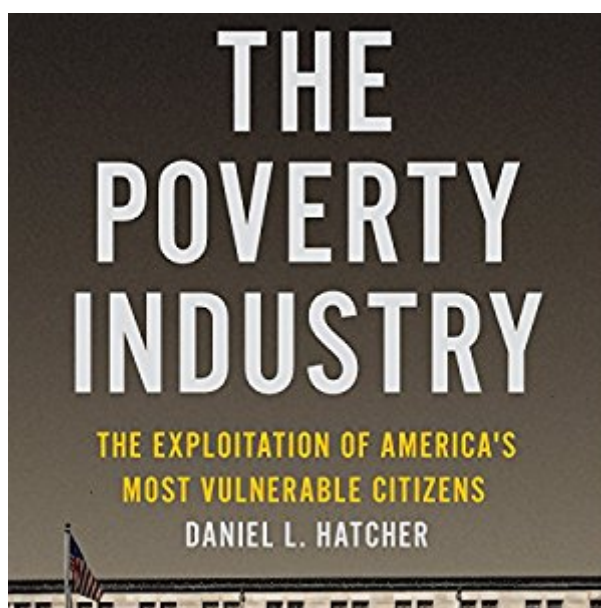


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The Poverty Industry: The Exploitation Of America's Most Vulnerable Citizens



Synopsis

Government aid doesn't always go where it's supposed to. Foster care agencies team up with companies to take disability and survivor benefits from abused and neglected children. States and their revenue consultants use illusory schemes to siphon Medicaid funds intended for children and the poor into general state coffers. Child support payments for foster children and families on public assistance are converted into government revenue. And the poverty industry keeps expanding, leaving us with nursing homes and juvenile detention centers that sedate residents to reduce costs and maximize profit, local governments buying nursing homes to take the facilities' federal aid while the elderly languish with poor care, and counties hiring companies to mine the poor for additional funds in modern day debtor's prisons. In *The Poverty Industry*, Daniel L. Hatcher shows us how state governments and their private industry partners are profiting from the social safety net, turning America's most vulnerable populations into sources of revenue. The poverty industry is stealing billions in federal aid and other funds from impoverished families, abused and neglected children, and the disabled and elderly poor. As policy experts across the political spectrum debate how to best structure government assistance programs, a massive siphoning of the safety net is occurring behind the scenes. In the face of these abuses of power, Hatcher offers a road map for reforms to realign the practices of human service agencies with their intended purpose, to prevent the misuse of public taxpayer dollars, and to ensure that government aid truly gets to those in need.

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Customer Reviews

Foster children aren't people. To state governments they are a revenue generating mechanism. States actively seek out disabled, removed and orphaned children to apply for and seize their federal benefits without their knowledge, and without giving them any of the money. Daniel Hatcher has discovered a whole industry sector, combining private companies and government that do nothing but generate profits out of the misery of unfortunate children, nursing home patients, and the poor caught in minor crimes. This nightmare of a book is staggeringly well documented with the states' and the firms' own proud documents. Everyone in power knows it goes on. And it gets worse by the day with their enthusiastic encouragement. States are arrogant about keeping their poverty activities private. They claim once a child is in custody, the sovereign right of the state supersedes any court proceedings seeking accountability. That includes due process, denied to victims. They claim seizing a child's assets helps support children. It is both illegal and unconstitutional, but whatever. The company MAXIMUS seems to be the biggest private player, with 13,000 employees dedicated to maximizing revenues for Human Services agencies in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK. And they commit fraud. Soon after admitting to fraudulently filing Medicaid claims, they won a contract to help prevent Medicaid fraud. (This is also typical in Washington, which charges military vendors with billions in fraud, then awards them additional billions in new contracts. And some of those military contractors are now players in the poverty industry.) Private companies have penetrated essentially every corner of the poverty industry. Former governors and congressmen sit on company boards, and these private companies even review the bids to run various facets of government agencies. -State agencies do not permit foster children to have any assets. Anything of value is seized by the State. This drops them into instant poverty, maximizing the state's claim on federal funds. -Federal law says the states have the clear obligation to pay for foster care. Children do not. Yet, after taking children's assets, Iowa charges children \$250 a month for its services. -State agencies are the least preferred payees of Social Security, but the states just apply as the sole possible payee, taking the money without the knowledge of the victim. -States use money laundering techniques much like check-kiting to steal Medicaid billions every year. So there is no money to treat the poor, while the states reap fortunes. -The governor of New Hampshire scammed Medicaid payments to be 40% of the state budget, and put the money in the general fund, taking it away from patients, robbing them twice. -Indiana built a 37 acre, \$200 million hospital by actively collecting nursing home patients and keeping federal money meant to care for them. -Total takings by state agencies from foster children alone is a quarter of a billion dollars a year, with a large cut going to private firms maximizing the take for their client states. -Private firms batch process social security applications

directly to Washington without vetting by their state "overseers". An expected percentage will always be accepted. Putting children on psychotropic drugs without prescriptions allows more children per foster home, reduces costs, and gets the state higher rates for (now) higher needs victims. The same goes for nursing home patients. Auditing the private sector auditors, the federal government found that that they cost five times as much as the fraud they uncover. After the billions in foster care and Medicaid scams, section three of The Poverty Industry details how private companies tear apart families and keep children in poverty by pursuing fathers for repayment of welfare. They lose their jobs, their reputations and their children. Looking at the vendor contracts, courts have to agree the primary focus of the State was revenue, not child wellbeing or family unity, so the contractors win. Having read the horrors of state racketeering and fraud in previous sections, this was practically comic relief. The book ends with the resurgence of debtor prisons for the poor, fueled by the astonishing list of fees private contractors can legally add to fines. Once in the vortex, the poor are never able to recover. They lose jobs, income, drivers' licenses, homes, even the right to vote. They are even fined for being fined. Interest is added like on credit cards. The collection agency tacks on its own fee of 25-40% to each new penalty it piles on. A hundred dollar fine that can't be paid instantly can grow to thousands almost overnight, even with the victim in jail. You cannot read The Poverty Industry without disgust. It is revolting, abhorrent and criminally insane. Page after page of untrammelled relentless evil greed becomes hard to stomach. That this is allowed to go on is itself a scandal. As you read, you think: this can't continue for 220 pages. It starts out terrible; how much more can there be? But it does go on and it does get more sickening with every page. The Poverty Industry should be the foundation of congressional hearings, documentary films and investigative reports. It is a damning, overdue condemnation of the states and their private sector contractors. It is cruel and unusual punishment for the most needy, least equipped and least knowledgeable. And the poverty industry just laughs all the way to the bank. David Wineberg

This is a must read for every American citizen! Required reading!

This book, that lifts the lid on exploitation affecting some of America's most vulnerable citizens, is something that you want to hope is made-up, misunderstood or otherwise not true. As it is, there is no suggestion that the author or the publisher are being economical with the truth, so the only other interpretation is that there is something to get very angry about. Make no mistake, this reviewer is politically more right-of-centre than anything else and does believe in free and open

economies, yet there are some things that you just do not do and cynically manipulating the system to (apparently) legally take money otherwise intended for those who are needy or vulnerable is one of them. Heck, one is seething even with the benefit of several thousand kilometres distance between Finland and the United States! The author contends, in this well-written, accessible and source-positive book, that government aid is being "redirected" to places that morally, at least, it should not go to. State care agencies sit hand-in-hand with commercial companies to take various disability and survivor benefits from children to "benefit" the state and its accounts. Who gives a bleep about the children, the disabled and the poor, huh? If that is not bad enough, it is alleged that nursing homes and juvenile detention centres are sedating residents with psychotropic drugs to reduce costs and maximize profits. It is a multibillion-dollar industry, says the author, yet you don't seem to hear a lot of angry people demanding change. Are they ignorant to what is said to be going on, or do they just not care since, well, they are poor, crippled or just the "rubbish". It seems hard to see that the federal government does not know what is going on, yet have they rushed to slap this excess down and change the rules? The answer sadly is quite clear, no.

The author is concerned and articulates this with aplomb. It is not a student-level rant about injustice but a forensic, focussed look at a situation, written by a professor of law at a respected university. As a non-American, this reviewer has a bit of a problem accepting and understanding the healthcare system. It feels morally wrong that the global superpower has a system where you can be bankrupted for the crime of being ill, even if you can afford some healthcare insurance. Private markets mean that, if you have the money, of course you may be able to get better, faster or more luxurious care. Yet basic healthcare in a civilised country should be a given. The claims made by the author about the shenanigans of certain state and private companies takes things to an even lower level. If even ten per cent of this book is true, a lot of people should be hanging their heads in shame. They should be doing jail time, although no doubt their behaviour is legally sound. Things should be changed immediately and this reported reprehensible behaviour terminated. If not, dear members of Senate and Congress, please don't dare to lecture the world about how to do its business and behave until you even try and get your own house in order. This behaviour is lower than a snake's belly, akin to stealing from a coffin at a funeral service. If you have high blood pressure and even an ounce of caring in your body, think before you buy this book as you will be annoyed, angered, dismayed and possibly shocked. This should be required reading. In an ideal world this should be seen as a historical relic in a very short period of time, since change has been effected and this remains just a low point in U.S. history. I won't hold my breath though.

awakening.

An eye-opening look at waste in our lasagna of governmental bureaucracy. Layer after layer.

interesting take on the system

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