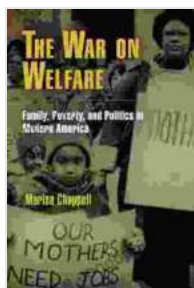


The War on Welfare: A History of America's Attack on the Poor

America's welfare system is a disgrace. It is a punitive, demeaning, and ineffective program that perpetuates poverty and inequality. But it didn't start out that way.



The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America (Politics and Culture in Modern America) by Marisa Chappell

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2925 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 358 pages



In *The War on Welfare*, historian Rick Perlstein tells the story of how the welfare system came to be what it is today. He shows how, from its origins in the Gilded Age, welfare was designed to control and punish the poor. And how, over the years, it has been used to justify everything from voter suppression to mass incarceration.

Perlstein's book is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the history of poverty and inequality in America. It is a powerful indictment of the welfare system and a call for a new approach to helping the poor.

The Origins of Welfare

The origins of the welfare system can be traced back to the Gilded Age, a time of great economic inequality in America. During this period, the wealthy elite grew increasingly alarmed by the plight of the poor. They feared that if the poor were not given some form of assistance, they would become a threat to social order.

In response to these fears, the wealthy elite began to establish private charities to help the poor. These charities were often run by religious organizations and were based on the belief that the poor were morally deficient and needed to be taught how to live properly.

The Rise of Public Welfare

In the early 20th century, the private charity system began to be replaced by a system of public welfare. This was due in part to the growing recognition that poverty was not simply a moral failing, but also a structural problem caused by factors such as unemployment, illness, and disability.

The first public welfare programs were established in the 1930s, during the Great Depression. These programs were designed to provide temporary assistance to the unemployed and other needy individuals. However, these programs were soon overwhelmed by the number of people who needed help.

The Welfare Explosion

In the 1960s, the welfare system underwent a major expansion. This was due in part to the civil rights movement, which led to increased awareness of the plight of the poor. It was also due to the War on Poverty, a federal program that was designed to eliminate poverty in America.

The welfare expansion of the 1960s had a mixed record. On the one hand, it helped to reduce poverty and improve the lives of many poor people. On the other hand, it also led to a number of problems, such as welfare dependency and fraud.

The War on Welfare

In the 1980s, the welfare system came under attack from conservatives. They argued that welfare was too expensive and that it discouraged people from working. They also claimed that welfare was being abused by the undeserving poor.

In response to these attacks, Congress passed a series of welfare reform laws. These laws made it more difficult for people to qualify for welfare and imposed stricter work requirements. They also gave states more flexibility to experiment with different welfare programs.

The welfare reform laws of the 1990s had a devastating impact on the poor. They led to a sharp decline in the number of people receiving welfare and an increase in the number of people living in poverty. They also contributed to the rise of mass incarceration.

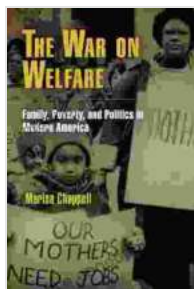
The Future of Welfare

The welfare system is at a crossroads. The current system is broken and needs to be reformed. However, there is no easy consensus on what kind of reforms are needed.

Some people argue that the welfare system should be abolished and replaced with a system of universal basic income. Others argue that the welfare system should be made more generous and less punitive. Still

others argue that the welfare system should be focused on helping people get jobs and become self-sufficient.

The future of welfare is uncertain. However, one thing is clear: the current system is not working. It is a system that perpetuates poverty and inequality. We need a new approach to helping the poor, one that is based on compassion and justice.



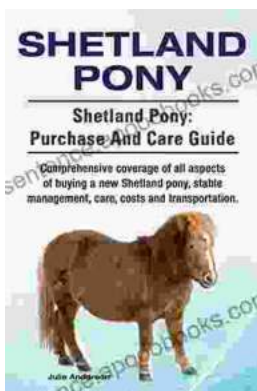
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