

## CHAPTER 7

### DEMOCRATIC HYPOCRITES

So Democrats don't support free markets, but at least they care about the poor, and they want to protect our civil liberties, right?

Wrong.

Should the government subsidize luxury stores that sell \$46 men's underwear? I don't think so. That's why I helped to fight against a \$60 million subsidy for a high-end mall that sells luxury items in Austin, Texas.

The city and county governments in Austin, Texas are dominated by Democrats, and every single Democrat voted to subsidize the mall despite lots of outcry against it. After the mall was built, a group of us tried to pass an initiative to overturn the subsidy.

I visited the mall to check it out. Inside the Neiman Marcus (an upscale clothing store), I came across a pair of underwear for \$46. That seemed like an absurdly high price for men's underwear, but I decided I just had to have it. I pinned it on a poster board and brought it to a hearing at the Austin City Council to help explain why I was against the mall.

I told the city council it was wrong to give a \$60 million subsidy to

a mall where rich people shop, while poor people had to shop at regular malls or stores that had to pay full tax rates. (Search the Internet for “\$46 Underwear Fighting \$60 Million Domain Mall Subsidies” for a video of my delivery to the city council.) Some called my presentation hilarious, others said it was over the top. Unfortunately, on election day we lost 52% to 48%.

Democrats often talk about helping the poor, but often the actions they take help the rich instead of the poor. Corporate welfare like “economic development subsidies” is just one of many ways Democrats hurt the poor.

Another much smaller example is subsidies for the arts. Democrats love those. The problem is, when you think about it, why should poor people pay higher taxes so rich people can get cheaper tickets to the opera?

One of the worst things Democratic hypocrites have done is support the war on drugs. America has the highest incarceration rate in the world and many people are in jail on drug-related charges.

Democrats say they want to help minorities, but the war on drugs hurts minorities badly. Minorities are far more likely to be thrown in jail for drug use than whites. Black market inner-city violence is brutal. People who get convicted of a nonviolent drug felony have their lives ruined. They’ll never be able to get a job, so all they can do is go back to drug trafficking. And all of us (including poor people) have to pay higher taxes to support all the police, prosecution, and prisons. Meanwhile, the wealthy contractors who build prisons, and the wealthy lawyers, and everyone else involved in the criminal justice system profit. Thanks, Democrats!

And of course, the war on drugs doesn’t just hurt the poor, it also hurts our civil liberties. A whole lot of intrusive laws have been upheld as constitutional (when they’re obviously not) because judges have said they are needed for the war on drugs. I’m talking about things like highway checkpoints, no-knock raids, and other things

that violate the Fourth Amendment. If Democrats had consistently opposed these things, we probably wouldn't have them. But Democrats have consistently *supported* them.

And then there's war. When Republican George W. Bush decided he wanted to invade Iraq, a bunch of Democrats in Congress said, "Sure, we'll let him do that." Of course, those same Democrats blamed him later when things didn't go well—but the war might never have happened if Democrats had lined up to oppose it.

War hypocrisy doesn't just affect Democratic politicians, but also Democratic voters. When George W. Bush was president, Democrats attended war protests by the thousands. As soon as a Democrat, Barack Obama, was elected to replace him, the war protests stopped—even though the wars and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq continued. (And of course, the Democrats in Congress stopped complaining.) I guess Democrats are only anti-war when a Republican is president. Libertarians, on the other hand, were outspoken opponents of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, regardless of who was president.

Basically the same thing is true of the Patriot Act, which has caused horrible violations of our civil liberties. Enough Democrats in Congress supported it to make sure it would pass. But then they attacked Republicans for it later. And Democratic voters used to protest the Patriot Act, but those protests stopped once Obama became president.

At the local level, Democrats ought to be diligent about preventing police brutality, and making sure the police respect everyone's rights. But actually, they don't care. They're generally happy to let the police do whatever they can get away with. Since the police usually treat minorities worse than whites, it's especially hypocritical.

I used to think the A.C.L.U. mostly fought against things supported by Republicans. Now I notice they are frequently fighting

against policies supported by Democrats as well.

Democrats Bill and Hillary Clinton once supported the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibited same-sex marriages. In 2013, Hillary changed her mind and started supporting the right of gays to get married. Libertarians have always supported getting government out of marriage, so people can marry whoever they want.

I think Libertarian pressure on issues like allowing gay marriage and ending the war on drugs has occasionally caused Democrats to stop being hypocrites and adopt Libertarian policies.

There was a brief period in 2009 when Democrats controlled the U.S. House, the presidency, *and* they had a filibuster-proof majority in the U.S. Senate. They could have rammed through anything they wanted to. They could have ended the Defense of Marriage Act, ended the Patriot Act, stopped the wars, passed tolerant immigration laws, or ended federal prohibition of drugs. They didn't do any of those things. If you ever doubt that Democrats are hypocrites, just remember that.

Unfortunately, there's still a general perception out there that Democrats are better than Republicans on these issues (civil liberties, foreign policy, and helping the poor and minority groups). They really aren't. They're just good at *pretending to care*.