



entitlements

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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- We learn in the video that, "...the American government, both federal and state, has become... a vast entitlements machine whose primary function is to dispense benefits. Indeed, federal and state governments now devote more attention and resources to the public transfer of money, goods and services to individual citizens than to anything else." Do you think that this is what the founders envisioned for America? Why or why not? How and why did this become the case? Should redistributing the taxpayers money be the primary function of government? Why or why not?
- We learn from Mr. Eberstadt that, "Specifically, this [American independence] meant an affinity for personal enterprise, a horror of dependency and a disdain for anything that smacked of a hand out." Why do you think that most Americans used to be ashamed to receive economic government assistance? Should they have been? Why or why not?
- Mr. Eberstadt points out that, "From cradle to grave, a treasure chest of government-supplied benefits is there for the taking for every American citizen – and exercising one's legal rights to these many gifts is now part of the American way of life." What fundamental factors do you think contributed to Americans gradually changing their value judgments (something being good or bad) regarding having to rely on the government for food, medical care, etc...? When and why do you think it become socially acceptable to freeload off of American taxpayers?
- Mr. Eberstadt contends that, "...having been raised increasingly on the taker mentality and accustomed to accepting government benefits, it's not clear that the young understand the future they face as the cost of these promises far exceed the nation's provision to pay for them." What exactly does Mr. Eberstadt mean? What future does the young face, especially in terms of entitlement programs?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr Eberstadt warns that America's current economic advantages, "...will not postpone the day of reckoning for the American character," but, "Then again, perhaps they [the younger generation] will demand reform, and bring us back to an America more committed to personal responsibility and less dependent on government generosity." What does Mr. Eberstadt mean by 'American character?' What would a 'day of reckoning be?' Do you think that the younger generation will swing the pendulum back towards Americans taking care of themselves? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Foodstamps

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Federal Food Stamp Program Spent Record \$80.4B in FY 2012,” then answer the questions that follow.

- How much more did the federal government spend on food stamps in fiscal year 2012 than FY 2011? What do you think are the primary factors for such an increase?
- We learn in the article that, “...SNAP outlays increased by \$42 billion between 2007 and 2011, and the number of SNAP participants increased by 70 percent.” What do you think accounts for such a significant increase in participants? Why do you think that so many people are choosing to sign up for foodstamps?
- Where does the money for foodstamp programs come from? Where do you think it will come from in the future? How long do you think that the federal government can continue to fund such significant increases? Why?



QUIZ

THE GOVERNMENT VS. THE AMERICAN CHARACTER

1. The American government has become:
 - a. A great source of jobs for its citizens.
 - b. Smaller over time.
 - c. More efficient.
 - d. A vast entitlement machine whose primary function is to dispense benefits.

2. By 2010, entitlement payments accounted for about _____ of all federal spending.
 - a. 1/4
 - b. 1/3
 - c. 2/3
 - d. 1/2

3. Government spending includes:
 - a. Income maintenance.
 - b. Medicaid.
 - c. Social Security.
 - d. All of the above.

4. From the founding of the US until quite recently, Americans have been regarded as:
 - a. Boring
 - b. Exceptional
 - c. Lazy
 - d. None of the above

5. Who is going to pay to everything?
 - a. Congress.
 - b. The younger generations.
 - c. A rich President.
 - d. The current generation.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/federal-food-stamp-program-spent-record-804b-fy-2012>

Federal Food Stamp Program Spent Record \$80.4B in FY 2012

By [Patrick Burke](#) | January 4, 2013 | 12:48 PM EST



(AP Image)

(CNSNews.com) -- During fiscal year 2012, the U.S. government spent a record \$80.4 billion on food stamps, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a \$2.7 billion increase from FY 2011. (Fiscal year 2012 ran from Oct. 1, 2011 through Sept. 30, 2012.)

According to the [Monthly Treasury Statement](#) that summarizes the receipts and outlays of the federal government, \$80,401,000,000 went towards SNAP during FY 2012, which was a \$2.7 billion increase from \$77,637,000,000 in FY 2011.

The SNAP program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which also runs other food assistance programs under the auspices of the Food and Nutrition Service Agency.

In total, nearly \$106 billion was spent on food assistance in 2012, with \$18.3 billion that went to “Child Nutrition Programs.”

Total federal spending on SNAP has increased each year during President Obama’s first term in office. In FY 2009 -- when SNAP was still known as the “Food Stamp” program - the government spent approximately \$55.6 billion.

By FY 2010, SNAP spending increased to nearly \$70.5 billion. Between FY 2009 and FY 2012, SNAP’s budget jumped by approximately \$24.8 billion.

According to an [April 2012 report](#) from the Congressional Budget Office, SNAP outlays increased by \$42 billion between 2007 and 2011, and the number of SNAP participants increased by 70 percent.

During FY 2012, the U.S. government ran a \$1.089 trillion dollar deficit, down from nearly \$1.3 trillion in FY 2011.