Main Street Economics Warns Americans Not to Buy 'New York Snake Oil'

Les Rubin: "There is no free lunch, stop looking for it."

Economic Education for the American Public

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Main Street Economics is calling on Americans to look past the latest promises of "free" government programs and confront the immutable laws of economics before the nation's fiscal problems grow even more dangerous. Its founder and president Les Rubin published a new commentary, "New York Snake Oil," in The Washington Examiner and another on Substack, using the current political debate in New York as a case study in why so-called freebies are never free, and why voters keep reaching for solutions that have failed everywhere they have been tried.

> Congress will not make the difficult choices required to solve this problem until the public understands the seriousness of the situation and demands action."
>
> *Les Rubin*

The Washington Examiner: https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/op-eds/4712802/mamdani-new-york-socialism-snake-oil-economics-freebies/

Substack: https://mainstreeteco.substack.com/p/new-york-snake-oil

These articles are another installment in Main Street Economics' effort to educate ordinary Americans about the debt crisis facing the country and the economic principles that determine whether prosperity grows or collapses.

"Some things never change. Human nature and the laws of economics are two of them," Rubin wrote. "We buy the snake oil some politician sells, drink it, get sick, and throw it away, realizing we were duped, again. Yes, we fell for it, but I learned my lesson. Did we learn our lesson? Are we doing that again? I think so."

He described the political sales pitch now circulating in New York as familiar and dangerous, not painless solutions paid for by someone else.

“That is exactly what I see happening in New York today. We have a very slick snake oil salesman making a case on painlessly fixing all the problems of today. If you believe there is a painless panacea to all our problems, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I would like to sell you.”

“This snake oil is the promise of all these things we want and can have if you only elect me. Yes, I will wave my magic wand, and everything will be wonderful. So, we buy the snake oil and try for magic — again. It did not work before, and it will not work now. Sorry to burst your bubble, the fairy godmother is not coming; the straws you are grasping for are an illusion. So, let’s get real.”

Rubin said the historical record is not ambiguous.

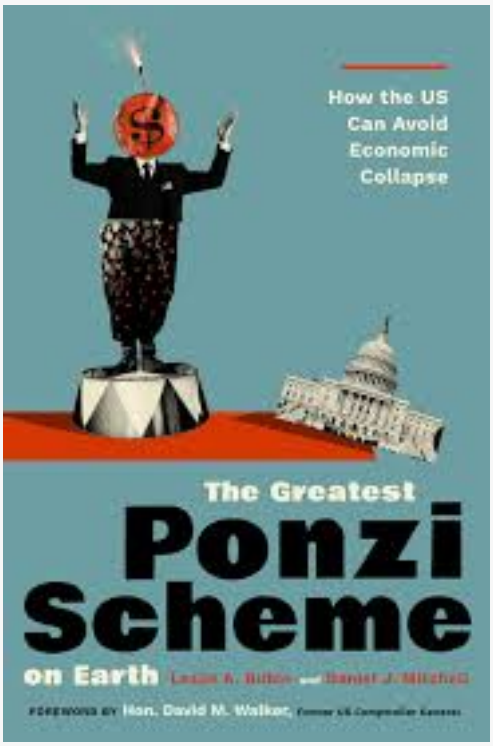
“The laws of economics are immutable. We know what works and what doesn’t. How do we know? Because the biggest lab in the world has proven them, time and again. Various forms of socialism/communism have been tried over and over again. Where has it worked for the benefit of ordinary citizens or constituents of a country or community? Nowhere. In its pure state, it has a 100% failure rate. It always evolves to a strongman, and his chosen henchmen, doing well — while the rest suffer. Yes, they achieve equality, all equally poor.”

He pointed to Venezuela as a recent warning. It was a rich country that bought charismatic socialist promises, then watched incentives collapse into dictatorship and widespread poverty. “Why does it fail? Because it works against the immutable laws of human nature. Incentives are what drive our actions. I think we all innately understand that — we do what we perceive to be in our best interest. When the incentives are removed, the system collapses.”

The promised New York freebies, he argued, collide with the same arithmetic that is already straining the federal government.



Leslie A. Rubin, Founder and President, Main Street Economics



The Greatest Ponzi Scheme on Earth: How the US Can Avoid Economic Collapse

“So, back to NY, are we really going to have free childcare, free transportation, cheap rent controlled apartments, cheap groceries, etc.? No, there is no money to pay for all these freebies. Yes, we can try to tax the rich, as we drive them to vote with their feet and move, leaving even less money to fund these things. Or we can tax the hell out of all the citizens to pay for them. So maybe it isn’t free after all.”

Rubin said the system that has raised living standards is the one Americans are being invited to abandon.

“The system that works best is a free enterprise/market economy, also known as ‘capitalism’. It has proven to work time and again. No, everyone isn’t equal, nor should they be, but everyone is better off."

Rich people get rich by providing goods and services that we want, they are better off when they do, but so are we. Our standard of living is unrivaled in the world. And our taxes on the middle and lower income citizens are the lowest in any advanced economy.

Claims that Scandinavian countries prove “democratic socialism” works are, he wrote, a misreading of how those countries pay their bills.

“The Scandinavian countries are often cited as examples of ‘democratic socialism’. Nonsense, they are more capitalistic than we are. Yes, they have many social programs, but they pay dearly for these ‘free’ services. The middle and lower income citizens pay enormous taxes compared to what we pay here. The income/pension taxes are very high on everyone there plus they pay high VAT (value added) taxes on most consumption, very high gas taxes, etc. All of this is on everyone, not just the rich.”

“There is no free lunch, stop looking for it. Look before you leap, the snake oil doesn’t taste so good and will just make you sick again,” Rubin said.

Rubin said the New York debate is not a local curiosity. It is a warning about the same habit that has driven the United States past $40 trillion in national debt and toward still larger unfunded obligations: the belief that government can deliver benefits without imposing costs, and that someone else will always pay.

“Politicians respond to voters,” Rubin has argued throughout Main Street Economics’ work. “Congress will not make the difficult choices required to solve this problem until the public understands the seriousness of the situation and demands action. That means Americans need to understand basic economics, including the difference between policies that encourage economic growth and policies that undermine it.”

Main Street Economics was formed to explain those facts in plain language.

“This is ultimately an education problem,” Rubin said. “People do not need to be economists to understand that you cannot continually spend more than you earn, borrow the difference and assume the bill will never come due. That is the recipe for bankruptcy.”

He urged Americans to read the full commentary, share it, and press elected officials for policies that control spending, preserve incentives, and strengthen the private economy before the next crisis arrives.

“America has the resources, ingenuity and economic strength to solve this problem,” Rubin said. “What we need is the public understanding and support for the difficult political decisions needed to put on the brakes before we speed over the cliff into oblivion.”

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About Main Street Economics

Main Street Economics was formed to provide Economic Education for the American public. We focus on explaining the fiscal problems we face and basic economics in easy-to-understand language by laymen for laymen without formal education in economics. For more information on Main Street Economics and its initiatives, please visit https://www.mainstreeteconomics.org/

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