

Freedom Matters

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Dane County, Wisconsin

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

A Time for Truth

by Bob Bowman

William Simon, whose son is now running for the office of Governor of California, was Deputy Secretary, and then Secretary, of the Treasury of the United States from 1972 to 1976. The resulting book he wrote, *A Time for Truth* (McGraw-Hill, 1978), stands as a classic of liberal thought — in the earlier meaning of a liberal as a proponent of the liberty of the individual — alongside F. A. Hayek's earlier liberal classic, *The Road to Serfdom*. Simon's book lacks Hayek's philosophical polish, but makes up for it by stating the issues in simple, passionate, human terms.

What both men saw, and what history has confirmed by the most compelling proof, is that governments which are collectivist states, engaged in central planning, destroy themselves and the well being of their own people. Hayek wrote his book in 1944. Simon wrote his in 1978. In resounding proof of their central thesis, the touted Soviet collectivist state and its client states collapsed in devastation and poverty in the late 1980s.

Simon describes the corruption of democracy in stark, simple terms. Here it is, in his own words:

"People have been taught that if they can get together big enough gangs, they have the legal power to hijack other citizens' wealth No decent society can function when men are given such power. A state does need funds, but a clear cutoff line must be established beyond which no political group or institution can confiscate a citizen's honorably earned property. The notion that one can differentiate between "property rights" and "human rights" is ignoble. One need merely see the appalling condition of "human rights" in nations where there are no "property rights" to understand why. This is just a manifestation of the socialist myth which imagines that one can keep men's minds free while enslaving their bodies."

To repeat: if people can get together big enough gangs, they have the legal power to hijack other citizens' wealth. The critic cries out, "No! That doesn't happen in a democracy!" Well, that critic is wrong.

Consider our own Eden of Dane County. Our modern day Eve, the County Executive, proposes in her booklet titled *Farms & Neighborhoods*, and funded by the county,

that the county confiscate half the remaining lot splits of farmers and others in those towns which are under exclusive agricultural zoning. At \$60,000 per buildable lot, that proposes to confiscate about a third of a billion dollars of the market value of their property. She declared that she would use her veto to force this on towns that refused to change their land use plans to do it. Now she's running for governor, as a Democrat. Note. All those people who vote for her are part of her gang.

Consider the Town of Springdale, part of our rich, exclusionary Dane County paradise. In April, 2001, a gang of voters elected new faces to control the town board. The new supervisors claimed they were elected to enact a town land use plan curtailing development, and on March 11, 2002, adopted a plan to confiscate perhaps a million dollars of the worth of every 100 acres of previously developable land. That's over \$100 million dollars confiscated from Springdale landowners. In effect, the voters favoring that plan are confiscating that wealth for their own benefit, without paying for it. To no surprise, the owners of most of the affected land are against it.

Home owners who are part of a gang to create legal means for confiscating their neighbor's land might think they're clever. Think again, for once they create the legal power for such confiscations, they will be next to face it. Madison mayor Sue Bauman was quoted recently as proposing "inclusionary" zoning for the City of Madison. To put this in perspective, the 2002 Springdale Town Plan practices "exclusionary" zoning to keep out development that the biggest gang of voters do not want. The "inclusionary" gang are already moving to confiscate the land use of the exclusionary gang. Big fish eat little fish.

A new tool for this is in proposed federal guidelines for "smart growth," drawn up by the American Planning Association. They call it "amortization of nonconforming uses." Example: if your single family home is rezoned as multi-family, it will not be grandfathered. Instead, you will be given, say, 5 years, to bring it into compliance. If you fail to do so, you will lose it.

You see, the land use laws created by those greedy to take control of their neighbors' land will later be used to take control of the land of those who created that law. In a word, those who legalize theft will next be stolen from, by the next gang. It is already happening.

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