

## Why Mitt Romney's Comments about the 47% Were Not Correct

As you may recall, one of issues that arose during the 2012 presidential election was in regards to the following comments made by Mitt Romney at a fund raising event held in May of 2012 -

*"There are 47% of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47% who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it. That's an entitlement. The government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what. And I mean the president starts off with 48, 49...he starts off with a huge number. These are people who pay no income tax. Forty-seven percent of Americans pay no income tax. So our message of low taxes doesn't connect. So he'll be out there talking about tax cuts for the rich. ... My job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives. What I have to do is convince the 5-10% in the center that are independents, that are thoughtful, that look at voting one way or the other depending upon in some cases emotion, whether they like the guy or not."*

Keep in mind that Mr. Romney's comments were made at a political / fund raising event, where he was speaking "informally" (without a teleprompter) so there were a few incomplete (and somewhat incoherent) sentences, along with a number of comments that were not fully explained. The "political damage" that Mr. Romney inflicted upon himself was caused by his characterizing 47% of Americans as people who believe that they are victims and who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, and that his "job" [as a presidential candidate? / as a future president?] was not to worry about those 47%.

Our Editorial Board feels that the percentage of Americans who feel that they are victims, and who feel that the US government has a responsibility to care for them is a much smaller number, one that is not statistically relevant (probably less than 5 percent). We also believe that a substantial majority of people (probably over 80% of the people in both the Democratic and Republican parties) are concerned about the US government's annual deficit, and the country's cumulative debt, and the breakdown of the country's political process in regards to the country's finances. We personally know a lot of "soccer moms" who are much more concerned about the state of our country's finances.

Mr. Romney's comments about entitlements were also wrong (and yet very correct). Under the Declaration of Independence, people have an unalienable right to life [along with liberty and the pursuit of happiness]. However, nowhere in our country's social contract (the U.S. Constitution) does it state that the US government has a responsibility to provide the essentials for everyday life - i.e., health care, food, housing, etc. The Constitution does state that We The People agree to "promote the general welfare" of the country's citizens, but nowhere does it state that the responsibility of the US government is to provide the essentials for everyday life.

Our Editorial Board believes that there are a number of proper and essential roles for the government (which we discuss elsewhere on our website), however, most aspects of daily life should be handled personally. Our Foundation's primary goal is to promote personal responsibility. Another one of our Foundation's goals is to work towards shrinking the size of the US government, and to help the government focus on its core responsibilities.