

Socialism

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I'm Adam Klugman and you are listening to AM 620 KPOJ, Portland's only Progressive Talk Station. The numbers here are 1-866-452-060, (503) 248-0620 or #620 on your AT&T wireless phone.

Well, the good news is... the government is open.

The bad news is that it cost \$78 billion in cuts to make it happen. Which is 38 billion more than [Boehner](#) originally asked for. But let's see... I'm not always good at the math, but that's \$22 billion less than the completely unreasonable \$100 billion that the Tea Party Faction was pushing for.

So there you have it:

What is \$78 billions in cuts to our budget going to do to our country?

Uh... Well... I don't know. It's just got me nuts.

Because I think it's a real debate. But precisely because I don't think it has *anything* to do with reality. It doesn't have anything to do with spending, or budgets, or tea parties, or any of that nonsense. This whole discussion for me is a [Red Herring](#). What do you think? I mean to me, it's a dysfunctional mess, designed to keep us all distracted from the real reason we are broke. Right? All of our jobs have been shipped overseas, are biggest energy corps, and banks pay no taxes, and we're fighting five wars.

And I could make a case for five wars on a credit card. It's not about spending at all.

It's back to [Grover Norquist](#); it's about reducing the size of government so you can drown it in the bathtub. It's about creating a false justification for dismantling the social infrastructure of this country and pocketing the cash.

But for me, even *that* isn't the real take-away. Because for me, we're through the looking glass, because Washington is just one endless, unhappy, family reunion that we can never leave. It's [Home For the Holidays](#) meets [Groundhog Day](#) meets [2012](#).

So I'm going to take a very different tact. I'm going to take the entire mess, turkey carcass and all, and throw it away. Because one thing is clear: Washington is broken, and we need a new system. And I'm going to use some bad words. So if you have kids in the room, you might want to cover their ears. Because the first word is: [Socialism](#).

Yes, that's right. Today I'm going to talk about [Socialism](#). Because maybe it's time we take that word back. Like maybe it's time we took back the L-word. Yes, that's right, I'm taking about the word: [Liberal](#). I know there are lots and lots of folks out there who agree with me on this because I get the emails.

And so, how about, if we took back the idea that there is nothing wrong with a system of government that puts the common good before the private individual good?

Now I know that's [heresy](#) in America, and I'm sure there are people listening to me right now who's hair is catching on fire, but I'm telling you, I won't back down from this.

Because [Socialism](#) is not a bad word because every modern reasonable free society in the world, including ours' has socialist institutions. The police department is a socialist institution. The fire department is a socialist institution. [Social Security](#) is socialism. [Medicare](#) is socialism. And in other "pinko" countries like Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden, they have social democracies. These hybrids, which make a lot of sense, that do things like: put tariffs on imported goods to protect their own industries and workers.

And I hope you're sitting down, because these countries also provide cradle to grave health care for their citizens. I know! It's madness!

And why do they do this? Why? Why you may ask: Because they actually care about their own people, because they put the public good of their citizens over the profit of their private citizens.

And yes!

They tax their people, yes! They tax them – Some as much as 70%. But think about what you're paying for, and *you* are going to pay for it one way or another.

I mean, how are those healthcare premiums to private insurance companies working out for you? Are they going down, or up?

I don't know about you, but I pay about \$12,000 a year with a \$5,000 deductible just to be protected if someone in my family gets catastrophically ill. All right, it's not health insurance it's disaster insurance.

I mean, if you're going to be taxed, and you *are* going to be taxed, wouldn't it be nice to know that the people you love will never be denied healthcare?

I mean, wouldn't it be nice going to bed at night knowing that everyone, including your children, has access to quality free education and equal opportunity?

Isn't it worth it to know that you will have job security, retirement security, that you were born into a society that sees it's primary goal as providing social and economic justice for it's people? Not it's corporations.

So maybe it's time that we stop thinking about *Socialism* as a bad word. I mean, let's take it back. And while we're at it, let's grab Liberal too. Because liberal means generous, open minded, favorable to progress, but we've allowed them to turn us into the enemy. We've even switched our brand to "progressive" just so that we would be more palatable to the most aggressive, most selfish, most ignorant elements in our society.

Well, I say it's time we stop running from these wimps. So I'm going to speak into this microphone as clearly as possible and say: "I am a liberal and I want to talk about socialism."

I'm not saying I'm a socialist because I don't think I am. But I believe in socialist principals like putting the common good first. I believe that one role of government is to prevent big business from rallying against the interest of the people. Don't you? I believe that workers have a right to demand a reasonable standard of living and a safe and healthy workplace. Don't *you*?

Does that make us socialists? You tell me. Does it make me a *Libertarian* because I believe the government should stay out of my personal life and not tell me which people I can marry? Does it make me a *Republican*, because I believe individual responsibility?

Or is it just common sense that the people want a government that genuinely cares about them? One that respects their private choices, one that provides for them when they are in distress, one that defends against enemies both foreign and domestic, one that helps them educated their children and care for their elderly and promote the common good in a way that builds a society that works for as many people as possible.

You want to call me a socialist? Go for it. But I won't back down. And I won't run and hide because you called me a *bad* name.

But what I will do is ask you this: Tell me why the system we have now is better?

And don't scream about *democracy* and *free markets* as if unregulated *capitalism* and *human liberties* are the same thing, because they're not. Because when 400 families make

an average of \$358 million a year and earn more of the wealth than 155 million of their fellow citizens, it's no longer democracy folks... It's an [oligarchy](#). It's [free market fundamentalism](#) it's corporate [Jihad](#).

I don't even *know* what it is.

But it sure as hell isn't a government run for and by the people. And I think it's time we stop running, don't you? I think it's time we stop hiding behind words like [Progressive](#), so we'll be more acceptable to the very people who seek to destroy us.

And I do it too. I mean, I call myself a progressive, but no more. So let's make a pact right now. We will never again substitute the word "progressive" when what we really mean is: liberal.

We need to get on the rooftops as shout out words like socialist and liberal until we are not afraid of ourselves anymore because then, and only then, will we be able to take an effective stand for what we know is true: that America is sick, that our beloved democracy is broken, that there is no party and power that can save us.

And if there is any hope at all it is with the people who will rise up now in non-violence and non-cooperation to demand a better way. And if you are wondering who those people are... well it's your calls next and I can't give you a better hint than that.

We'll be right back.

You're listening to "[Mad as Hell in America](#)," with [Adam Klugman](#) on [KPOJ](#).

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