

# Government laws preventing social darwinism



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The concept of Social Darwinism is ineffective due to the creation of government laws starting in the twentieth century to modern day, which consistently take away from the supporting idea of "survival of the fittest." Charles Darwin created the theory known as social Darwinism, advocated by Herbert Spencer, in which individuals follow the same laws of natural selection as plants and animals. The purpose of natural selection is for those who are strongest to continue and the weak to die out, it is what makes society evolve. Throughout the years, government involvement has increased substantially whether it be political, economic, social or even biological, that prevents natural selection and the unfit to die out. It creates an equal playing field for all individuals, despite being wealthy, poor, 'fit' or 'unfit.'

The government supporting the poor goes against the main idea of social Darwinism. "Spencer opposed any laws that helped workers, the poor, and those he deemed Genetically weak. Such laws, he argued, would go against the evolution of civilization by delaying the extinction of the 'unfit'" (). President Franklin D. Roosevelt supported the idea of federal aid for the poor, a national welfare system was established for the first time in American history in 1935. The purpose of the welfare system is to assist those who are not able to support themselves due to cases like unemployment, unskilled labor capacity, disability, or other similar reasons. The welfare system opposes the idea of social Darwinism due to its purpose to support and provide for those who are unable to do it for themselves. "The state was not to hinder the strong or assist the weak, interceding only to protect individual freedom and rights." (). Many of those individuals who partake in the system

are supposed to be supported until they are able to do so on their own, it is not meant to live off of. In modern day, there are cases where some abuse the welfare system by lying and cheating to receive more benefits from the government. For example, there are restrictions on what an individual is allowed to purchase with food stamps. There are many individuals who purchase items that are restricted and are not necessities like alcohol, pet food, household supplies, and other similar items. The system is to support individuals to help get them back on their feet, or to help maintain a basic living style that covers all necessities, however many are abusing the system and staying on the system, therefore they do not have to work or work harder to earn what they need to survive and it lessens the individuals motivation to strive for more.

The time of the Industrial Revolution created a period of development that largely impacted how goods are produced. The revolution transformed mostly rural societies into industrialized urban areas. During this time period, goods were increasingly starting to be produced in mass quantities by machines in factories. The dramatic change from small towns to major cities brought problems like pollution, overcrowded cities, lack of clean drinking water and sanitation. However, the cities greatly benefited the economy with booming businesses. The idea of "survival of the fittest" applied to laissez faire, in which businesses are allowed to operate with little regulation from the government. In other words, the government did not have much authority of how the business should be run and its conditions. This allowed businesses to have whatever working conditions, maximum hours, and minimum wages they pleased, and those who had a problem with it either

quit or were fired. " He believed labor unions took away the freedom of individual workers to negotiate with employers." (). Those who stayed and worked had the motivation to do so and earn the money. Soon enough protests start against the businesses which formed labor unions caused the beginning of government intervention to create and enforce regulations. The regulations enforced child labor laws, health regulations, minimum wage and wage hours. Those who were " unfit" were then able to work due to the governments support.

Taxes take away from the hard-earned wealth and gives it to those who did not earn it themselves. It allows those who are unmotivated to continue what they are doing and not strive for more or better because they are getting handed everything by doing nothing because the wealthy are working and doing it for them. Herbert Spencer is known for advocating laissez-faire that did not support regulation of private enterprise from the government. " He considered most taxation as confiscation of wealth and undermining the natural evolution of society,"(). in other words, the government taking individuals wealth who have worked for it is defeating the purpose of competition and the intelligent to evolve. The wealth that is earned is suppose to be passed down to future generations to take that wealth and expand and do better. " The former carries society forward and favors all its best members; the latter carries society downwards and favors all its worst members."

President Richard M. Nixon signed the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) which calls for the regulation of certain drugs and substances. Drugs or substances like marijuana, heroin, LSD, and others are illegal under federal law. Creating <https://assignbuster.com/government-laws-preventing-social-darwinism/>

a law that makes it illegal for individuals to take such drugs, opposes survival of the fittest. Those who are susceptible to take such drugs and or susceptible of addiction keeps the genes in circulation to pass down such traits to future generations. The drugs are a gateway to cancel out or remove such individuals from continuing and passing down to future offspring, but the laws against the usage of the drugs keep those so-called bad bloodlines in society and passed to their children.

The idea of eugenics was popular across the world and soon to be controversial. Eugenics is the science of improving the human species by selectively mating people with specific desirable hereditary traits. The purpose of eugenics is to breed out any diseases, disabilities or any other undesirable traits, to create a superior human population. " Darwin's natural selection itself had evolved from biological theory, to social, and economic theory, until finally it provided the intellectual foundation for creating a ' better' human race" (1997, p. 97). Starting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, thousands of individuals from mental institutions starting in California took part of sterilizations that were to protect society from the offspring of people with mental illness. Not only did the sterilizations affect the mentally ill, but it was also performed on minorities. In 1924, they successfully passed national legislation to restrict immigration of people who deemed less desirable. This also prevented marriage between races and those who were known as criminals. Thirty-three states allowed involuntary sterilization on those who deemed unworthy to procreate. The U. S. Supreme Court ruled in 1927, that forced sterilization on the handicapped does not violate the U. S. Constitution. The ruling was overturned in 1942, but many were victims of

the procedure. Adolf Hitler believed that non-Aryan races such as Jews and Gypsies were inferior and performed extreme measures like genocide, to keep the gene pool pure. Similarly to the United States, the Nazis created the Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring which resulted in thousands of forced sterilizations. Hitler continued trying to purify his superior race by targeting his own Germans with mental or physical disabilities, including those who were blind and deaf, euthanizing them by gas or lethal injection. Hitler's actions were morally wrong and were eventually prevented from continuing with the defeat of Germany and ending of World War II. Many often-associated eugenics with Hitler's actions and ideas which therefore caused a decline in popularity. Eugenics across the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were morally wrong, due to similar ideals to Hitler, which created laws to shut down such procedures and actions.

Those who have disabilities, whether it is mentally or physically, are protected by the government to give them a chance and to not be left behind from society. For education, those who are mentally challenged are put into special education programs within the school to receive an education like any other student. This is known as inclusion; it is wanted for the disabled children to feel similar and included with the other children, and to not be left behind which opposes social Darwinism of leaving the 'unfit' behind. For public schools, the federal government provides funding for the schools, more specifically to benefit the special education children. The funding also includes free reduced lunch, which is for children who cannot afford to buy food from the school for lunch. The government is aiding those who are unable to support themselves or those who are the 'unfit' of

society. In public schools, making every individual's education the same often affects the more intelligent of the population because the laws requiring diversity, which often brings the intelligent down. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), bans discrimination against employees and potential employees who have physical or mental disabilities that limit daily everyday life activities. This law is similar to the inclusion idea of education, and how it opposes Darwinism. This act is to prevent those with disabilities from being excluded or in other words to not leave the 'unfit' behind.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed by President Lyndon Johnson, ended segregation within public places and banned employment discrimination based on race, religion, sex, and other similar reasons. Many social Darwinists believed the government should not interfere with the development of society, and that the poor should not be helped, and races are biologically superior to others. For a period of time, whites have been the superior race and African Americans have been inferior. Blacks have been segregated from the whites in society in education, workplace, transportation, and many others. The Civil Rights Act made it that every individual is equal, including those of color, which defeats the ideal of competition between individuals.

Individual competition for property, wealth, etc. drives those who are willing to do and be better than others rise up within society and those who fail or simply lack the willingness to do so, helps eliminate the weak and immoral of the population. There is the basic understanding that intelligence tends to dominate over the lazy population. "To affirm that they are equal would be to say that a man who has no tool can get as much food out of the ground as the man who has a spade or a plough; or that the man who has no weapon

can defend himself as well against hostile beasts or hostile men as the man who has a weapon. If that were so, none of us would work any more." (). The intelligent are the ones who have the wealth and the success they were able to achieve because they earned it by working hard. " Competition, therefore, is a law of nature. Nature is entirely neutral; she submits to him who most energetically and resolutely assails her. She grants her rewards to the fittest, therefore without regard to other considerations of any kind." ().

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FMLA supported individuals that needed to balance work and life, without losing their job. The act allows up to sixteen weeks off from work while the individual is allowed to keep their position in the workplace. The act originally applied to women who are pregnant and needed time off from work for their health and to care for the newborn baby, this soon expanded to all individuals of the workplace. The act strictly opposes competition within the workplace.

On June 26, 2015, the U. S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all fifty states. The main idea of social Darwinism is for the human species, just like plants and animals, are meant to evolve. With same-sex marriage, the couples cannot procreate, it is biologically impossible, therefore preventing the human race to evolve. Similarly, those who identify as transgender also has an affect on the evolution of the human race. If a biologically born female transgenders male and a biologically born male transgenders female can reproduce. It is only possible when a biologically born female still has their reproductive organs that are still functioning, same as the biologically born male. If their reproduction organs are removed and <https://assignbuster.com/government-laws-preventing-social-darwinism/>



altered to the opposite gender they identify as then the individuals can not procreate, therefore affecting the evolution of the human race.

Transgender individuals have been coming out more in modern society. The individuals are wanting to be treated as equals and identified as the gender of their choice. This is affecting the competitive aspect of Darwinism and making the playing field equal for every individual. With the individuals who are transgender, their participation in school sports are greatly affecting records and scholarships. Mary Gregory is biologically male but transgender female who actively participates in powerlifting. On April 27, 2019, Gregory broke several powerlifting records of the Raw Powerlifting Federation. It sparked controversy and the president of the foundation stated, " In our rules, we go by biological. According to the rules, she can only lift in the men's division. ...I'm not trying to hurt anyone's feelings but I have to follow the rules." (). Similarly, controversy has developed about a transgender female, biologically male, participating in high school track and field. Female top runners have filed a complaint due to the transgender individual dominating the races which is affecting their chances of scholarships for college. The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference allows athletes to compete based off of the gender the individual identifies as. To make the playing field fair and ' equal' laws have been placed to make that happen, but unfortunately this instance ruins the competitive aspect of social Darwinism.

In 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was enacted by President Barack Obama. The act required every United States family to have health insurance, the families who choose to oppose then has to pay a tax penalty.

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Those who have declared previous medical conditions, for example cancer, cannot be denied health insurance. This act requires every individual, poor or wealthy, fit or unfit to be equal. This act strictly opposes the Darwinism concept of the government not supporting the 'unfit.'

Communist and socialist countries promoted equality and eliminate social classes, therefore opposing Darwinism beliefs. Both types of government heavily regulate the economy. "...arguing that human progress resulted from the triumph of superior individuals and cultures over their inferior competitors; poverty was evidence of inferiority. Anything that interfered with the self-improvement of superior individuals or markets was to be resisted." (). The government owns and operates production and businesses, the citizens are not allowed to have ownership. This allows the government to control the economy. It creates large equality across the country for every individual and eliminates competition. One of the main understandings of Darwinism is the aspect of competition between individuals, it is what makes the strong move forward and the 'unfit' fall behind, it is what strives evolution.

Social Darwinism supports the competition between individuals and the evolution of species. Governmental laws have been enacted more throughout history since the mid twentieth century to lessen individual competition and slow down evolution. Government is controlling more of the social, economic, political and scientific world to create a fair, equal playing field for all individuals. "Survival of the fittest" is meant for the strong and intelligent to thrive in society and pass on to future generations, and the lazy and unintelligent to be unsupported, lost within society in the hopes to

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eventually die out, all in the purpose to evolve and create a superior species. Therefore, government involvement and creation of laws prevent " survival of the fittest" from pursuing, causes it to be ineffective.

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