

## READINGS

### Voting Rights & Imprisonment:

- <https://www.kqed.org/news/11841345/proposition-17-and-the-history-of-voting-rights-for-formerly-incarcerated-californians>
- <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights> (up to Table 1)

### Is Welfare Good?:

Argument 1 (Ruth Wilson Gilmore): *Welfare reinforces the state*

- Selection from Golden Gulag:

The golden age of U.S. capitalism [had] started thirty years earlier, when Washington began the massive buildup for World War II. The organizational structures and fiscal authority that had been designed for New Deal social welfare agencies provided the template for the Pentagon's painstaking transformation (Gregory. Hooks 1991). It changed from a periodically expanded and contracted Department of War to the largest and most costly bureaucracy of the federal government. The United States has since committed enormous resources to the first permanent warfare apparatus in the country's pugnacious history.

The wealth produced from warfare spending did two things: it helped knit the nation's vast marginal hinterland (the South and the West) into the national economy by moving vast quantities of publicly funded construction and development projects, and people to do the work, to those regions (with California gaining the most) (Schulman 1994). The wealth also underwrote the motley welfare agencies that took form during the Great Depression but did not become truly operational until the end of World War II (Gregory Hooks 1991). Indeed, the U.S. welfare state has been dubbed "military Keynesianism"—an unpronounceable name but a good thing to know—to denote the centrality of war-making to socioeconomic security. On the domestic front, while labor achieved moderate protections against calamity and opportunities for advancement, worker militancy was crushed and U.S. hierarchies achieved renewed structural salience. The hierarchies mapped both the organization of labor markets and the sociospatial control of wealth. Thus, white people fared well compared with people of color, most of whom were deliberately, if craftily, excluded from the original legislation; men received automatically what women had to apply for individually; and urban industrial workers secured limited wage and bargaining rights denied household and agricultural fieldworkers.

...

Keynesian institutions congealed legitimacy and revenues into highly differentiated, but reproducible, units of state power (Piven 1992). Income and employment programs for workers, infrastructural programs for capital, and subsidy programs for farmlands were designed to keep

surpluses from again accumulating into the broad and deep crisis that had characterized the Great Depression.

The uneven development of the New Deal's "creative government" (Baldwin 1968) resulted not only from the uneven capitulations of capital to a massive social wage but also—and perhaps more so—from the desperately dense relationships between southern (and western) and northern Democrats. The racial, industrial, gender, and regional divisions reflected in eligibility for and the scope of New Deal agencies and programs institutionalized Jim Crow without speaking his name (see, e.g., Mink 1995; R. W. Gilmore 2002b). In other words, the anomaly that emerged in the 1930s was not only the welfare-warfare state, but also the extension of regional norms to national relationships (e.g., county-determined eligibility for federal aid to dependent children). The political remains of those agencies form the armature of the workfare-warfare state.

Argument 2 (JohntheDuncan): *Welfare's emotional/spiritual violence*

- [My Bull\\$ht Job: Welfare and Neoliberalism](#)
- [Austerity, Pandemic & Neoliberalism](#) (welfare disc. starts at 07:45)
  - [Built Different: Neoliberalism and the Many Ways it Changes You](#) (**NOT REQUIRED**, but it's related; and, it's worth the while.)

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. 'Regular people' have less control over elections than the rich.
  - a. Do incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people have less control than regular people?
  - b. If so, does the parallel have a deeper meaning?
2. Gilmore says creating and using the procedures of welfare has enabled those same procedures to serve warfare ends; John says going through those welfare procedures is emotionally taxing, and aims (in part) to neoliberalize human nature.
  - a. Are Gilmore and John correct to say that welfare has actively harmful aspects?
  - b. If so, what differences are there between Republicans and Democrats? Be sure to think systematically — lay out each thing you've ever thought or heard about each party, and compare.
  - c. Now, consider the election process (not just including the circus of campaign season) — does it also have harmful, unspoken intentions and/or effects?
3. How does the importance placed on elections by DSA augment those intentions and/or effects?
  - a. Does voting within DSA, or any of DSA's other procedures, have similar intentions and/or effects?