’m buying and know exactly when the order will arrive. I’m accountable to my husband. In other words, I keep track of a lot of things and I’m just one person.

The government has, how many, employees and all of them put together can’t seem to keep track of anything. From the looks of things, it has no interest in weeding out the scammers.

According to a WSJ op-ed piece by James Bovard, the number of food-stamp recipients has risen to 44 million, up from 26 million in 2007 costing \$77 billion up from \$33 billion. The USDA has only 40 inspectors to oversee about 200,000 merchants who accept food stamps but who’ll never be prosecuted for illegal activities.

Wisconsin food-stamp recipients routinely sell their benefit cards on Facebook and prosecutors won’t prosecute.

In my state of Washington, food-stamp recipients are selling their cards on Craigslist. DSHS management has actually restricted fraud investigations into this criminal activity. Go figure.

Thirty percent of inmates in an Iowan jail collected food stamps. The same thing is happening in Wisconsin where more than \$12 million in overpaid benefits and other questionable charges were made in 2009, some which went to prison inmates.

Again, same thing in New York and the list goes on and on.

Not only are monies going to people who aren't qualified to receive them, but government employees are scamming the system as well. Two employees of NYC's Human Resources Administration pocketed \$8 million from their food-stamp scam; Wisconsin staffers plundered almost \$300,000 and a Louisiana state bureaucrat scammed the system for \$50,000.

What's really disgusting is that, on the one hand, the food stamp program is considered by the USDA as a "nutrition" program but, on the other hand, it vetoed all proposals to prevent food stamps from being used for junk food. Although food stamp recipients rose by more than 50% during the Bush administration, you'd think that President Obama would do something about this so his wife would stop kvetching about junk food.

And the abuses aren't limited to food stamps. My husband often sees people selling their government-issued bus passes for money to buy drugs. In 2010, Medicare and Medicaid made \$70 billion in improper payments.

I remember reading last year about protestors on Wall Street, not angry about the failing economy or Wall Street scandals. Nope, they wanted an extension of their already 99 weeks of unemployment benefits! Sure, some people, through no fault of their own, lose jobs, yet, I know a few people who miraculously found a job after their 99 weeks were up.

What are the two million federal employees doing? I know every one isn't in charge of doling out money, but, really, who's in charge here? Who's watching the vault?

We've got a growing number of whiners in this country who feel entitled to the tax dollars paid by hard-working Americans. We've got the scammers who know they're not entitled to the monies they receive but don't return it. And then we've got the government that is either disinterested or impotent to do

anything about it.

What was once a country whose greatest asset was its self-reliant citizens, is now becoming a nation of wimps and deadbeats. We only have to see what's happening in European welfare countries to visualize what our country may look like in the foreseeable future.

Cradle to grave benefits gut peoples' independence and individualism and results in a nanny state where folks believe they are entitled to free money.

I wasn't raised like that. I was expected to work after I graduated from high school and I continued to do so while attending and paying my own way through college and law school.

Instead of getting an education and become productive members of society, too many people feel entitled and are willing to accept a government stipend and then complain when the coffers dry up. The welfare mentality has always been alien to me.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

Who's Rich? Who's Poor?

✘ Almost eighty Catholic educators recently criticized U.S. House Speaker, John Boehner, due to speak at Washington's Catholic University. They claim his record is "among the worst in Congress" when it comes to protecting the poor. The letter called on Speaker Boehner to "reawaken your familiarity" with church teachings on the subject of poverty. The letter also mentioned the 2012 budget and called it "particularly cruel to pregnant women and children."

This irked me for a number of reasons.

While many others condemned Notre Dame for inviting President Obama to give the commencement address in 1969 because of his pro-abortion stand, I wonder if these same eighty Catholic educators wrote a similar letter to Notre Dame or President Obama for failing to adhere to the Christian teaching of pro-life.

I also wonder if any of this band of eighty ever criticized other politicians, like Nancy Pelosi and John Kerry, both cafeteria Catholics, who are pro-abortion and living in open defiance of Catholic teaching.

The missive also criticizes the tax cuts for the wealthy. This brings me to my second point. Who exactly are the wealthy in this country? If you believed President Obama, you're rich if you and your spouse earn \$250,000 a year. Well, to someone earning minimum wage, \$250,000 sounds like a whole lot of money. Actually, to most people, including me, \$250,000 is a lot of money. But does earning that amount make someone "rich"?

I don't know how you define "rich," but, in my opinion, if someone, no matter what age, can stop working today, and still maintain the same lifestyle he or she enjoyed while working, relying only on their accumulated assets, I would consider that person "rich." But then the next question is, "so what?" If that person has been able to amass a sufficient estate to take care of himself and his family, for the rest of his life, without government assistance, I say, "GREAT!" and the government shouldn't penalize someone for making money, investing it, and planning ahead for their family's future.

Which brings me to my final point. The poor. How do you define "poor"? I find this question a lot harder to answer. Rich people either inherit their money or earn it. On the other hand, the issue of poverty, whatever your definition of

poverty is, results from a wide variety of factors.

There was a time in this country when family, friends, church and community took care of the poor. That's the way it should be. Those who provided the help and those who received help were accountable to each another. The community knew when someone needed help and the person in need could not scam the givers. People gave voluntarily.

But then the government stuck its nose somewhere it didn't belong. The 9-to-5 civil servants who couldn't wait to punch out, started doling out money to anyone who asked for it, without any concern whether there was a legitimate need or not. After all, it wasn't the government workers' money – so who cared?

The coffers have been hemorrhaging money ever since and the lines of those with their hands out have gotten longer and longer.

President Obama, for example, is a perfect example of someone who wants to force charitable giving by being “neighborly,” a euphemism for income redistribution.

Of course, there are people who are in real need. But, because there's no real oversight, no one will ever be able to determine who is deserving of public assistance. The entitlement monster created by the government is so gigantic and out of control at this point, it's impossible to stop the fraud even though we're \$14 trillion in debt and can't afford to continue to throw money away.

In my line of work, child abuse and neglect, I've seen so much government waste trying to provide families with services. I've seen parents who receive bus passes to visit their children turn around and sell those passes for drugs. I've seen parents who receive aid panhandle and pick up a hundred bucks a day. How about the guy in Michigan who won \$2 million in a lottery but continued for nearly a year to swipe his food

stamp electronic card? When questioned about it, he said, "If you're going to ...try to make me feel bad, you aren't going to do it." And let's not forget the \$1.4 billion of Katrina funds used by scammers to fund vacations, porno and a sex change operation.

It's also unbelievable to me that someone could actually receive 99 weeks of unemployment benefits for not working. How many people are receiving benefits but have cash-paying jobs on the side? Just like welfare, being handed money by the government for doing nothing clearly removes the incentive for looking for a job. I wonder how many people miraculously find work after their benefits run out.

Because government is involved, there's no way to ever track dishonest people who scam the system. We're now seeing how difficult it is to stop these handouts to anyone who asks for them under the guise of being "needy" or "poor."

Speaker Boehner is trying to rein in spending but the recipients and their spokesmen, like those eighty Catholic educators, are yelling and screaming, "You can't stop giving away free money to people who do nothing for it because they're needy and poor." Really? By whose definition?

I'm afraid I do get it – it's the nature of the beast.