



Rights vs. Benefits – What’s the Difference?

By KrisAnne Hall, Guest Columnist

Some Americans seem to be confused about the difference between Rights and Benefits. Influenced in part by manipulative politicians and pundits, this confusion has clouded the minds of the unsuspecting. Here is a typical example of this confusion on Twitter: “I’m really liking how the GOP is rolling back abortion and birth control rights but doing nothing about gun control. Real pro life there.”

How many people have you heard proclaim that there exists a right to healthcare, birth control, abortion, or some other government granted thing? Do they truly not understand what a right is? Are they being deceptive or are they deceived? Those Americans caught up in this deception are chasing after benefits, not rights.

A Right is something that you possess inherently by the nature of your creation. Although it may cost to protect it, it is not confiscated from another on your behalf. A benefit is payment or privilege given to you at the cost of another’s property. Money must be confiscated from another citizen in order to pay for a benefit.

Samuel Adams, designer of our Constitutional Republic described rights as being *“evident branches of, rather than deductions from, the duty of self-preservation, commonly called the first law of nature.”*

Another political philosopher, Frederic Bastiat writes with great clarity on the meaning of Rights and how government relates to those Rights:

“Life, faculties, production — in other words, individuality, liberty, property — this is man. And in spite of the cunning of artful political leaders, these three gifts from God precede all human legislation, and

are superior to it. Life, liberty, and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty, and property existed beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place.”

Rights aren't created by legislation. Rights are not granted by government. Rights precede government. Government is created to protect rights. Artful political leaders deny our Right to keep and bear arms, while at the same time asserting that the benefit of healthcare is a right. Yet, not only does life, the production from that life (property) and the right to that production (liberty) exist prior to governmental organs, but the right to protect those things from forceful taking is inseparable from the rights themselves.

“Among the natural rights of the Colonists are these: First, a right to life; Secondly, to liberty; Thirdly, to property; together with the right to support and defend them in the best manner they can.” – Samuel Adams.

“Each of us has a natural right — from God — to defend his person, his liberty, and his property. These are the three basic requirements of life, and the preservation of any one of them is completely dependent upon the preservation of the other two. For what are our faculties but the extension of our individuality? And what is property but an extension of our faculties?” - Frederic Bastiat

If you must wait for government to protect your life, liberty, or property and are not free to do that yourself, then those items do not belong to you, they belong solely to whomever you have relinquished that right of protection. For if those in government choose not to protect you, or unable to protect you when you could otherwise protect yourself then you are in essence a slave, a ward of the state – you are not free. Your rights are forfeited to those upon whom you depend.

Benefits, on the other hand, are not inherent and must be taken rather than protected. The gifts of God are rights. The gifts of government, are benefits. Those benefits may fall into the categories of healthcare, subsidies, or any assistances bestowed upon people using money collected from other people, otherwise known as taxes. A person

does not have a right to healthcare paid for by others - that is a benefit. A person does not have a right to welfare or monetary assistance; those are benefits. Rights belong to all people - benefits are only available to those who are a part of a defined group, subject to the terms decided upon by others. Rights are not given by government so they should not be taken by government. Benefits can be given and taken based upon transitory terms. Benefits have to be agreed to, legislated into existence, and supported by transfer of property. Rights are inherent and must only be recognized and defended. Their existence does not depend on taxes or any other property transfer.

People have a right to life. People have a right to defend life. You do not have a right to birth control, any more than you have a right for someone to buy you a car, pay for your vacation or buy your groceries. Other citizens paying for your birth control is a benefit, not a right. Abortion is taking life from another, and that is contrary to Natural Law and the natural right to life. One cannot be said to have a right to take another life or cause another life to cease.

The first ten amendments to the Constitution were incorporated to serve as reminders to the American people of the rights that belong to all people as a matter of Natural Law. These first ten amendments do not contain clauses about healthcare, welfare, or prosperity; because if they did, they would be called the Bill of Benefits instead of the Bill of Rights.

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