

January 4, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing this letter to explain why I am a part of the Tea Party movement. We have no budget to advertise and I hope that a letter from a real person who genuinely cares will carry more weight than a dozen TV spots during prime time. I am breaking the letter up into four parts to keep the reading manageable, and cover the most important phases of my life as it relates to this movement in chronological order; this is part one. I hope that this letter encourages you to learn more about what millions of American's are plugging into organically, out of an instinctual sense of patriotism and national survival.

I grew up in poor neighborhoods raised by a single mother. We were on welfare, food stamps, and received healthcare from a free clinic. When I turned ten we left the city and moved into a public housing apartment complex set in a suburb. I was in a middle class town with good schools and low crime rates and yet, I was surrounded by a culture of dependency and dysfunction; dependency on one or more government programs – dysfunction that comes from trying to live a normal life without a blue print for how to do it.

While we attended the same schools as the suburban kids, kids from my neighborhood generally had lower grades and most dropped out of high school. Kids in my housing complex had problems with the law and all the other associated ills that accompany this type of community. There was no inherent flaw in us as kids, but we were being taught to rely on the social safety net for our guaranteed support, that we could not be truly successful on our own, and that we were not as good as the people living a quarter mile in any direction outside of our complex. Exposure to the suburban school was a brief vacation from our problems. Our real education was taking place at home-modeled by our parents and neighbors, and financed by the government. Our parents did not provide for us, it was the state that gave us our food, our low rent, and our free electricity. When push came to shove, the state was what we counted on, not ourselves, not our parents, not one another.

I will never forget a time towards the end of my last summer in the housing complex. There was a small girl, no more than three years old. She came running into our apartment section crying hysterically, and since all the sections were designed the same I assumed she was lost. She stood outside a townhouse sobbing. I jogged over to see if I could help her find her way home. The window was open so anyone inside could hear what was happening right outside. After a couple minutes of me trying to communicate with the child a woman came to the door holding another child, she opened the door letting the crying child in, giving me a dirty look while doing so and then shut the door in my face without a word. I have never struck a woman, but I often thought about going back there to knock her out. The child was crying so hard, so long that mucus had hardened running down her face. It was tragic and common place.

Having lived in it first hand I know public assistance creates dysfunction and dependence, and whether the individual supporting it wants the best for people or intends on making them wards of the state the outcome is the same. The will to succeed is gone, and an understanding of cause and effect does not exist so working your way out can't happen. The cycle of poverty and abuse follows and is nearly impossible to break once it has started. It took me over 10 years after I left that apartment complex to understand that was not who I was, that it was not a matter of time before I was drawn back to that life. I doubted myself, my ability, my worth for years because of what my environment taught me in my formative years.

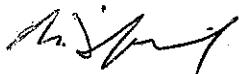
If you want to help someone teach them, but make them struggle and learn and grow from that struggle. Working two or three jobs to dig out of poverty is not a crisis; it is the answer, and the only path accessible to most everyone. Instead we are attacking the people that create opportunity, and telling those that need it that it doesn't

exist or is just out of reach. I and the people I grew up with would have suffered far less if we had to work two or three jobs to live at the same standard the state kept us at. Our parents would have taught us the value of a dollar and how to earn one because they would have had to learn those lessons themselves. Children would not have been abused at the hands of alcohol and drug addicted people who saw no hope because they were not forced to find it for themselves. The few that succeeded despite the poor life lessons might not have fled the neighborhood taking away powerful role models for kids who need them more than anyone else.

I do not believe the Tea Party movement is our salvation; salvation can only come from God. I do believe it is a means for people who care about and support what is sensible and just to express themselves collectively, and now is a time when this is not just a matter of proper civics, this is about the survival of the republic. We must all educate ourselves and participate. Freedom is a right but the rights of people have been stolen or violated far more often than they have been upheld throughout history, and don't think for a second history won't repeat itself here and now to our detriment.

Please consider learning more about the Tea Party movement. All we want is freedom and the blessings that come from that freedom, nothing more.

Sincerely,



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