

# WHO'S GAMING THE SYSTEM NOW?

Contributed by Jim Jordal  
Thursday, 28 May 2015

## WHO'S GAMING THE SYSTEM NOW?

By Jim  
Jordal

### Get into

almost any discussion of poverty and its causes and you'll likely hear the same thing: "It's all those welfare people who are "gaming the system" by taking advantage of provisions in the decades old "safety net" to exploit them for their own good. They are perceived as failing to live up to their moral responsibilities as people, parents, and citizens, and are seen as "drags" on the economic system.

### The concept

of an economic safety net to catch those unfortunates who fail to "make it" under existing economic conditions has been around for a long time, but it came into increased prominence during the Great Depression of the 1930s. What the New Deal designers had in mind was a network of governmentally-funded strategies to get people back to work, prime the pump of productivity, build renewed confidence in the economy, and reduce the sense of fear pervading the land. What the designers evidently failed to consider is that gamers of the system would exist at the top as well as the bottom of the economic pyramid of wealth. Granted, there are far more gamers at the bottom than at the top. What we don't consider is that those at the bottom, while many, are exposed every day as their schemes collapse or are publicly revealed. What we don't hear of is the far fewer, but vastly more damaging, attempts by those few at the top to use their money, power, and influence to purchase legislation and regulatory decisions designed solely to keep their places at the top of the income pyramid and to prevent any attempts to unseat them.

### The prophet

Isaiah says it very clearly: "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers who write oppressive decrees; to deprive the needy from justice, and to rob the poor among my people of their rights, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!" (Isa. 10:1-2 WEB). So just who are the "writers of oppressive decrees"? One major player is the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) that, according to on-line encyclopedia Wikipedia is a "nonprofit organization of conservative state legislators and private sector representatives that drafts and shares model legislation" to state legislators on pending issues, albeit from a business point-of-view. Wikipedia reports that recent subjects for ALEC efforts have been "reducing corporate regulation and taxation; loosening environmental regulations, weakening labor unions, promoting gun rights, and tightening voter ID rules."

These proposed programs have the effect of denying justice to the masses while transferring economic and political freedom for corporations to do whatever will increase their profits. The result is not merely new legislation, but a calculated attempt to move existing power balances toward the rich and powerful, and their ideas of privilege and continuing control over our economy and political system.

Their attempts have been successful enough so that we might seriously question whether we live in a democracy or in a corporate oligarchy designed to transfer wealth and power up the pyramid of wealth. Truth no longer matters; it's public perception and how one can skew it with misinformation and lots of noise.

Yes, the poor do often game the social welfare system, but their actions constitute mainly theft from the public trough by individuals and families rather than by redesigning the system to reward privilege and power with literally trillions of dollars per year in unearned, unneeded, and undeserved benefits.

A primary reason for the fall of the Roman Empire was that money gradually corrupted the integrity of the Roman Senate as power and votes were bought and sold in the political market. This moral decay spread into the empire as the formerly bedrock trust in the empire became corroded, allowing portions to break away as their confidence in benefits of Roman citizenship disappeared.

Think about the political situation in America today. It's no secret that massive contributions to secret political action committees will skew election results. One of the worst pieces of political and social injustice ever to exist is the 2010 Supreme Court decision in the infamous Citizens United case that allows most of the massive corporate spending for political purposes to enjoy protection under constitutional rights of free speech. Who's gaming the system now?