



Dutchess County Young Republicans



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Landmark 1996 Welfare Reform Stealthily Overturned by Obama's Economic Stimulus Bill

The Economic Stimulus Bill, recently signed into law by President Obama, secretly overturned the landmark Welfare Reform Act of 1996 passed by President Clinton and Congressional Republicans without debate or disclosure. The elimination of the 1996 welfare reform will result in one of the most dramatic increases to the welfare system the country has ever seen. Gone will be accountability in a program that cut welfare rolls by 80%, replaced instead by a system that financially rewards states for adding people to the welfare roll.

The Welfare Reform Act of 1996's primary objective was to shift how state welfare programs were funded. Prior to the Act, states were offered incentives by the federal government to increase their welfare rolls. The reform created a system where funding was based on a flat-rate, where there was no increased funding or benefit to increasing the caseload. This resulted in promoting states to discourage welfare dependency at a savings to American taxpayers. The act proved successful in reducing the dependency of welfare throughout the country and encouraged states to push a welfare-to-work ideology. Now, with passage of the Barack Obama Stimulus Plan the United States will return to a bonus-based system that will promote increased welfare rolls at the expense of American taxpayers and without incentive to move people off welfare and into self-sufficiency.

The Economic Stimulus Act of 2009's abolishment of welfare reform will also lower the dignity of men and women by perpetually fostering a spirit of dependency. At the same time it increases government spending, increases the size of government, and creates unsustainable government systems that are sure to have long standing impacts on future generations. Republican legislators were right to have voted no on the package.

It is disappointing and unfortunate that President Obama and Congressional Democrats would end a successful and bipartisan 13-year-old welfare reform policy by cunningly concealing it in an economic stimulus package without debate, without transparency, and without bipartisan support. The American people deserve more responsibility, transparency, and honesty from their Democrat leadership.

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