



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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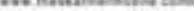
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‘Entitlement Programs’ Serve Elderly

Republicans have made it clear that their next budget goal is to slash so-called entitlement programs. Democrats have failed to explain to the public that the misnamed programs are valuable and prevent millions of Americans, many of them elderly or children, from living in poverty. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities issued a report last week that found: “Social Security benefits play a vital role in reducing poverty. Without Social Security, 22.2 million more Americans would be poor, according to the latest available Census data (for 2012). Although most of those whom Social Security keeps out of poverty are elderly, nearly a third are under age 65, including 1 million children. Depending on their design, reductions in Social Security benefits could significantly increase poverty, particularly among the elderly.”

The report explained, “Almost 90 percent of people aged 65 and older receive some of their family income from Social Security. Without Social Security benefits, 44.4 percent of elderly Americans would have incomes below the official poverty line, all else being equal; with Social Security benefits, only 9.1 percent do. These benefits lift 15.3 million elderly Americans — including 9.0 million women — above the poverty line.”

Medicare has proven equally as effective. Yet, Republicans like to pretend that the U.S. is quickly moving toward an entitlement society.

However, CBPP issued a report last year titled, “Contrary to ‘Entitlement Society’ Rhetoric, Over Nine-Tenths of Entitlement Benefits Go to Elderly, Disabled, or Working Households.”



THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry

It stated, “More than 90 percent of the benefit dollars that entitlement and other mandatory programs spend go to assist people who are elderly, seriously disabled, or members of working households — not to able-bodied, working-age Americans who choose not to work. This figure has changed little in the past few

programs went to the elderly (people 65 and over), the seriously disabled, and members of working households. People who are neither elderly nor disabled — and do not live in a working household — received only 9 percent of the benefits.

“Moreover, the vast bulk of that 9 percent goes for medical care, unemployment insurance benefits (which individuals must have a significant work history to receive), Social Security survivor benefits for the children and spouses of deceased workers, and Social Security benefits for retirees between ages 62 and 64. Seven out of the 9 percentage points go for one of these four purposes.”

President Obama has suggested a more balanced approach, with cuts being matched by closing some of the loopholes for the wealthy

years.”

It stated, “The claim behind these critiques is clear: federal spending on entitlements and other mandatory programs through which individuals receive benefits is promoting laziness, creating a dependent class of Americans who are losing the desire to work and would rather collect government benefits than find a job.

“Such beliefs are starkly at odds with the basic facts regarding social programs, the analysis finds. Federal budget and Census data show that, in 2010, 91 percent of the benefit dollars from entitlement and other mandatory

The research also shatters another myth, the idea that entitlement programs shift resources for the middle class to the poor.

“The data show that the middle class receives approximately its proportionate share of benefits: in 2010, the middle 60 percent of the population received 58 percent of the entitlement benefits. The top 20 percent of the population received 10 percent of the benefits; the bottom 20 percent received 32 percent of the benefits.”

Even with a sluggish economy, Congress seems unwilling to support those on food stamps, now called SNAP — Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program. Under the 2009 Recovery Act, recipients received a 13.6 percent temporary boost in benefits. However, that provision is set to expire on Nov. 1, resulting in a \$80 a month loss for a family of four. That means SNAP benefits will average less than \$1.40 per person per meal in fiscal 2014.

Instead of continuing to help those in dire need, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (R-Ok.) introduced legislation in September cutting SNAP by at least \$39 billion over the next decade.

To his credit, President Obama has suggested a more balanced approach, with cuts being matched by closing some of the loopholes for the wealthy.

According to the Tax Policy Center, the top fifth of the population receives 66 percent of tax-expenditure benefits, the middle 60 percent of the population receives a little more than 31 percent of tax-expenditure benefits, the bottom fifth receives just 2.8 percent of tax-expenditure benefits and the top 1 percent of the population receives 23.9 percent of tax-expenditure benefits. And the report pointed out, “That’s more than eight times as much as the bottom fifth of the population, and nearly as much as the middle 60 percent of the population.”

It’s time for President Obama and Democratic leaders to show that they can stand up to Teapublicans more than once.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service.

Don Yelton: Look Who’s ‘Lazy’ and ‘Crazy’

Voter suppression is alive and well, especially in the state of North Carolina, where a Republican official, Don Yelton, proved himself to be at best intellectually limited, and at worse, downright crazy.

While discussing North Carolina’s new voter ID law, Yelton made some absurd and incendiary statements. “The law is going to kick the Democrats in the butt. If it hurts a bunch of college kids [that are] too lazy to get up off their bohunkas and go get a photo ID, so be it. If it hurts a bunch of whites, so be it.”

Yelton continued, “If it hurts a bunch of lazy blacks that want the government to give them everything, so be it,”

What is wrong with this man? Has he no decency? He tipped his hand by telling the world what he really thinks, and indicating what the so-called voter ID laws are really about. These laws are about suppressing likely Democratic votes. They are about racism and racist attitudes. These attitudes don’t belong in these United States of America 150 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Who the heck is Don Yelton, anyway? He’s a local North Car-



BENNETT COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

olina precinct chair who initially answered questions about his interview with some belligerence. “I’ve been called a bigot before,” he said before adding that his best friend is Black. Then he goes on

the past because they are frightened of our multicultural future.

I am waiting for someone to tell me that Yelton is “just one person” and that his views do not represent those of the Republican Party. I’m also waiting for ants to eat snakes. I am certain that Yelton has used these kinds of comments before. Is this the first time he has been reprimanded?

To apply the word “lazy” to students and African Americans is disingenuous, racist, and insulting. Yelton seemed careful, though, not to ignore senior citizens, some of who might be

laws, fewer polling places, and other methods of keeping voters away from the polls. These efforts to “kick Democrats in the butt” by attacking likely Democratic voters ought to mobilize voters to outmaneuver and out vote these people who are so crazy that they call others lazy. The lazy comment is connected to racist stereotypes. Somebody needs to remind Yelton that the plantation and sharecropping systems that North Carolina’s economy rested on for at least a century was staffed by “lazy” people who were constantly being ripped off for their labor.

Shame on Don Yelton for being crazy enough to call hard working students and African Americans lazy. Shame on the Republican Party that he purports to represent. And shame on the state of North Carolina for its attempt to suppress the vote. Shame, too, on the other states around the nation who, like North Carolina, who have made voter suppression a priority.

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Editor’s note: Yelton resigned last week after his remarks were aired on “The Daily Show.”

to talk about the “n” word, saying that if African Americans can use the word, then so can he.

Of course, Yelton was reprimanded by his party. He ended up resigning over his comments. But no one reprimanded Mitt Romney over his 47 percent comments, and no one has reprimanded the many Republican racists who cling to

challenged to get new ID. Yelton’s comments are especially revealing of the contempt that some elected officer for their constituents. Now that Republicans control both houses of the North Carolina legislature, some feel free to say what they really think.

This is not a North Carolina problem. Many states want to suppress the vote with new voter ID