



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 20, 2021

## When “Woke” Politicians Take People’s Food Stores Away

Because Long Beach politicians are short on common sense, not to mention common decency, their constituents are now closer to living in a “food desert.” At issue is the closure of two of the California city’s major grocery stores as the result of policy reflecting the AOC School of Economics.

As the *Epoch Times* [reports](#):

Grocery chain [Kroger](#) said it closed down two [California stores](#) Saturday after the Long Beach City Council approved a COVID-19-related “hero pay” ordinance that increased wages by \$4 per hour.

The pay increase, [mandated in January](#), was for workers who were employed at pharmacies and retail stores with 300 or more employees in the Southern California city.

The move was announced earlier this year, but the Ralph’s and Food 4 Less — both operated by Kroger — were shut down on April 17, employees told local media outlets.

“As a result of the City of Long Beach’s decision to pass an ordinance mandating Extra Pay for [grocery](#) workers, we have made the difficult decision to permanently close long-struggling store locations in Long Beach,” said a spokesperson for Kroger several weeks ago. “This misguided action by the Long Beach City Council oversteps the traditional bargaining process and applies to some, but not all, grocery workers in the city.”



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To digress for a moment, this now-common habit of calling people “heroes” for doing their duty — a nauseating example of the bastardization of language — should be addressed. Captured in battle, my



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father was a prisoner of war in Germany during WWII. Yet he would've laughed if you'd called him a hero.

George Washington was a hero. Audie Murphy was a hero. Someone merely doing his duty in the workaday world, virtuous though that is, is not a hero.

Saying otherwise reflects the "participation trophy" phenomenon. Do we really want to linguistically equate the performance of duty — an obligation for everyone — with performance above and beyond the call of duty? And if a goodly percentage of the population now comprises "heroes," what do we call actual heroes?

Answer: They get lumped in with not just a dutiful grocery clerk, but the stoned slacker who breaks your eggs packing your bags.

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Speaking of incompetents, commentator Monica Showalter addresses the store closures and the city council, [writing](#), "So instead of highly compensated 'hero' workers as dictated by the central planners, the city has got 300 more heading for the unemployment lines. Proud of yourselves, morons?"

"It's not as if they didn't have warnings — they most certainly did," she continues. "Los Angeles passed a \$5-an-hour "hero pay" measure and got a wave of shutdowns to show for it."

Groceries also sounded the alarm, pointing out that the pay mandates would spike labor costs 28 percent — and overall costs 4.5 percent — and destroy their paltry 2.2 percent profit margin. This wasn't just a line, either. As [this site](#) relates, supermarkets' profit margins really are only one to three percent.

But it's doubtful the City Council cares. With leftists, it's ideology first, reality second if at all. It's as with the USSR's starving of millions of peasants. The attitude just may be, "If you're not 'good enough' to make our plans work, you're going to suffer!" People don't like having their plans spoiled, and low-virtue types (i.e., leftists) are especially intolerant of it.

Reality doesn't care about our passions, however. And here's another reality: Michelle Obama, self-proclaimed nutrition expert, has spent much time lecturing us about "food deserts" in inner-city areas such as Long Beach (which is [71.8 percent](#) Hispanic/Asian/black). Yet she ought to lecture leftist politicians who do their best to chase businesses from their jurisdictions.

Note here that grocery stores already face increased obstacles in inner cities, with theft and shoplifting more common and security costs higher. It doesn't take much increased regulation to make their situation so untenable that they close shop.

Moreover, there are consequences even if the businesses can weather the storm. For example, the "CGA [California Grocers Association] said it [commissioned a study](#) finding that grocery costs for a family of four could increase by \$400 a year with a \$5-per-hour extra pay mandate, as proposed in Los Angeles County," relates Showalter, quoting a [report](#) by Supermarket News.

Long Beach's narrow thinking isn't surprising, though. As Showalter also tells us about the City Councils' behavior, the facts

didn't stop leftists from yelling in an amazing miasma of ignorant smog and false claims about grocery stores being wicked and evil for not wanting to do business where they would very certainly lose money. I read through some of this crap and couldn't believe my



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eyes. According to [LAProgressive](#), here was the basic tone: “Genocidal U.S. government should take a lesson from the revolutionary people’s government of Cuba. Access to fresh food is a human right and all workers are provided for equally. Profits are never a consideration in ensuring essential services are accessible to all.” Some of the protests [were led by this mad dog, famous leftist Ron Gochez, the freak who disrupted the Cuban Ladies in White rally in Echo Park](#) (I was there, literally next to now-*Epoch Times* columnist Roger Simon) with a Che Guevara banner. Gochez has been involved in a [lot of pro-communist causes; it’s hard to name a really crazy one he isn’t](#). In his day job, [he teaches, or did, in Los Angeles-area public schools](#).

My, a schoolteacher. I’m shocked, *shocked* (in the [Captain Renault](#) sense)!

Yet at the end of the day, if Long Beach residents want better policies, they need to make better voting decisions. Elect stupid politicians, win stupid prizes.



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