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SSA's Response to a Request for Freedom **by Jean Carbonneau**

As President Bush tells the world, we have a new fresh air of “freedom” in this country. I felt it and so I thought I would act on it. I wrote to the Social Security Administration to see if I could get out of Social Security. Here's SSA's reply to my request. Enjoy, and think of it whenever Bush lectures the world about freedom.

[SSA letter begins]

From: The Social Security Administration

Thank you for your inquiry.

Participation in the Social Security program is mandatory with respect to the payment of Social Security taxes, regardless of the citizenship or place of residence of either the employer or the employee. Unless specifically exempt by law, everyone working in the United States is required to pay Social Security taxes on earnings from covered employment. These earnings are subject to Social Security tax without regard to the citizenship or place of residence of either the employer or the employee.

The law provides an exemption only in very limited circumstances for members of certain religious sects. Individuals generally cannot voluntarily withdraw from or terminate their participation in the Social Security program.

Similarly, people cannot withdraw the Social Security taxes that they have already paid. This is true regardless of the number of Social Security credits earned or whether benefits are payable. The Social Security taxes that employees and employers pay on workers' earnings are not placed in an individual worker's account, but are pooled in special funds from which benefits are paid to eligible workers and their families. However, people will not receive benefits unless they voluntarily apply for them at the time they become eligible.

The authority for the collection of taxes, including Social Security taxes, is found in the Internal Revenue Code, not the Social Security Act. (See sections 3101(a) and 3102(a) of the Code.) We suggest that you direct any questions you may have about tax liability to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by any of the following methods:

- Calling their toll-free telephone number, 1-800-829-1040; or
- Calling or visiting any local IRS office; or
- Writing to the national address of the IRS below:

Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20224

Or

Accessing their Web site at the following Internet address:

<http://www.irs.gov>

[SSA letter ends]

As you can see, U.S. officials speak of liberty only in a rhetorical manner, not in a way that is consistent with reality. Liberty, as most people would define it, means that government gets out of our way and leaves us alone, including leaving us free to control our own income, retirement, and choices on charity. Government's main legitimate reason for existence is to protect people's rights, period. The U.S. government was not brought into existence to provide "retirement security" or "education" or "health care" or "charity" any other such social "service."

Ask yourself this question. What would happen if an individual started a system like Social Security and tried to get people to participate in it? Answer: He would end up in jail because it would be nothing more than a Ponzi scheme, as Social Security is. Frédéric Bastiat defined this type of government scheme as "legal plunder."

For more than 150 years, Americans rejected these social schemes, and instead relied on themselves, family, friends, or charities to provide these important services. Over the long run, the country prospered and charities blossomed.

It's time to end Social Security, not reform it.

Jean Carbonneau has worked for 20 years in the U.S. Postal Service, and advocates its freedom from government control. He's also a fourth-generation American of French-Canadian descent.

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