

Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich: Isn't Charity a 'Christian Value?'

YAHOO! CONTRIBUTOR NETWORK

By [Isa-Lee Wolf](#) January 25, 2012 2:50 PM

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COMMENTARY | OK, Republican presidential hopefuls, let's have it out. Enough with the shadowy references and whispered slams.

Poor people are still people. And people deserve to eat. For a collection of the so-called "religious" who wave and tout and bleat their religiosity (thank you, [Bill Maher](#)) constantly, you sure have a dim view on helping your fellow man. After [a State of the Union address](#) that covered a range of issues bearing down on a nation in risk of losing its middle class, what does Newt Gingrich talk about?

Food stamps.

Newt said of President Barack Obama's address, according to ABC News: "[He will always prefer a food stamp economy to a paycheck economy and call it fair.](#)" This remark follows his [previous offer](#) to speak to the NAACP about encouraging its membership to focus on jobs over what? Food stamps.

Newt, we get it. You seem to think that every person of color -- including the President of the United States -- is obsessed with food stamps. It's an implication fraught with racism so thinly veiled, it might as well be sheer.

Though it shouldn't need saying, once again, all black people are not on food stamps or trying to get on food stamps or recently off food stamps, and all people who need government assistance to eat are not black. Now, with that overarching racism out of the way, let's get to the heart of what these candidates think of charity.

Newt's not the only one finding political fodder in disdain for the poor (or in Newt's case, the imagined poor). Gov. Mitt Romney's tax plan would [raise taxes on low-income](#) Americans to finance high-end cuts, reports the Associated Press.

Keep in mind Mitt paid a tax rate [of about 13.9 percent](#) the past two years, and earned about \$45.2 million in that time period, according to Reuters. And yet apparently he thinks his taxes are too high because he wants to cut taxes for the rich (read: Mitt).

Arguments that these "job creators" need tax breaks to help the economy are protectionist nonsense: if it worked, the economy would be helped by now. How much lower than 14 percent does the tax rate have to be before the rest of the country sees the benefit?

Enough. Enough of the poor-blaming, race-baiting rhetoric that raises hackles but accomplishes nothing. Enough of empty words that translate into more of the same: benefits for the wealthy and shaming of the poor. We are all Americans, whether we are rich, poor, religious, non-religious. Bruce Springsteen recently penned the future anthem "[We Take Care of Our Own](#)" about these lost values, and hearing it rips at any American who cares about our fellow citizens, any American who can remember when it wasn't this way, because it's just not true anymore.

Now the fight is over which candidate can outdo the other, punishing our own most severely for the new sin of poverty. Enough.

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