



Entitlements: A Declaration of Dependence

In its simplest terms — terms most believed by those who were intellectually raised on a diet of mainstream media and government schools — July 4 celebrates the independence that our Founding Fathers achieved from the British in 1776. But it's much deeper than that. When they cut ties with the motherland, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and the other signers of the Declaration of Independence were also cutting ties — then and for the future — from onerous forms of government. They were founding a nation, perchance heaven on Earth, based on the basic yet so magnificent premise that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."



The Founding Fathers believed that we as individuals were just as independent as our embryonic nation was from Great Britain. Our singular destinies — and thus collectively, the destiny of America — were based in self-determination. We — not the government — were to decide how we lived our lives. The new form of self-rule that they were devising at the time (which was so eloquently defined by the Constitution 11 years later) ensured that government was an object of and by the people (the states formed the federal government, not vice versa), and was there only to provide for an environment that guaranteed our natural rights and ensured that no one, not even the government itself, infringed upon those rights and prevented anyone from pursuing his life's dreams.

The times have changed, however. Many of the same Americans who last week celebrated our formative document and its philosophies have willingly decided to abandon those tenets. They clamor for a form of government that our nation won its freedom *from*. Slowly but surely, even subconsciously, they have declared their *dependence*. They want a ruling body that will do more than create and execute the rule of law. They want and need a ruling body that will provide for their everyday comforts — one that, in defiance of the Declaration of Independence, will not allow the pursuit of Happiness but rather will *issue* Happiness, or at least a sickeningly limited version of it.

Look no further than two entitlement programs, which, thanks to the advances of modern science and its impact on the length of our lifespan, have the potential to be the bedrock and subsistence for one-third of our lives. Since these programs were introduced in 1935 (Social Security) and 1965 (Medicare), Americans have grown to believe they absolutely cannot live without them in their golden years. They want government, and essentially the people and businesses it robs from, to give them the income and healthcare they need to survive as they age — things they should have been planning for in their early working years.



Written by [Robert Confer](#) on July 11, 2011

This dependence has been made grossly apparent by public sentiment in recent months. As Congress and the White House have duked it out over short-term deficits and the long-term solvency of our nation, some of the more conservative Republicans have called for cuts in or complete overhauls of these programs. In a perfect world (at least that dreamed of by those of us who actually believe in our founding principles), these unconstitutional monstrosities would be ended. But such thoughts are considered “fringe” or “dangerous” by the masses, because most Americans, despite the well-known financial flaws of Social Security and Medicare, want them left as is. Even ardent Republicans view any modification, no matter how slight, as an atrocity. An AP poll conducted in May verified this: 54 percent of Americans thought Social Security should be left alone while nearly 60 percent felt the same about Medicare.

Such surveys are not a frightening mirage. Proof of their basis could be found in the May special election for New York’s 26th Congressional District where Democrat Kathy Hochul handily won the historically Republican seat because she emphasized that Medicare was vitally important and her opponent’s plans to modify it were an affront to the people of her district.

It’s obvious that the majority don’t value independence. Last week they should have locked their doors and stayed away from any and all of the July 4 festivities. Celebrating as they did was a display of total hypocrisy.

If they truly believed in what the day stands for, they should be demanding that the government get out of the retirement business and put an end to the taxes it extracts from productive sectors of the economy in an effort to make entitlement programs work. This would allow every one of us to pursue Happiness as we see fit.

Isn’t that what America — *and independence*— is all about?



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