

Those Who Despise America – Part 4: Cost-of-Living

by

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Caveat: Socialists and extreme far-left exponents have publicly stated that their goal is to virtually redefine America and its democracy by abolishing capitalism, eliminating class divisions, and dismantling government, social and family structures. Achieving this goal will totally rewrite the basis on which our nation was founded and the elimination of freedoms given to us by God and established by our Constitution.

When it comes to cost-of-living issues, socialists have several supposed concerns including:

- Housing costs
- Healthcare costs
- Education costs
- Low wages
- Childcare and family expenses
- Utility and transportation costs
- Food insecurity

Before diving into these so-called concerns, it should be reiterated on a regular basis, that if you tell the same lie repeatedly you will eventually believe it. Similarly, if you present the lie to the general public, they will accept it as truth, even though proven false later on. This is called **Self-deception** and often leads to **Gaslighting**, a form of psychological manipulation.

On the surface, if you Google or AI what influences a rising cost of living, the list above, along with a few other areas will be listed. Socialists want us to believe that government, through its involvement and public investment, can control the rising costs. The fact is, it cannot.

In order to control any or all of the above concerns, a nation must be completely isolated from the rest of the political and economic world. This is impossible. Some countries, such as North Korea, have tried isolation, but found that they must also rely on external economic and political support for basic survival.

Socialists argue that cost-of-living problems exist because of markets that prioritize profit over rather than the “common good.” The problem with socialists is that they want

to “fix” the symptoms, rather than the causation of the problems. Let’s look at some of the so-called problems.

Housing costs

Socialists target high rents, the lack of housing, and high home prices as the results real estate speculation, lack of affordable housing, and greedy investors, developers, property taxes, homeowners’ insurance and building regulations.

Their common proposals include rent regulation, creating public housing, and increasing the affordable housing supply.

- *Rent regulation* is a broad concept that exists in many areas. It covers
 - Limiting rent increases – such as capping annual increases
 - Maintenance and repair standards – requirements for keeping properties safe and habitable.
 - Tenant protections
 - Rules against discrimination, retaliation, eviction, etc.
 - Requirements for advance notice before raising rent or ending a lease.
 - Laws on reasons and how tenants can be evicted.
- *Creating public housing is generally a municipal government only endeavor with the intention to provide affordable housing for people who may not be able to afford market-rate rents.* In essence, public housing is a landlord based rental operation owned and managed by the government. The acquisition, building or renovation of properties, and management and upkeep are all part of the government’s budget. Generally, the housing budget is not a major priority for most municipalities.
- *Affordable housing is often created through partnerships between governments, nonprofits, developers, and community organizations rather than by a single provider.* There are several different types of affordable housing, including:
 - Public housing
 - Subsidized housing
 - Income/net-worth restricted housing
 - Affordable homeownership

There are several problems with these areas, the primary one being a lack of housing availability. This lack of housing is caused by an increased demand for housing, limited new construction, and rising costs. This is the common rhetoric that we hear but rarely

take a look at to determine the causes. We need to ask questions to understand the problem.

So why is there a lack of housing availability? There is only one answer to this question and it is because the population has increased. The next question to ask is, "Why has the population increased?" There is a plethora of answers to this question, ranging from the false narrative that "if they come, the tax base will increase," to liberal policies that put communities at risk financially, economically, and socially.

Regardless of the reasons, local governments rarely look at the impact of their decision-making practices. Return on investment studies are not done, nor are consequence of actions taken into consideration.

Healthcare costs

Socialists typically support universal healthcare funded through taxation and providing medical care is based on need rather than ability to pay. This is another false narrative because the emphasis is placed on access to medical providers that, for the most part, address the results of poor health decisions.

At its root, our healthcare system is based on ten (10) overarching areas:

1. Preventive Care
2. Primary Care
3. Specialty Care
4. Acute Care
5. Chronic Disease Management
6. Mental and Behavioral Health
7. Rehabilitation
8. Long-Term Care
9. Palliative and Hospice Care
10. Public Health

The problem is that we treat these areas separately even though they are highly interconnected.

Let's take Public Health, for example. Its primary responsibility is to protect and improve the health of entire communities. It should oversee much of the preventive care area by focusing on disease surveillance and prevention, establishing health policies, and promoting quality healthy living.

Much of our healthcare response however is based on addressing illnesses and injuries that require either short or long-term care. There is not much that can be changed relative to injuries other than to establish OSHA type regulations that must be adhered to. However, with regard to illnesses, there is a lot that can be done to prevent a lot of the “diseases” that stalk our communities and its citizens.

If socialists truly want to reduce healthcare costs, they need to address the many different factors that drive healthcare spending, rather than focusing on a single policy solution. This will require addressing a lot of the social and economic aspects of our society. For example, it is known that using tobacco and e-cigarettes products can cause cancer. The warning labels are not sufficient and leave the decision-making up to the user. To put it bluntly, to help prevent the cancers related to these products, the products need to be eliminated from society. Similarly, proper healthcare decision-making education must begin with a child’s first day of education and must be based on fact and not such stupidity as gender identity, etc.

Education costs

Many socialists advocate free or low-cost public education, including higher education. They view high tuition and student debt as barriers to opportunity. Again, this is another false narrative propagated by socialists.

Free and low-cost K-12 public and private education is already available to students. Across the nation we have publicly supported community colleges that have low tuition. It is true that textbooks and school supplies can be high, but educators can help reduce these costs with some creative thinking.

State sponsored colleges and universities often have lower tuition costs than private one. The choice of attending a public or private college is up to the student and is not mandated by any law or requirement.

The costs of attending higher education institutions can be mitigated with students and/or parents making wise decisions. For example, a student can attend a local community college for the first two years and then transfer to a 4-year institution. They can also buy used textbooks instead of new ones. Additionally, they don’t have to buy products associated with promoting school identity or spirit.

Alternatively, students can join the military for 2-years of active duty and receive educational benefits to help pay for their educational costs. Another alternative is to

look for special low-cost loans where students, upon graduation, can reduce their loan by serving in their communities.

The greater part of higher education costs may not be actually associated with the educational process but with choices the student makes. For example, many students end up changing their major after 1-3 years of study. Many students also choose not to take advantage of low-cost residential dorms or married student housing.

Regardless of what institution a student attends, there are many choices that students and parents make that should not be considered part of educational expenses. Many of these choices are basically living expenses which would still exist whether the student is enrolled or not.

According to AI, to attend North Carolina State University (NCSU), the estimated annual cost for tuition and books is approximately **\$10,200 to \$10,500** for a North Carolina resident. In comparison, attending a North Carolina community college costs approximately **\$3,400 to \$3,900 per year**, including tuition and books.

To obtain a 4-year degree in North Carolina, a NC student attending the first two years at a local community college and the last two years at NCSU. This approach would have a total cost between \$27,200 - \$28,800,

Socialists advocate having the government forgive student loans that students use to finance their education. Approximately **47%** of students graduating with a 4-year degree have student loan debt, with an average balance of about **\$29,600**. The remaining **53%** of graduates complete their degrees without student loan debt by relying on scholarships, grants, personal savings, family assistance, or other forms of financial support.

More than **90%** of student loans come from federal student loan programs that are financed by income and corporate taxes, and federal borrowing when government spending exceeds its revenues. Forgiving student debt is government malfeasance. Not only is it illegal, unethical, and improper, but forgiving student debt is an abuse of power, administrative misconduct, a misuse of public funds, and abuses taxpayers.

Low wages

Socialists argue that wages do not keep up with living costs. However, they also lump into this narrative is a call for stronger labor unions, and improved worker protections.

Before jumping into this discussion, we need to recognize the impact of four key elements of the US economy that small businesses have:

1. They make up about 99.9% of all US businesses.
2. They employ approximately 45–46% of private-sector workers.
3. They account for a significant share of new job creation, often creating about two-thirds of net new jobs.
4. They contribute roughly 40% of U.S. private-sector gross domestic product (GDP).

These figures help explain why policies affecting wages, taxes, regulations, and labor costs can have a significant impact on small businesses as well as workers.

Socialists are short-sighted when they look at the “income disparity” between management and workers in corporate America. Their stated goals are to reduce this disparity by implementing policies that redistribute income, increasing wages, strengthening worker protections, and expanding union influence (e.g. collective bargaining).

The key word that they use relative to these goals is “corporate”. They do not distinguish between large and small business, and that is where the socialist agenda does not help Americans but hurts them instead.

Looking at the call for higher wages sounds good until you take a close look. While the average profit margin for small business is between 5% – 10%, it varies by industry. For example,

- 2% to 5% for retail, restaurants, and grocery stores
- 15% to 30% for consulting, professional services, software, and specialized services

The average number of employees for small business is 10-20 employees. Let's assume that a business has

- 10 employees having a minimum wage of \$10/hour,
- \$500,000 in annual sales,
- 10% a profit margin (\$50,000), and

What would be the impact on the business if the minimum wage is increased to \$12/hour?

After all the calculations, a \$2/hour minimum wage increase would:

- Increase payroll costs by 20%
- Add \$41,600 in annual expenses
- Reduce annual profit by approximately 83%
- Lower the profit margin from 10% to about 1.7% (\$8,400)

A 20% increase in wages sounds good for the employee, but at what cost? The reduced profit margin will:

- Reduced the ability to reinvest
- Limit ability to handle unexpected costs
- Reduce owner compensation
- Result in potential price increases
- Possible changes in staffing
- Create higher risk of business failure

Many socialists and labor advocates support raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour. This is a 106.9% increase. They claim that it will

- Increase consumer spending
- Reduced financial hardship for the worker
- Increase worker productivity
- Increase tax revenues

Raising the minimum wage will have a domino effect. While workers will enjoy some initial benefits, businesses will either go out of business or will need to increase their prices, which in turn, will put the worker back to where they were.

Regarding “strengthening of worker protections” are essentially wanting stronger influence and power with regard to how businesses operate. They need to use workers, collectively, to influence management decisions and actions. Now, let’s be clear about this and ask an important question – “Why would a person want to control a business or industry?” There are seven possible reasons or motivations:

- Profit and wealth
- Power and influence
- Security and stability
- Competition and survival
- Innovation and mission
- Status and recognition
- Ideology or social goals

At the core of these reasons/motivations, control over a business or industry usually means control over resources, decisions, money and outcomes, and people may pursue that for constructive or self-serving reasons.

This is why the key component for control is the formation of “worker unity through unionization.” No matter what concessions a union may get from management, the union often fairs better than the workers. With their wins, they achieve wider worker acceptance, increased income, and political and economic power. The workers see these wins as beneficial but fail to realize that they are paying an organization that is incorporated as a non-profit organization, but whose income is generated by membership dues and investments. In many cases union leadership is often paid high salaries and benefits that corporate executives receive. In other words, the devil is in the details of management and leadership.

Childcare and family expenses

Socialists argue that raising children is not only a private family responsibility but also a social responsibility because children become future members of society and workers. They advocate for affordable childcare, paid parental leave, and policies that share childcare responsibilities by public institutions.

In many well-balanced societies, the care and supervision of children is often shared between parents and the community. In these societies it is well understood that the community’s responsibilities also include teaching children the overall values, morals and ethics of the society. The social interaction does not include teaching or imprinting of personal biases or beliefs on children.

The family unit is already at risk and many socialists and far-left supporters are now constantly pressuring students to subconsciously disavow the family, especially through such issues as gender identity and sexual transformation.

Utility and transportation costs

Some socialists favor public ownership or tighter regulation of utilities and public transit to keep prices affordable.

During the late 1800s (1875–1899), utilities, transportation, and basic services were becoming essential to urban life across the country. At the same time, emerging socialist parties began arguing that these services were essential to everyday life and should be affordable and, potentially, publicly controlled rather than privately owned.

Today, the expansion and development of utilities, transportation systems, and public services have evolved into a series of interconnected networks that serve most of the

country. Ownership of these networks is divided among federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private corporations. These entities are generally subject to regulation and oversight by federal and state regulatory agencies. These services include:

<u>Utilities</u>	<u>Transportation</u>
• Electricity • Water and sewage • Natural gas • Internet/telecommunications • Cable/satellite services • Waste collection/recycling	• Roads and highways • Air travel • Passenger/freight railroads • Ports and waterways • Public buses • Subways and urban rail • Light rail and streetcars • Bike infrastructure

While socialists advocate the public ownership of utilities, it should be noted that regulatory authority already exist at the federal, state and local levels.

- Federal – regulates utilities when they cross state boundaries or fall under federal jurisdiction.
- State – commonly regulate investor-owned electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications companies.
- Local – regulate county, municipal and cooperative utilities.

Transportation systems are similarly regulated but there may exist overlapping regulatory control between federal and state governments, and between state and local governments.

Public ownership can make essential services more affordable and accessible. However, such ownership often results in higher taxes/fees, inefficiency, maintenance costs, less innovation, and/or political influence.

Some socialists advocate for tighter regulations on utilities and transportation. This is probably the better and less radical approach to keeping the various services affordable for all. Tighter regulations could improve affordability by limiting unreasonable rate increases, protecting consumers from excessive fees, and requiring companies to provide reliable services at reasonable prices.

State and federal legislative bodies can strengthen the regulation of utilities and transportation by requiring transparent pricing, reviewing rate increases, establishing consumer protections, and tying allowable price increases to service quality and necessary infrastructure investments.

Food insecurity

The well-being of all people begins with survival. Before individuals can pursue security, relationships, purpose, or personal fulfillment, they must have reliable access to water, shelter, and food in order to sustain life.

To ensure that these households have access to affordable, healthy food, socialists propose strengthening social safety-net programs, reducing poverty, and implementing policies that improve access to food.

Like many of their responses to cost-of-living issues, their resolutions to this issue include: progressive taxation, higher wages and worker protections, and subsidized housing, healthcare and childcare.

Additionally, socialists propose several policies to improve food access and reduce food insecurity, including:

- Expanding food assistance programs by increasing eligibility and benefit levels.
- Increasing cash assistance for low-income households.
- Subsidizing the cost of healthy and nutritious foods.
- Supporting local and public food programs, including school meal programs, community food initiatives, and food cooperatives.
- Investing in grocery stores and improving access to affordable food in underserved communities.
- Supporting farmers and sustainable agriculture to reduce dependence on large food corporations.
- Regulating food prices and markets to make essential foods more affordable and accessible.

The major problem with these policies is that, for the most part, require money in order to implement them.

It should be noted that these programs do not include elements to educate people in how to buy, select, or cook healthy food, nor do they restrict what foods can be bought. Consequently, many low-income people buy low-cost, unhealthy, and highly processed food.

There are some elements of the proposed policies that could be help low-income families without creating any significant tax increases. These include:

- Removing taxes on nutritious foods

- Supporting community gardens, urban farming, food cooperatives and farmers' markets
- Adjusting benefits for inflation
- Providing refundable tax credits
- Providing tax and other incentives to open grocery stores in underserved communities
- Offering incentives for stores to stock affordable, healthy foods.
- Simplifying applications for assistance

In Summary

Every American has concerns with one or more of the cost-of-living issues discussed. Each issue has many facets, and all the issues are interrelated. A change in one will impact one or more of the other issues.

To address the issues presented here, many socialists support:

- Progressive taxation
- Expanded social welfare programs
- Stronger labor rights and collective bargaining
- Public or cooperative ownership

Such extreme actions are unnecessary if all levels of government revamp their policies, regulations, and laws through common-sense and reasonable changes.

While government change is needed, private sector businesses must voluntarily change to avoid excessive government oversight. Corporate America, like government, has a social responsibility to contribute to the economic and social welfare of our citizens.

This does not mean adopting WOKE or DEI policies. Rather, it means recognizing that businesses have a legitimate role to play in addressing broader economic and social challenges while remaining focused on their core responsibilities to employees, customers, shareholders, and communities.

While socialists focus on the cost-of-living issues at government and business levels, they totally fail to address the role individuals must play in improving their own circumstances and quality of life. However, the emphasis on government and business intervention is counter to the socialist agenda which is to seek control of the population.

Such emphasis can ultimately conflict with individual responsibility and personal freedom. A sustainable approach should balance reasonable government reform,

responsible business practices, and the individual's responsibility to make constructive choices that improve their own lives.

Author's Conclusion

The real answer in addressing the cost-of-living issues and lies in education. Our educational system is broken and needs to refocus its fundamental purpose of educating students in practical, usable learning.

The basic architecture of our school system has not changed as much as the content has. The school day and year still has a finite number of hours per day (6-7 hours) and weeks per year (180 days). Summer breaks are roughly 8-12 weeks.

Students spend roughly half as many hours per year (1,000 – 1,200 hours) in school as opposed to adults working full-time (2,080 hours). This time disparity may help to explain other societal issues that we face today.

The K-12 school system needs to return to the basics. Students need to build skills in reading and writing, math and science, art, and technology. They need to take required courses in physical education, US history and civics, and life skills such as home economics and, shop/manual training.

Because the body of human knowledge has expanded dramatically since 1970 while the basic structure of the K–12 school year has remained relatively unchanged, educators face increasing pressure to cover more material within the same limited amount of time. Consequently, students encounter subjects as brief fragments or “tidbits” of information rather than having the time to explore concepts, make connections across disciplines, and develop meaningful understanding.

This curriculum compression has shortchanged students, not because they are exposed to too little information, but because they have too little time to transform information into knowledge, knowledge into understanding, and understanding into the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills needed for an increasingly complex future.