



Republican Base Voter

[The Shrill One has an interesting post](#) on “self-reliant moochers,” i.e. those states (and voters) who loudly proclaim their flinty self-reliance and then rely on government transfers. Turns out that conservative states rely much more heavily on government transfers than Blue staters supposedly addicted to the “[cradle-to-grave assurance government will always be the solution](#).” An estimated three people nationwide were surprised.

But for once, Krugman is too soft on his opponents: by only considering government transfer payments, he could be understating the degree of Red states sucking at the government teat. He concludes that three Red states actually are quite self-reliant: Wyoming, Utah, and Nebraska. But that could greatly understate matters — not just for them but also for those Red states that by his own, very conservative definition, already *are* moochers.

Remember that most Mountain West states would essentially cease to exist without massive federal water projects. And their supposedly tough, flinty cowboys depend for their livelihood on grazing on federal lands at prices far below market rates. Then there is the [Mining Act of 1872](#), giving these John Galts mining rights for costs vastly lower than the Almighty Market would price them at: the statute prices a claim at \$5 and has not been changed in 140 years. And Nebraska? Somehow I think that the Cornhusker state would be very different without massive federal agricultural subsidies.

Many western states essentially creatures of massive federal subsidies. “Get the government off my back — but give me cheap water, land and minerals” remains the faux-Randian credo of the Sagebrush Rebellion.