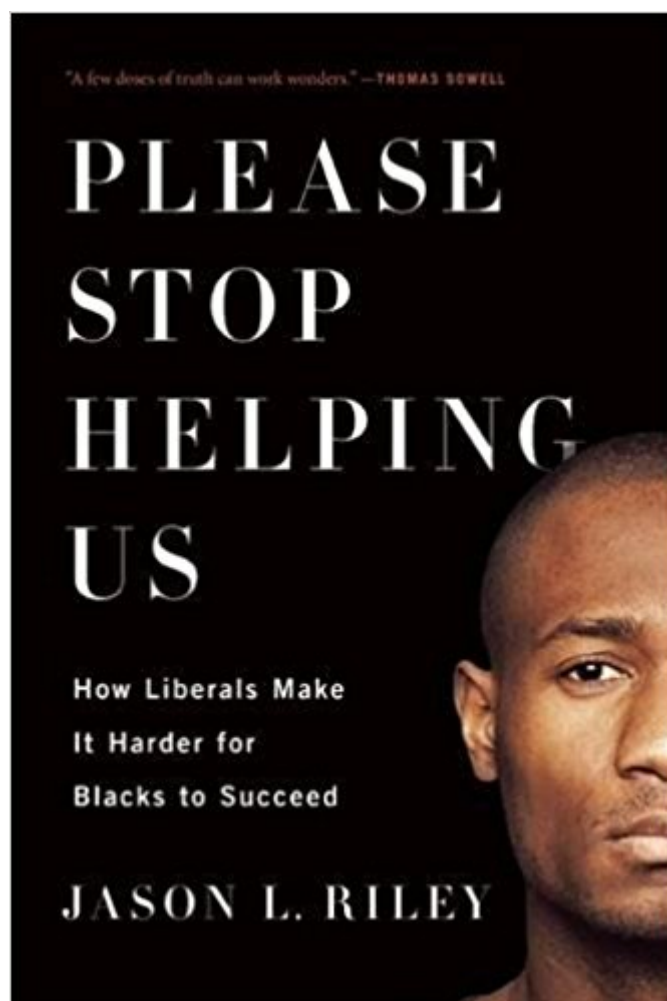


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Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder For Blacks To Succeed



Synopsis

Why is it that so many efforts by liberals to lift the black underclass not only fail, but often harm the intended beneficiaries? In *Please Stop Helping Us*, Jason L. Riley examines how well-intentioned welfare programs are in fact holding black Americans back. Minimum-wage laws may lift earnings for people who are already employed, but they price a disproportionate number of blacks out of the labor force. Affirmative action in higher education is intended to address past discrimination, but the result is fewer black college graduates than would otherwise exist. And so it goes with everything from soft-on-crime laws, which make black neighborhoods more dangerous, to policies that limit school choice out of a mistaken belief that charter schools and voucher programs harm the traditional public schools that most low-income students attend. In theory these efforts are intended to help the poor—and poor minorities in particular. In practice they become massive barriers to moving forward. *Please Stop Helping Us* lays bare these counterproductive results. People of goodwill want to see more black socioeconomic advancement, but in too many instances the current methods and approaches aren't working. Acknowledging this is an important first step.

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Customer Reviews

Jason L. Riley is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a columnist for the Wall Street Journal. He lives in suburban New York City with his wife and three children.

Can Affirmative Action and similar programs be hurting those it intends to help? To even raise this question will be puzzling to many of us, but social policies based on emotion and empathy, the ones that "feel" right, often have the worst unintended consequences. This book examines them all in detail. I would say that Riley's thesis roughly boils down to this: Affirmative Action and other well-intended programs are essentially training wheels for blacks. They may have had their place early on, but continued reliance on them is now more harmful than helpful. He does a thorough job researching relevant data and provides a strong case for this. He reminds me of Dambisa Moyo, Zambian economist, who reveals to clueless Westerners that endless aid was actually hurting Africa by creating a culture of dependence and thwarting initiative and self-reliance. The same is true here in the US. In many large American cities, generations of black households have grown up on welfare, creating a distorted sense of expectations and entitlement. If you, your parents, and your grandparents were all substantially supported by government, why would you believe that anything else is likely, or even possible? If, on the other hand, like so many Asian-American success stories, you believe the only way to make it is study your tail off, and become self-reliant, then so many doors will be open to you in medicine, engineering, business, and more. Riley really has his work cut out for him. There are more unquestioning drones in modern America than the skies of Afghanistan. He will be called all the usual names--Uncle Tom, Self-hater--used by the Politically Correct to punish those who color outside the lines. But if he can change the minds of just a few, create a few more black superstars like Ben Carson, etc, then it will be all worth it.

Government "war on poverty" programs of the last 50 years have failed in spite of increasing expenditures. There appear to be limits on what the government can do beyond removing barriers to freedom. The focus on "equality of result" seems to be creating more barriers to progress. The book examines the track record of various laws and programs and their undesirable consequences:

- * Welfare programs that trap people in poverty.
- * Affirmative action in higher education that results in fewer black college graduates.
- * Minimum wage laws that price blacks out of the labor force.
- * Soft-on-crime laws that make black neighborhood more dangerous.
- * Limitations on school choice that trap students in failing schools

The book is well written, with many personal examples from the author's life. It reveals how black culture, more than anything, explains the continuing academic achievement gap between black and white. I highly recommend this book.

I have always admired Jason Riley and watch him on the Wall Street Journal Review on Fox News

plus any other places I might catch him. As an admirer of Thomas Sowell as well, I really enjoyed Jason's book and became even more impressed with him after reading about his family. I'm glad his father remained an influence in his life but sorry his sisters couldn't deal with their situations. He should be very proud he refused to be pulled into the "entitlement society" and, instead, chose to follow his dream to become a journalist. I have been very frustrated with the liberals' effort to hold the black down and think they are doing them a favor when in reality, they are keeping them down. This is politically motivated. As a former American History teacher, I could see these things happening especially after the passage of the Great Society programs and the Civil Rights Act (even if Johnson thought it would do good!!!). I will continue to be an even greater admirer of Jason L Riley and wish him all the luck in the world. Hope he has another issue on which he could write a book because he has great skills and writes to reach the average person and make it understandable. It's too bad that the very people who would most benefit by his book won't be the ones reading it! I wish there were some way to reach the young black youngsters before they become indoctrinated in the worthless lifestyle being sold to them. Best of luck, Jason, and I'll keep listening to you and reading your books and columns. Bobbie

I love how every piece of the argument is backed up by data and actual acts, and not just pandering to emotional reactive behaviors the media tells us to have. On a side note, it brings to mind the point many liberals consider concerning global warming. I, myself, try not to get involved politically with climate change. (Environmental, yes; politically, no). If the science and data are what matter, shouldn't the science and data be what matter as a result of political agendas? As the author suggests, it's all about the agenda, not the results. I believe bad (normal) political leaders, usually liberals, tend to maintain the status quo as the overall agenda-keeping certain groups at the same level in order to maintain power. Without it, there really is no platform for politicians to have. Well worth the read.

a book that makes you think. Many examples of the law of unintended consequences. The author has staked out the position that repeated attempts to achieve equality for African-Americans has had the exact opposite effect and the intended beneficiaries are actually worse off. Whether or not you agree with him after reading this, the points he raises must be considered to achieve the desired results.

Jason Riley gives us much to think about. Those of us who want to help should read this cautionary

tale. Some of what we do is possibly causing more harm than good. It reminds us that we should always be ready and willing to review reliable data and verify we are meeting our goals. If not, we need to adjust. This book is also a reminder to give everyone the dignity and respect to do for themselves what they can and thus should do for themselves.

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