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President's summit on volunteering is made-for-TV hypocrisy, say Libertarians

After 30 years of government failure, politicians beg for volunteers

WASHINGTON, DC — The Presidents' Summit for America's Future is a made-for-TV study in hypocrisy, says the Libertarian Party — politicians who spent their whole lives using the coercive power of government are now preaching to Americans about the virtues of voluntary cooperation.

"Bill Clinton and George Bush lecturing about the merits of volunteering is like Bonnie and Clyde lecturing about the merits of bank loans," said party chairman Steve Dasbach about the summit in Philadelphia designed to get more Americans to volunteer.

Clinton and Bush were joined at the three-day summit by former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. But their presence merely turned the event into "an all-star infomercial about the failures of government," said Dasbach.

"Over the past 30 years, politicians like Clinton, Bush, Carter, and Ford have spent \$7 trillion on government programs to eradicate social problems," he noted. "Now, they're forced to admit they did such a terrible job and wasted so much money that the only solutions left are non-governmental solutions."

To lead by televised example, Bill Clinton even grabbed a paintbrush to paint over graffiti in a poor, inner-city neighborhood.

"Clinton is no volunteer, but he plays one on television," said Dasbach wryly. "He spent one afternoon trying to salvage a neighborhood that his favorite government programs have devastated."

Devastated? That's right, said Dasbach: "In numerous inner-city neighborhoods, government welfare programs destroyed two-parent families, government regulations destroyed businesses, and government schools destroyed the educational system. It's going to take more than Bill Clinton with a paintbrush to cover up 30 years of government failure."

Does all this criticism of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future mean that Libertarians are opposed to volunteering?

"Libertarians, and Americans in general, are 100% in favor of volunteering," said Dasbach. "That's why 93 million Americans volunteered 15 billion hours of time in 1995. What we're opposed to are politicians who spend 364 days a year in Washington, DC, raising taxes and proposing new regulations — and one day lecturing us about the merits of volunteering."

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