



What Lies Beneath the USA

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In late August 2009, hurricane Katrina slammed into the gulf coast of Louisiana unleashing a brutal and ruthless side of Mother Nature that few Americans had ever witnessed. Days following the violent storm revealed a crude social tragedy that galvanized the world and our country alike. Scenes of suffering and conditions of extreme poverty could have easily formed the backdrop of an impoverished province in a poor country somewhere in Africa. But here in America where some of the richest people in the world reside? Where some privileged citizens relish in the luxury of spending upwards of \$100 million on prized paintings? The answer is yes. This is the segment of America ruined by government entitlements.

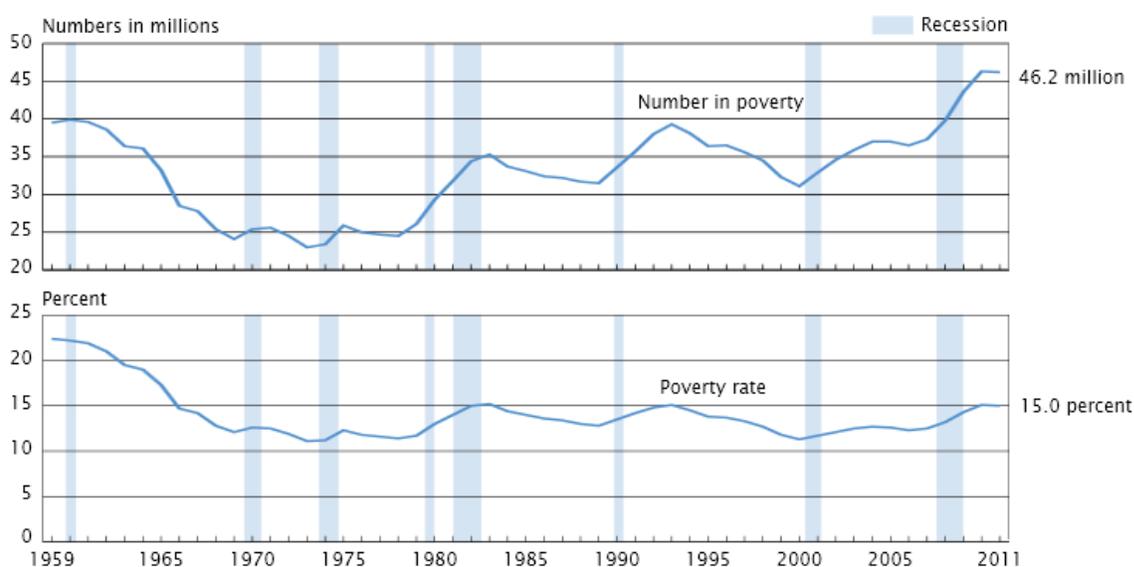
The aftermath of hurricane Katrina exposed a heartbreaking reality in which some of our fellow Americans live. It is a reality that exposes the ugly evangelization of politics. Politicians in every election cycle have treated these less fortunate individuals like mental and physically disabled victims, consoling their frustration and social injustice by promoting tax payers redistribution of wealth. These constituents have been brainwashed into believing that their poverty and misfortune are attributed solely to the color of their skin.

Last week the world and our country were once again impacted by the gruesome anarchy and madness of which mankind is clearly capable. In Ferguson, Missouri, the judicial verdict of a black youngster who was killed by a police officer reminded our country about a series of social issues faced by a number of black communities in our country today.

Some people remain focused on the isolated fact that a white police officer shot and killed a black man minutes after he stole merchandise in a local store. Clearly they are missing the scope of the true reality because the bottom line is not about race but what lies beneath the lack of opportunities, education and progress for some communities.

Racism, prejudice, discrimination and bigots exist all over the world. Certainly America has progressed substantially otherwise a black man would not serve as President of our country. Even a black person is the CEO of American Express, the symbol of capitalism, flamboyance and worldwide wealth. We must consider the fact that in some poverty stricken black communities black men are robbing, killing, violating law enforcement, burning property, dealing drugs and raping fellow black women. Herein lies the tragedy that capsizes opportunities for these people trapped in the hopes and promises that liberal politicians bring on Election Day.

Figure 4.
Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate: 1959 to 2011



Note: The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years. For information on recessions, see Appendix A.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1960 to 2012 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war against poverty in 1964, our country has spent more than \$17 trillion fighting this battle. Guess what? The rate of poverty in America today averages 15% a strikingly similar figure to the one of fifty years ago - simply inconceivable and outrageous!

Under the current governmental plan, the war against poverty that provides food stamps, housing benefits and welfare for qualified recipients is lost and will never be resolved by only sponsoring immediate needs. Reinforcing longer term solutions instead of approving alcohol and cigarette licenses for convenience stores inward of these populace.

Consider the case of Cabrini-Green in Chicago, a racially segregated location that many called the Apartheid of the north side of the city erected and made possible by the local housing authority. Surrounded by two liquor stores in less than a mile, these massive red brick projects hosted hundreds of black families and individuals forced to take the daily risk and hustle perpetrated by drug dealers and gangsters. Notorious are the miserable living conditions void of air conditioning to cool the boiling heat of summer infamous for causing the death of more than 650 Chicago citizens during the summer of 1995.

What the local housing authorities created was nothing more than a ghetto, a shameful welfare experiment that our society should condemn and never perpetrate on our people again.

As always, it is the private sector that comes to the rescue, taking the initiative and risk. Jewel Supermarket chain is one such example along with other stores and private developers that changed the future of this area in Chicago. They demonstrated stellar example that implementation of good ideas and solid policies can improve the lives of impoverished Americans. Among other ideas, individual states should put tax incentives into practice to relocate small production plants and training centers to recruit potential labor force within respective communities.

Ladies and gentlemen: early pregnancy, childbirth out of wedlock, dropping out of high school, drug abuse and alcohol addiction, obesity and domestic violence are not innate tendencies controlled by DNA.

As long as welfare exists and trillions of dollars wasted do not focus on education, job training and opportunities, the country will be forced and condemned to face the lowest point of its social issues time and again. Let us help people not by giving them free money but by gifting them the skills and education that they need to move forward in life.

Luis E. Woolley