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OPINION

Socialism Versus Societal Awareness – There's A Difference

Fall election not between freedom or socialism

Pecco Beaufays

In Louise Andrus's Opinion piece, published in the June *Beacon*, she ends with the statement "I believe the election in the Fall will decide New Hampshire's future, either Freedom or Socialism." In my opinion, that's a false choice. One ideology does not necessarily exclude the other.

Perhaps she should explain her take on "socialism" as it applies to our American society. Nobody is proposing replacing the ideology of private enterprise with socialistic, collective ownership. In this case, the "social" aspect of life in the United States applies to social entitlements for every citizen, to level the field through equal access to education, health care, and invested "entitlements," such as veteran's benefits and pensions.

For a cursory reference, the reader can go to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_market_economy to find a lengthy explanation of the Social Economy developed in Germany and copied by other successful countries.

One paragraph explains it best: "The 'social' segment is often wrongly confused with socialism and democratic socialism and although aspects were inspired by the latter, the social market approach rejects the socialist ideas of replacing private property and markets with social ownership and economic planning. The 'social' element to the model instead refers to support for the provision of equal opportunity and protection of those unable to enter the free market labor force because of old-age, disability, or unemployment."

What does "societal" awareness mean for our citizens? A responsible family unit strives to be healthy, well fed, and well educated. Communities

within our country will be more productive and successful when its citizens have affordable access to health care, education, and food on the table.

In the United States of today we have two political parties whose partisans look at issues from two different standpoints: The Republicans and right-wing factions espouse an ideology of small government without services, and say "please, do not interfere in my life." However, that ideology would remove "social" entitlements such as Social Security, government pensions paid to federal, state, municipal employees and many first responders. It would do away with workman's compensation, unemployment benefits, Employer Paid Health Insurance (which millions of Americans still do not receive), Medicare, Medicaid, Federal Student Loans, and Scholarships. Many of the people who say they favor a society that provides no services would find themselves unable to cope if those benefits were to vanish and strain to pay for their livelihood - rent, doctor bills, fees for services as well as higher education.

The Democrats, inaccurately labeled as "Socialists" by many Republicans, stand for and defend community responsibility for all American society, recognizing that a healthy and educated society is more productive. For this reason, Democrats support just entitlements for its citizens providing access to adequate healthcare, Medicaid, Medicare, living minimum wages, and Social Security benefits, and quality public education. These "social" services are essentially like insurance paid for by every taxpayer to benefit the health and well-being of American citizens who live and contribute to our American "society." This is not "Socialism" in the sense of the word defined as "collective

See Awareness on page 19

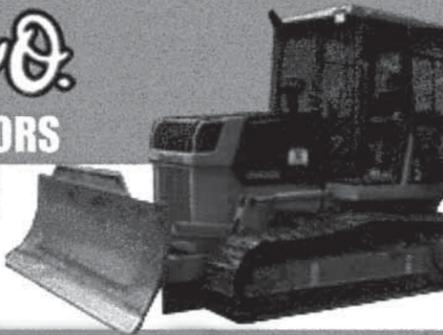
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