

Creeping Bernie-ism

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If you have been watching Tucker Carlson, recently, on Fox or in his bizarre interview with Ben Shapiro, you might have noticed something peculiar: the conservative newsman-commentator sometimes sounds awfully similar to Bernie Sanders.

Both think that if some of Amazon's and Walmart's employees are not paid "enough" to live without government assistance, that means the companies are being subsidized by taxpayers.

Ryan Bourne finds this odd, too, judging it "peculiar" to suggest that, "when setting wages,



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a company employing low-skilled workers should ignore the value of the tasks the employee actually undertakes for them."

It's almost as if these guys haven't thought it through.

"If Sanders is right that programs such as food stamps modestly subsidize employers who pay low wages," Bourne argues, "then his hugely expensive Medicare-for-all and free-college-tuition proposals would constitute a massive subsidy to low-wage employers."

Similarly, when Donald Trump and his allied Republicans push for what we used to call "workfare" requirements, that would mean that the jobs the recipients get also constitute subsidies.

Both Carlson and Sanders apparently assume that companies pay workers according to the needs of the workers determined by subsistence levels — presumably by the old Marxian Iron Law of Wages — and not according to their competitive productivity. That is, what they are worth.

As is common with demagogues, Sanders and Carlson both blame the only companies that are at least paying low-skilled workers something, rather than all those other companies and potential benefactors who aren't paying them at all.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.