

Cap-and-trade vs. freedom



by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=2365#more-2365>

There is a very small but power-packed book entitled, *The Law - The Classic Blueprint for a Free Society*, that was written in 1849 by Frederic Bastiat, a Frenchman who saw that America's form of government was the most free in the world.

He spoke in similar terms as our own Declaration of Independence when he wrote, "Life, faculties, production - in other words individuality, liberty, property - that is man. And in spite of the cunning of artful political leaders, these three gifts from God precede all human legislation, and are superior to it."

Bastiat recognized that where there was property, there was also plunder, writing, "Man can live and satisfy his wants only by ceaseless labor; by the ceaseless application of his faculties to natural resources. This process is the origin of property. But it is also true that a man may live and satisfy his wants by seizing and consuming the products of the labor of others. This is the origin of plunder."

And how could plunder be stopped? "It stops when it becomes more painful and more dangerous than labor", said Bastiat, explaining that that is the "proper purpose of law".

As I write this article, the House of Representatives has passed the so-called "Cap and Trade" bill and has sent it to the Senate.

The talk shows are abuzz with disapproval, due to the fact that no one in Congress has even read the thirteen hundred page bill.

But others have, and are sounding the alarm that this bill will give the government virtual control over most aspects of our lives. It threatens our financial existence, takes away many of our freedoms, and puts us solidly on the track for socialism. The proponents of this bill, nearly all Democrats, would use this bill to plunder the wealth of the American people.

Bastiat had something to say about this kind of plunder. He wrote, "It is impossible to introduce into society a greater change and a greater evil than this: the conversion of the law into an instrument of plunder."

Bastiat divides plunder into two categories, illegal plunder (meaning actual theft) and legal plunder (meaning use of the law to steal). He determines what is and is not legal plunder with a simple test. "See

if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime.”

He further describes legal plunder writing, “now legal plunder can be committed in an infinite number of ways. Thus we have an infinite number of plans for organizing it; tariffs, protection, benefits, subsidies, encouragements, progressive taxation, public schools, guaranteed jobs, guaranteed profits, minimum wages, a right to relief, a right to the tools of labor, free credit, and so on, and so on.

All these plans as a whole - with their common aim of legal plunder - constitute socialism...Socialists desire to practice legal plunder, not illegal plunder. Socialists, like all other monopolists, desire to make the law their own weapon.”

This cap-and-trade bill represents the plunder of America. Haven't the stimulus bills done enough damage? Haven't we been saddled with enough debt and lack of confidence in our economy?

Is not the specter of inflation even larger than it was in the late seventies and early eighties, when it devastated so many families?

Why do not the Democrats (and some Republicans) not object to this outrageously oppressive bill? Are they so arrogant that they believe this will not destroy our economy or our freedoms?

If this bill is passed, many people will lose their homes, their jobs, their businesses, their livelihoods, and for no good reason other than to accomplish a socialist political agenda.

America has withstood similar assaults in its past, but none so severe, so dangerous as this one. Our government has become the plunderer of the American people.

Let us pray that this horrible bill goes down in defeat, in addition to the universal health care bill.

These bills are not the way to solve America's problems. Americans must wake up and take back the Congress in the mid-term elections in 2010 and the Presidency in 2012.

Walter E. Williams, who wrote the introduction to the English version of Bastiat's book wrote, “Americans share an awesome burden and responsibility. If liberty dies in the United States, it is destined to die everywhere.”

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