

Voluntaryist Solutions to the Public Benefits and Immigration Problem

December 2018: I read this essay and added commentary for Editor's Break 119 of the EVC podcast.

Ours is a world filled with organized crime, you may call them “governments.” These governments often, in their quest to legitimize and maintain their rule, offer benefits back to those they victimize on a continual basis. Some governments offer more than others. The United States government, and its many smaller federated governments, have created many different benefit programs for those it considers its citizens, and otherwise.

The funds for these public benefits programs ultimately come from citizens and residents. When people from other parts of the world move into the United States, they have more or less the opportunity to obtain these public benefits for themselves. If too many people move into the United States and exploit these public benefits (and eventually vote for more of them), this will have the very real effect of bankrupting governments if they don't act to either limit public benefits or increase revenue generation, such as by what is euphemistically called “taxation.”

What's a voluntaryist, who is a person who recognizes the criminal nature of governments, to do about the problem of immigrants exploiting public benefits? There are several possible solutions to this problem, many of which are consistent with the voluntary principle, that all human relations should happen voluntarily, or not at all, and many of which are not. As a voluntaryist, I do not care to consider or defend solutions that require the violation of the voluntary principle. Here are some which qualify as anti-voluntaryist:

- Having governments *maintain or increase its crime against its citizens* in order to fund the building of a wall or other technological barriers to immigrant entry.
- Having governments *repel peaceful immigrants by the threat and use of violence*.
- Having governments *increase its surveillance of its citizens* in order to monitor for their aiding and abetting of unwelcome immigrants.
- Having governments *coercively interfere with its citizens voluntarily trading with unwelcome immigrants*.

I could go on, but I'm sure that's sufficient to give you an idea of the sorts of solutions that government brings to the problem of public benefits to immigrants. None of these obviously coercive and aggressive solutions appeal to me, nor are any of them compatible with my principles as a voluntaryist. All of them are totally unjust and necessarily violent against peaceful people. So what can be done about this problem? Here are some solutions

which are compatible with the voluntary principle:

- Having governments *severely limit or abolish its public benefits programs*. No public benefits, nothing for immigrants to exploit.
- Having governments *reduce its aggression against free markets and free trade* with people in other places around the world. This would increase the economic opportunities for would-be immigrants at home, decreasing their incentive to leave.
- Having governments *abolish their wars on drugs and other illicit trades*. These policies have had major negative effects on poorer places around the world.
- Having governments *end their foreign wars and occupations*. These interventions have had major negative effects on poorer places around the world.
- Having governments *abolish gun control* so that its citizens have the legal right to defend themselves from attacks by unsavory immigrants.
- Having interested parties *form voluntary education centers* to expose immigrants to voluntaryist thought.
- Having interested parties *open their homes, churches, and community centers to immigrants for the purpose of befriending them* and showing them how to survive in their new land without the need to exploit public benefits.

I'm sure if you really put your mind to it, you too could discover all sorts of peaceful solutions to this problem. It's not difficult. At some point, however, you will realize that your enemy is not the poor immigrant trying to find a better life for himself and his family. Your enemy is organized crime, government. Should those who value peace, liberty, and justice pray to their enemy to coercively protect them from the non-enemies their enemy has incentivized in the first place? Seems stupid to me.