

RICH, POOR, AND MORE AND MORE **– BACKGROUND AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Stephen L. Bakke, September 2008 and April 2011

In 2008, I wrote and distributed a report about a myriad of economic issues which I titled Rich, Poor, and More and More. I have now reworked the original report and am reissuing it in three much shorter “articles.” These are much more manageable and easier to get through in a short period of time. This first report just gives some background and the sources of information for the original report. Then I follow up with two reports giving a “Point/Counterpoint” analysis of a number of issues. I also give some opinions and closing comments.

Keep in mind that most of the information in these reports relates to information available in 2008. My intension is that this rework/restructure of these reports will frame these issues and set the stage for dealing with many of these same topics in the future. **This is important at this time as we are witnessing our government struggling with finalizing the 2011 budget, starting discussion of the 2012 budget, debating how to dig out of our irresponsible deficit, and dealing with the debt ceiling controversy.**

Background

Economic issues permeate our world. The volume of information can be overwhelming, particularly in this an election year. And contradictions abound. All too often the points being made, while not totally false, mislead because they present incomplete information. Sometimes it seems there is an attempt to increase class envy and promote class warfare. Would politicians and biased media types do this? Of course! I have attempted to pick some common opinions or assertions, as well as competing information, and state them both simply and clearly.

Here are the intended characteristics of the information presented in this project:

- I have tried to make my biases obvious.
- My disagreement does not result in excluding an opinion or assertion. Sometimes I disagree with the “*Point*” presented, a few times with the “*Counterpoint*”, and sometimes (not often) I disagree with both.
- The “*Points*” presented have been independently expressed by third parties and are not my invention. I have used paraphrasing in an attempt at brevity. Virtually all of these can be found, stated or strongly implied, in the independent / external sources listed at the end of the report.
- The “*Points*” presented are very common and should be familiar to the reader. But remember that they may not reflect the majority opinion.
- The “*Counterpoints*” presented are summarized from the independent / external sources listed at the end of the report, and are not my invention.

- Neither the “*Points*” nor the “*Counterpoints*” should automatically be presumed correct, but I believe the credibility of the sources makes the positions and comments relevant for evaluating the issue. And as I will attempt to show, all too often the “*Points*” just don’t tell enough of the story to reach an overall conclusion.
- If a comment contains some of my personal opinion, I believe that will be obvious. Once again, all of the opinions and information originated separate from me – even if it is obvious I agree with some of them.

Sources of Information

The following is not intended to be a complete detailed bibliography or list of notes and references which would be adequate for publication or other wide use of this report. The following lists are intended to relay the nature, extent, and sincerity of my effort to become personally more knowledgeable. At a minimum, I hope these lists lend a level of credibility to the information provided. The items below are listed in no particular order.

Books

Who Really Cares? by Arthur C. Brooks

Gross National Happiness by Arthur C. Brooks – excerpts, summaries, and reviews

Economic Facts and Fallacies by Thomas Sowell

Myths, Lies, and Downright Stupidity by John Stossel

Papers, Pamphlets, and Studies

Congressional Budget Office – study regarding effects of globalization

Internal Revenue Service – taxpayer statistics

University of Michigan – taxpayer statistics

Tax Foundation statistics

U.S. Census Data

Writers, Columnists, Commentators, Economists, Educators, Scientists, Reporters Editorial Sources, Government Officials, Websites and Online Newsletters or Publications: Too numerous to list here.

Now proceed to the next “Rich/Poor” reports which provide arguments on both sides of many issues.