

A “Republican War on Women”? Hard to Believe, But the “Facts” Say Yes.

[Submitted by Paul Winther (Indivisible Research Committee)]

The commentary found below was, in part, prompted by a 2016 Lexington-Herald Leader article. The article was written by John Cheeves. The source for the “facts” cited after the Cheeves article is found at the end of the commentary.

“War on poverty failed because it trapped people with handouts, Andy Barr says.”
by John Cheeves
(Lexington Herald-Leader, August 12, 2016)

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“The federal government’s war on poverty was an expensive failure that made generations of Americans dependent on handouts, says U.S. Rep. Andy Barr, R-Lexington, who is promoting a conservative alternative this election year.

Barr has co-authored a report for the House Republican Study Committee that recommends sweeping changes in federal benefits for the poor. There would be more work requirements and lifetime limits, similar to what Congress imposed on welfare recipients in 1996. The federal government might turn over programs, such as food stamps, disability payments and public housing, to the states in the form of block grants, while encouraging states to narrow eligibility and eliminate fraud.

“This centers around work,” Barr said in a recent interview. “What we recognize in our recommendations is that work is not a punishment; work is a blessing. It’s a ticket to upward mobility. And we think poor people are not liabilities to be managed by some distant welfare bureaucracy in Washington. Instead, poor people are assets, they’re untapped assets whose lives need to be enlivened through work incentives.”

Barr’s report singles out the state of Kansas for praise. Kansas has reduced lifetime limits for its for its cash-assistance welfare recipients, from the five years allowed by federal law to two years, to push people into the job market. As intended, the number of Kansans collecting welfare has plummeted. However, data released in April by the nonpartisan Kansas Health Institute indicates that few families — just 9 percent in 2014 — reported having employment as they lost their welfare payments, down from 41 percent under the five-year limits in 2006. Slightly more than half said they had no other income when their benefits ended.”

COMMENT ON BARR’S 2016 PROPOSAL AND WHAT HE ADVOCATES NOW:

Ah yes, Andy Barr’s sterling leadership is truly something to behold! Equally remarkable is his ignorance about the consequences of the Kansas program as described above: fewer people receiving welfare aid, but alas, no jobs for those deleted from the welfare roles. Some solution! No money, no employment, no hope.

What Andy Barr proposed in 2016 was onerous. What he continues to advocate in 2018, is more of the same. Consider the following (complete 2018 data is not yet available):

The population of Kentucky in 2015 was 4.43 million. The number has increased since then. Furthermore, of the 1.72 million households in the Commonwealth identified at that time, the median annual income was \$45,215. This is below the statistic for the entire country. Kentucky is most definitely not a wealthy state: it ranks either fourth or fifth from the bottom, depending upon what source is consulted. Furthermore, the number of households struggling to pay bills is more than likely increasing!

Then there are these facts.

In 2015, full-time male employees in Kentucky made 1.39 times more than female employees. If history is a guideline, the inequity in pay scale existed despite males and females performing the same job, doing identical work. According to the source cited below, the average salary for males “in common jobs” was \$54,1716. Not so for females, far from it. They got \$39,438. The amount of money has probably increased since 2015, but most definitely not the inequity.

And then there is this. The “largest industries” in Kentucky; 1.) Restaurants/food services; 2.) Elementary and Secondary schools, and 3.) Hospitals. These “industries” are, by far, “populated” by females: daughters, wives, mothers, aunts, and yes, increasingly also grandmothers. And unless a female is a highly paid nurse or physician, the predominant depressing fact is that females, especially in restaurants and food services, receive very modest salaries, if they receive a salary at all. Many, if not most, survive on tips, and their employers most often do not provide health insurance.

Elementary and Secondary school teachers are a bit more fortunate---up to now. They get a salary but it is nothing to write home about. Health insurance? Yes for many teachers, but that will most likely become a thing of the past if most Republicans “have their way.”

Now here a most discouraging statistic, and it is one that Andy Barr blatantly ignores. He did it in 2016, and his mind-set has not changed in 2018. It concerns poverty by age and gender.

In 2015 (again current data not yet available), 18.5% of Kentucky’s population lived below the poverty line, a number that was higher than the national average in 2014. Females between the ages of 25 and 34 were the largest demographic “group” (or “cohort”) living in poverty. In second place were females from 18 to 24 years old, and occupying third place were females from 35-44. These are childbearing years for women, the time when they are responsible for taking care of infants, growing families,

and so forth. They might, or might not have the help of others, but let’s face it: single parents (meaning females) are becoming the norm.

SO Andy Barr, with these “facts” characterizing reality in Kentucky, why have you and your fellow Republicans in the Commonwealth and in Washington D. C. worked to eliminate Health Care for citizens instead of correcting its limitations? Why have you voted to terminate Planned Parenthood, why have you argued consistently against worker unions of any kind, why have you voiced opposition to the idea of increases in minimum wages? And how about your draconian, unrealistic ideas for Medicaid?

An objective commentator would conclude that your ideological fixation represents an assault against women; against working females, against poor females in particular; against those who are not privileged, who are not wealthy Republicans or “well-heeled” Democrats. And lest I forget, you are not too fond of the working poor who happen to be male.

Shame on you, Andy. Demonstrate some leadership and stop the nonsense.

SOURCE: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/kentucky> [sic] [January 28, 2018]*

[*NOTE: This source has additional categories of 2015 data for Kentucky (as of 1/28/2018).]
