



Things are not as they should be.

Those involved in charitable work see it every day: insidious issues of poverty like addiction, isolation, and unhealthy dependency relentlessly claim new victims. What if the solutions we deemed best are actually making matters worse? Have we cheapened justice for the marginalized, allowing it to morph into injustice? It's time to expose harmful counterfeit justice and champion that which is actually good, right, and honorable.

Justice has been stolen. Let's reclaim it.



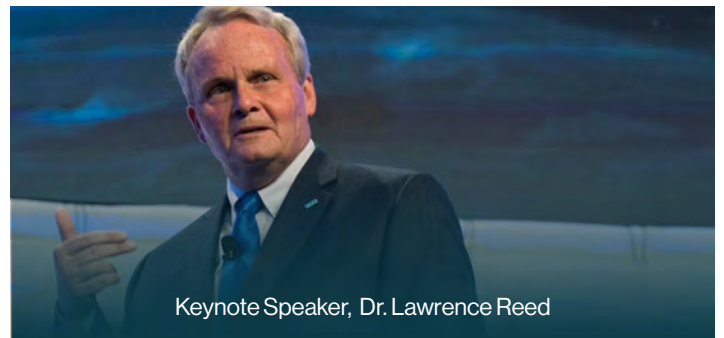
Join us for the True Charity Summit, *Reclaiming Justice*, with Dr. Lawrence W. Reed—author, speaker, and President Emeritus of the Foundation for Economic Education. A fierce lover of liberty and economic justice, Reed has made it his life's work to advance free market principles built on a strong moral foundation.

Along with three presentations by Reed, the Summit will feature breakout sessions on economic, historical, social, and practical justice with Dr. Anne

Bradley, Dr. Patrick Garry, Mr. Scott Allen, and Dr. James Whitford.

Taking place on **Tuesday and Wednesday, May 18 and 19**, the Summit is for anyone—churches, non-profits, social workers, or individual Good Samaritans—seeking to bring greater justice to their poverty- fighting efforts.

Learn more at TrueCharity.us/Summit.



Keynote Speaker, Dr. Lawrence Reed



The Injustice of Bad Charity

By Travis Hurley, Director of Advancement

Nobody likes to feel misunderstood.

When people stand at street corners and fly signs — signs that can't possibly tell their whole stories — they know they are at risk of being misunderstood. The cold glares and disparaging comments they sometimes receive confirm the risk of being perceived as scam artists or addicts who are only interested in feeding their addiction. There's injustice in being prejudged like that.

There may be an even greater risk, though, at the hands of those who actually do give a few dollars or loose change. In this case, the panhandler is at risk of being perceived as helpless. There's injustice in being prejudged like that, too.

Indiscriminate handouts that lack even a conversation, let alone the potential for real relationships, put panhandlers at risk of being trapped in their current circumstance. And the giver in this situation is easily trapped, too. They are trapped by their own sense of believing they've done something good when quite likely they've done just the opposite.

Unfortunately, the injustice of bad charity isn't unique to an exchange of money on a street corner between two individuals. New groups of well-meaning people regularly organize, rallying around the false idea that our only job is to give, give, and give some more without ever calling the recipients into their own success. Sadly, some of these organizations become critical of Watered Gardens' challenge-oriented model, betraying their own misunderstanding of this ministry while encouraging toxic exchanges through their own.

It's bad charity, it perpetuates injustice, and it persists in the Four States. But you can help.

The next time you hear of the latest group simply giving things away, remember that we are calling our region to #GiveBetter. Be an advocate for coupling compassion with relational, responsible efforts that actually empower the poor while preventing those of us who give from becoming paternalistic in the process. **There's real justice in that.**



The Equality Act's Potential Impact On Faith-Based Efforts

by Jeff Lofting, True Charity Education Director

"[I]f you allow biological men to sleep right next to us at night, to disrobe and change right next to us at night, we'll brave the cold." This was communicated to staff at Anchorage, Alaska's Hope Center, a self-described "safe haven...for homeless women," which recently faced an incident in which an inebriated biological male identifying as a female expected

a bed for the night. A representative from the Hope Center explained that "it would rather close than deviate from its religious views and its mission to serve vulnerable women."

Shelters implement strict safeguards to protect the emotional and physical well-being of vulnerable individuals who have placed trust in that shelter, and they have always had the discretion to do just that. When you consider that 92% of



Help Is Here (And So Is The Hurt)

By James Whitford, Executive Director

“We want to avoid a situation where people are unaware of what they’re entitled to,” said Vice President Harris recently. She was explaining the purpose of the Biden administration’s “Help is Here” tour, showcasing the third round of national stimulus legislation passed into law last month.

I hope someone met them along the way and handed off the book *When Helping Hurts*. This fundamental read authored by leaders in community development highlights the harm done when indiscriminate charity fails to discern true need on an individual level. Certainly, the most recent stimulus package represents another round of indiscriminate charity marketed on the grounds that nearly all Americans need relief. Accordingly, HR 1319 was titled American Rescue Plan Act and infers we the people are in the direst straits. But are Americans in need of a government rescue?

At Watered Gardens, we know about the work of rescue—whether from a life of being trafficked, attempted

suicide, or a sub-zero winter’s night. Even so, the majority of the poorest who come to us are more in need of encouragement, guidance, and a friend than to be rescued.

Unnecessary rescue diminishes a person’s dignity, and if repeated enough, births a debilitating dependency.

The greatest problem with sweeping rescue-rhetoric legislation is that it shifts our attention toward a paternalistic federal government, rather than creative local solutions, family members who need support or who can lend it, and to our neighbors in need.

A more apt name for HR 1319 might be *The American Civil Society Disruption Act*.

For more than two decades, I’ve witnessed how government programs intended to address social ills instead crowd out the private efforts of civil society and disrupt the natural, relational ties vital for families and communities to flourish.

Section 1107 of HR 1319 will reimburse shelters for the meals they serve

children, but it will also crowd out private donors and volunteers whose service will seem less necessary. Section 1104 that expands government food commodity by \$37,000,000 but ties the hands of organizations to a no-questions-asked mode of charity, will reduce the need for people to come through local food banks that offer more than a hand-out. I also know from experience the penalty associated with unused Emergency Housing Vouchers (section 3202) will tend to motivate local housing agencies to qualify more people as homeless, perversely incentivizing just that—homelessness.

This bill is far beyond a rescue. It’s a gross expansion and entrenchment of the welfare state. To use the word “rescue” is more than a little disingenuous, and though many might be sincerely thankful that “help is here,” there’s a lot of hurt that comes with it, too.

To read the full article, originally published on [InsideSources.com](https://insidesources.com), visit **[TrueCharity.us/blog](https://truecharity.us/blog)**.

homeless mothers have experienced sexual and/or physical abuse, according to one study, the importance of that discretion becomes obvious. President Biden’s promised resurrection of the Equality Act during his first 100 days, though, endangers that discretion.

Section 3 of the Equality Act includes an amendment to the language that would effectively prohibit sex-specific facilities, such as homeless and women’s crisis shelters, from separating biological males and females. One can imagine the emotional and physical dangers this might pose to the safety and well-being of residents who have experienced sexual and physical abuse from the opposite sex.

Those working in charitable efforts are not simply cogs in a social assistance machine—they are individuals making significant sacrifices for the opportunity to impact their communities. They do so joyfully, freely exercising their beliefs in the care of those in need. The aim is never to turn away those in need, but to help the most vulnerable in the most effective way that they know, based on their convictions. The Equality Act would handicap their ability to do so and may cause those they seek to protect to “brave the cold” instead.

To read an extended version of this article, visit **[TrueCharity.us/blog](https://truecharity.us/blog)**.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Blooms of Hope

May 6-8 | Washington Family Hope Center (WFHC) | 1112 E 2nd Street in Joplin

Celebrate the moms in your life and support moms in need through Blooms of Hope—our first annual fundraiser for the WFHC. With the help of Joplin Greenhouse, generous volunteers, and moms staying at the shelter, this potted plant sale will offer an array of floral varieties perfect for Mother's Day! **Learn more at WateredGardens.org/Blooms.**

Forge Fireworks Stand

July 1- 4 | 8 AM-10 PM | Forge Campus | 705 E 15th Street in Joplin

In partnership with Military Fireworks, we'll be selling fireworks to benefit the Forge Center for Virtue and Work. The men in the program take part in the set up and sales, and a portion of the proceeds will offset the costs of the program. If you celebrate our country's independence with fireworks, be sure to buy them at the Forge campus—and tell your friends, too!

RECENT EVENTS

Forge Sees Three Students Graduate This Quarter!

At our most recent Forge graduation ceremony, three students completed the program entirely, and eleven advanced from one phase to the next. Congratulations to Timothy Brown, Russell Smith, and Benjamin Dover (pictured left to right) for graduating this quarter. They've come a long way, and we're incredibly proud.



KEY VOLUNTEER NEEDS

- Overnight Resident Assistants (Outreach Center)
- Hosts and Kitchen Assistants (Outreach Center)
- Breakfast & Dinner Meal Crews (Outreach Center)
- Daily Assistants (Worth Shop)