



Written by [Brian Farmer](#) on March 26, 2009

Legislating Altruism

President Barack Obama has a very different agenda. For example, on the campaign trail, he said that he would "set a goal for all American middle and high-school students to perform 50 hours of service a year, and for all college students to perform 100 hours of service a year." Left unsaid, of course, were the details of how he intended to accomplish that. The obvious way to do so would be to make such service compulsory by attaching strings to federal education dollars. The schools would ultimately make the kids "volunteer" to do community service as a requirement for graduation.



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In a commencement speech at Wesleyan University, Obama advised graduates to serve others, saying, "Our collective service can shape the destiny of this generation. Individual salvation depends on collective salvation." Thus, Obama reveals his world view to be that of a collectivist, not an individualist.

Individualism holds that every person exists for his own sake, that he has inalienable rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, and that governments are instituted to secure those rights. Collectivism, on the other hand, holds that each person exists not for his own sake, but for the sake of the group. The implication is that governments do not exist to secure individual rights, but to look after the welfare of the group, thereby turning individuals into virtual sacrificial beings.

A passage from Aldous Huxley's *A Brave New World* perfectly describes what President Obama would like to accomplish:

A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude. To make them love it is the task assigned ... to ministries of propaganda, newspaper editors and schoolteachers.

If that sounds a bit harsh or extreme, it is only because we have not yet reached that endgame. However, we are definitely heading in that direction, judging from legislation presently under consideration. On March 18 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1388, the "Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act" (GIVE Act) by a vote of 321-105. The Senate has taken up its companion bill, S. 277, called the SERVE Act, and voted 74-14 on March 23 to invoke cloture (preventing a filibuster) on a motion to proceed to consideration of the measure.

The GIVE/SERVE bills reauthorize the Clinton administration's AmeriCorps and allocate enough funding to expand it from 75,000 to 250,000 enrollees. In addition, the legislation calls for the creation of several new volunteer corps, including a clean energy corps, an education corps, a healthy futures corps, and a veterans corps. Ostensibly, the programs would be designed to provide incentives for middle-school, high-school, and college students, as well as senior citizens, to participate in volunteer



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community service. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the cost of the programs would come to around \$6 billion over five years.

Those who are familiar with the history of AmeriCorps know all too well how federal government volunteer programs have been used for political purposes. The so-called “volunteers” of AmeriCorps have been put to use lobbying against certain anti-crime initiatives in California, protesting at Republican political events, and working for such liberal advocacy groups as the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), which became notorious for perpetrating massive voter registration fraud in the most recent presidential election.

And as reported in a recent Michelle Malkin column, “D.C. watchdog group Citizens Against Government Waste also documented national service volunteers lobbying for rent control, expanded federal housing subsidies and enrollment of more women in the Women, Infants and Children welfare program. AmeriCorps volunteers have also been paid to shuffle paper at the Department of Justice, the Department of Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Legal Services Corporation and the National Endowment for the Arts.”

In other words, the GIVE and SERVE Acts are not so much about promoting genuine and effective charity as they are about creating slush funds and make-work bureaucracies which promote a left-wing agenda, while masquerading as altruists working for the general welfare.

The provisions of the GIVE and SERVE Acts may sound innocuous and well-intentioned. But history shows that unconstitutional, socialist programs almost invariably start out that way. Then they are expanded, step by step, often through stealth, until they are financially burdensome and a threat to our rights and freedoms.

In the parable of The Good Samaritan, the Samaritan helped the man who was beaten and robbed. Jesus said, “Go and do likewise.” Jesus did not say, “Go and force others to do likewise.” But President Obama wants the federal government to force us to be altruistic. That is not the proper role of government. That is an abuse of government.

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