

Why Liberals Are Selfish

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by Bill Donohue

Celebrity superstar Lena Dunham spent the summer on a book tour that employed a host of comedians, musicians, and artists as part of the warm-up acts for her gig. She makes \$6 million a year, and pulled in over \$300,000 for her summer tour. Yet she never paid her staff a penny, keeping all the loot for herself. When she was exposed as a fraud, she lied: "As an artist raised by artists, no one believes more than I do that creators should be fairly compensated for their time, their labor, and their talents."

Mario Batali is known as Mr. Liberal in New York City. He also rips off the poor. Two years ago, he and his partner agreed to pony up \$5.25 million to settle their cash-skimming schemes at eight restaurants. They took 4 to 5 percent of each shift's wine and drink sales from the workers' tip pool, took an unlawful "tip credit" that pushed pay below minimum wage, and failed to pay extra for shifts lasting more than 10 hours.

Dunham and Batali are not an anomaly. The Chronicle of Philanthropy tracks charitable giving, and the results of its latest study, released this week, show that liberals across the nation are selfish, giving less to the poor than conservatives. This is nothing new but the figures are nonetheless impressive.

The four top cities in terms of income are also hotbeds of liberalism: Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. Each posted a decline from 2006 to 2012 in how much residents gave as a percentage of their income to charity.

Adjusting for income, the most generous 10 cities are, from the top down: Salt Lake City, Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta, Nashville, Jacksonville, Oklahoma City, Dallas-Fort Worth, Charlotte, and Virginia Beach. The least generous are, from the bottom up: Hartford, Providence, San Jose, Boston, Buffalo-Niagara Falls, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Sacramento, San Diego, Philadelphia, and Seattle.

Notice that most of the most generous states are known for their conservative values, and most of the least generous are

known for their liberal values. The breakdown politically is similar. Of the top 10 most generous states, all 10 voted for Mitt Romney in 2012. Of the bottom 10 least generous states, all but one voted for Barack Obama.

No one disputes that liberals rhetorically champion the cause of the poor more than conservatives – it is one of their most defining characteristics – so why is it that they are the most miserly in parting with their money to help the poor?

We know from other studies that those who are the most religious give way more of their adjusted income to the poor than those who are not observant. Mormons and Baptists, in particular, are known for their generosity, but not those who live in secular college towns. Still, there is more than religion in play.

Liberals believe that the government should help the poor, not them, personally. But picking another man's pocket to assist the needy isn't charity – it's redistribution. As Mother Teresa taught us, charity, if it is real, must cost us. It costs nothing to take from Peter to pay Paul.

In other words, the data provide no rational explanation why liberals should be able to claim the moral high ground in the war on poverty. It is they who are the selfish ones.

Dr. William Donohue is the president of and CEO of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. The publisher of the Catholic League journal, Catalyst, Bill is a former Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars. The author of five books, two on the ACLU, and the winner of several teaching awards and many awards from the Catholic community, Donohue has appeared on thousands of television and radio shows speaking on civil liberties and social issues. Read more reports from Bill Donohue – [Click Here Now.](#)