

Jerry Brown's Climate Crusade: What A Nightmare For The Poor

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This article is coauthored by investigative journalist Katy Grimes whose latest book is California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?

California's Governor, Jerry Brown, went to Vatican to save the world by declaring Climate Change a moral imperative. Of course, many have questioned whether the Pope should be preaching about the climate. Here in California, many are also questioning why Jerry Brown doesn't realize the real moral imperative for the Governor should be California's continued ranking as #1 in the country in poverty.

If you listen to liberal Democrat leaders that control the California legislature, everything is just fine in the sixth largest economy in the world. However, their claim ignores California's sky-high cost of living and the exaggerated role Silicon Valley plays in the state's economic standing.

Even if California is the sixth largest economy in the world, its liberal leaders must also be said to be presiding over an economy that has the highest poverty rate among the top six nations.

Indeed, for years now, California has been home:

1. to one-third of the nation's welfare recipients despite having but 16% of the country's population,
2. to the most residents living below the poverty line in the country, including Hoovervilles in upscale Orange County and San Diego, and
3. a staggering number of welfare recipients "enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program in California alone exceeds the total populations of 44 of the other states of the union."

Gov. Brown rationalized his state's high poverty, in an interview on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," by saying California's highest-in-the-nation poverty rate is a result of the State's booming economy, which makes California a magnet.

According to Brown: "People come here from all over in the world, close by from Mexico and Central America and farther out from Asia and the Middle East. So, California beckons, and people come. And then, of course, a lot of people who arrive are not that skilled, and they take lower paying jobs. And that reflects itself in the economic distribution."

Brown is right about people coming here, more than a quarter of the 38 million Californians were not even born in the United States, but he is wrong as to why. California's policies of in-state tuition, driver's licenses, welfare benefits and healthcare for those who come to California illegally, have proven to be an electromagnet in addition to potential jobs and the university system.

The cold hard reality is that California is descending deeply into a state of "haves" and those that not only "have not" - they will never "have" because of California's war on the middle class and the poor.

As Demographer Joel Kotkin explains:

"California is home to a large chunk of the world's richest people and particularly dominates the list of billionaires under 40. Yet, by one new measure introduced by the Census Bureau last year, the state also suffers the nation's highest poverty rate; while a 2015 United Way study found that close to one in three Californians were barely able to pay their bills. No surprise then that as of 2015, the state was the most unequal in the nation, according to the Social Science Research Council.

As of 2011, nearly half of the 16 counties with the highest percentages of people earning over \$190,000 annually were located in California but denizens of the state's interior have done far worse. A 2015 report found California was home to a remarkable 77 of the country's 297 most "economically challenged," cities based on levels of poverty and employment. Altogether these cities had a population of more than 12 million in 2010, roughly one third of the state at the time. Six of the ten metropolitan areas in the country with the highest percentage of jobless are located in the central and eastern parts of the state.

What is disappearing faster than any state, according to a survey last year, is California's middle class, a pattern also seen in a recent Pew study. One clear sign of middle class decline: California's homeownership rates now rank among the lowest in the nation and Los Angeles-Orange County, the state's largest metropolitan area, suffers the lowest level of homeownership of any major region."

Where did that middle class go? Some simply became poorer. Others have left to find jobs in Texas, Washington, Florida (states without income taxes), Nevada and Arizona (states with low income taxes).

Keep in mind that California taxpayers pay the highest overall taxes in the Country. It's state income tax is the highest in the nation, it has the highest gas taxes, the highest state corporate tax west of the Mississippi and among the highest sales taxes in the country. These sky-high taxes yield the state about \$150 billion a year, and that is on top of the additional \$100 billion Californians pay in federal taxes.

Not content with that, in 2017 alone, two separate provisions were signed into law that will raise gas taxes even higher – perhaps as much as 80 cents per gallon combined. Of course, the larger of those taxes is a cap and trade tax, i.e. a climate change tax.

Who do those taxes hurt the most? Drivers. Who drives the most? Besides truckers, who are often middle class, independent, small business people - the middle class and the poor have to drive the farthest to their jobs. In other words, Jerry Brown's war on Climate change is really a war on the middle class and the poor.

Their voices go unheard however. Why? Because it doesn't fit the social justice narrative of the Democrats and the media of Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles simply will not give it the coverage it is do.

Despite his seven-year sabbatical in the 1980's traveling in Mexico, practicing Zen Buddhism in Japan, and India, where he worked with Mother Theresa on poverty, Jerry Brown's real crusade is climate change.

According to Brown, "I think this almost has to be at the level of a crusade."

In May 2016, Gov. Brown signed a climate change compact (a likely illegal treaty) between 12 regional and provincial governments in seven countries, committing to reduce greenhouse gases which they claim cause global warming. He did the same this year with China. Brown's motive is to demonstrate California's commitment to the rest of the country and world. That is why he taking a luxurious trip to the Vatican.

However, as Daniel Greenfield wrote in Frontpage Magazine, "None of this will stop droughts or storms," "But it will move money to the right people. The ones, like Al Gore, living in luxury condos in San Francisco about to be flooded by the Great Green Apocalypse that never comes."

So, that is Jerry Brown's California. A Crusade. Who cares whether climate change is about money and the fact that many world leaders are on record admitting it is about wealth redistribution, making the poor poorer, and the "right people" wealthier.

Meanwhile, back home, while Jerry is crusading in the Vatican, California's middle class and poor are getting poorer too.