



## THE KOCHS, ENEMIES OF THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Would you like to die in a ditch? How about a relative, a friend? The Kochs are working on it. Here's the story, told about as well as one can tell it, from Nancy MacLean's *Democracy in Chains*:

“Those [like the Kochs] who subscribe to the libertarian philosophy believe that the only legitimate role of government is to ensure the rule of law, guarantee social order, and provide for the national defense. That is why they have long been fervent opponents of Medicare,

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Medicaid for the poor, [Social Security,] and most recently, Obamacare. The [well-fed] House budget chairman, Paul Ryan, has explained that such public provision for popular needs not only violates the liberty of the taxpayers whose earnings are transferred to others, but also violates the recipients' spiritual need to earn their own sustenance [!]. He told one audience that the nation's school lunch program left poor people with 'a full stomach—and an empty soul.' (pg 213)

“Less well known is that these zealots do not believe that the government should be involved in trying to promote public health, period. We are not talking about subsidized hip replacements and birth control. We are talking about things like basic sanitation, something governments have committed to since the Progressive Era as the single most important measure to stop waterborne epidemics such as cholera and typhoid.”

Tyler Cowen, the director of the Mercatus Center, heart of the Kochs' academic empire, puts it this way (*Democracy in Chains*, pg 212):

“With the ‘rewriting of the social contract’ under way, people will be ‘expected to fend for themselves much more than they do now.’ While some will flourish, he says, ‘others will fall by the wayside.’ And because ‘worthy individuals’ will manage to climb their way out of poverty, ‘that will make it easier to ignore those who are left behind’...‘People who have had their government benefits cut or pared back’ should pack up and move to lower-cost

states like Texas. Granted, [Cowen] says, ‘Texas is skimpy on welfare benefits and Medicaid coverage,’ and nearly three in ten of its residents have no health insurance, but the state does have jobs and ‘very cheap housing’ to offset its ‘subpar public services.’”

And last, there's this, from George Buchanan, former director of the Mercatus Center and intellectual godfather to the Kochs and their movement to destroy our democracy: “People who [fail] to foresee and save money for their future needs ‘are to be treated as subordinate members of the species, akin to...animals who are dependents.’” (*Democracy in Chains*, pg 212)

Die in a ditch, and die like a dog. Cholera or typhoid? Take your pick.

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Why worry about the Kochs, when there is so much else to worry about? Their vast wealth, their donor network, and their organization have built a “private political party” that now rivals the two major, visible parties. They are mounting a coordinated, nationwide assault on the people of this country, and we must name our enemy, know our enemy, and mount a coordinated, nationwide resistance to our enemy. Here in Tucson, that begins with the “Freedom Center” that the Kochs and their allies created at UA and the course in right-wing, anti-labor economics that the Freedom Center has insinuated into our high schools.