

I Want a Cost-Free Life!



Guest post by Butler Shaffer.

While driving on the freeway the other day, I saw a sign on another car urging me to “demand free energy.” Why the driver failed to include “free food,” “free gasoline,” “free designer clothes,” “free cars,” “free sex,” “free luxury home,” or any other whim was not made clear. This man’s message expressed the whine heard from men and women whose parents never helped them to learn that the causal regularities of nature cannot be suspended for their momentary convenience; that the costs of the benefits we desire must be incurred by someone. Such infantile thinking underlies all political programs – the costs of which are forcibly imposed upon others. The self-serving demands for these programs are usually disguised more subtly as “general welfare,” “social responsibility,” the “public interest,” or other seemingly selfless ends. On occasion – as was the case with this driver – the purposes are more patently expressed, albeit without the foot-stomping tantrums attending such displays in adolescent years. When I see or hear such demands, I am reminded of the childhood lyrics “I want what I want when I want it!”

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