

A source of our anxiety?

Market Watch recently [reported](#) that while employment is up, the number of people who can go any length of time without a paycheck is abysmally low.

“Approximately 63% of Americans have no emergency savings for things such as a \$1,000 emergency room visit or a \$500 car repair, according to a survey released Wednesday of 1,000 adults by personal finance website Bankrate.com, up slightly from 62% last year. Faced with an emergency, they say they would raise the money by reducing spending elsewhere (23%), borrowing from family and/or friends (15%) or using credit cards to bridge the gap (15%).”

The follow up sentence to that paragraph is a real gem:

“This lack of emergency savings could be a problem for millions of Americans.”

You think?

The lack of any savings is a major problem for people; just consider the psychological impact of it all. Without any cushion, one is in a perpetual state of heightened anxiety. Like a hamster on a wheel, we don't dare stop.

Can that be healthy for us as individuals, families, communities, or even a nation? Certainly not. We must always be going, too busy to care about much else other than our own survival.

The political impact is huge. First of all, being too busy to be involved in things erodes the bonds of community and family, things that our sort of government and society depend upon. Furthermore, people will seek relief from the anxiety of impending financial ruin. With the societal fabric frays as we become more isolated in our personal hamster wheels, to whom

do we turn to for relief?

An ever more powerful and paternalistic government, naturally.

It makes sense as government increasingly becomes the only visible institution that can unite us while also seeming powerful enough to save us from our anxieties.

For some, this may be seen as the natural solution and an understandable, if not predictable, evolution of society and government. Such arguments have been made for quite some time now. The danger, though, is that such a dependency on government, particularly the federal government, does continue to erode the societal bonds that are the health of democracy. Those other institutions, such as family, church, and community, traditionally served as checks against government in order to create a balance of power in society.

As we slowly evolve from what we are now to a state that becomes increasingly more active in our lives, we should be concerned. How different is our situation if we turn to the federal government for relief from our anxieties to that of peasants giving themselves over as serfs to their local lords in exchange for security?

To be fair, there has always been a sense of anxiousness to the human experience. Whether subsistence farming or in the modern economy, we never truly feel "safe". Nonetheless, something is amiss today. If the Left and Right are serious about improving our nation and not simply gaining political power, both sides should take a serious look at the root causes of our debt-based economy and why people are in such a precarious financial state. Is it better to address the root cause or to simply bandage over the problem, quite likely causing any number of new problems?