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For Immediate Release

# *Screwed*

## **The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class —And What We Can Do About It**

### **By Air America Radio's Thom Hartmann**

The American middle class is on its deathbed. Ordinary folks who put in a solid day's work don't get tax cuts, can no longer afford to buy a house, send their kids to college, go on vacation, or even get sick. If you're not a CEO, you're probably screwed. If you want to know how screwed the middle class is, just look at these grim statistics:

- From 2002 to 2004, the inflation-adjusted annual average pay for CEO's went up from \$7,773,000 to \$9,600,000 during the period 2002 to 2004. Meanwhile, from 2000 to 2004, the inflated-adjusted median household income went down from \$46,058 to \$44,389.
- From 2001 to 2005, America has lost 2,818,000 manufacturing jobs. And (not counting those in the military-industrial complex) the number of private sector jobs since 2001 has decreased by 1,160,000.
- Seventy-six percent of Baby Boomers say that they don't think they are very prepared to meet their retirement expenses.
- Today, only 60% of companies provide health care to their employees. Over 45 million Americans were without health insurance as of 2004, and that number has grown since then.

In *Screwed: The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class—And What We Can Do About It*, author and Air America Radio talk show host Thom Hartmann argues that twenty-five years of hostile government policies have left the middle class on the brink of extinction. American democracy itself is under siege, as it cannot exist in any meaningful way without a vibrant middle class to support it.

Hartmann shows that America's middle class is not the "natural" consequence of a free market based economy. The modern-day middle class was created when the rules of the market were set to maximize the public good. The creation of Social Security (and later Medicare), the establishment of a minimum wage, and fair labor laws all helped to build the strongest middle class the world has ever known.

So why are so many of us in the middle class unable to achieve the same basic standard of living that our parents had? As Hartmann reveals, over the last twenty-five years, we've witnessed an undeclared war against the middle class waged by the "cons"—so-called "conservatives"—who have worked hard to overturn the economy that FDR, Truman, and Eisenhower built. The cons have not "freed" the market: instead they have created market rules and conditions that value corporations over people.

***More...***

The result: the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class is getting screwed.

Thom Hartmann makes the case that it is not too late to return to the America that our Founders envisioned. He urges all Democrats *AND* Republicans to take back their parties, by showing up at local political party meetings and getting involved in the civic life of our country. FDR said it best: "If the average citizen is guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must have equal opportunity in the market place." Democracy requires a fair playing field. It will survive only if We the People stand up, speak out, and reclaim our democratic birthright.

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**Thom Hartmann**, a nationally syndicated radio host and bestselling author, is renowned for examining and promoting public awareness of political flaws and malfunctions in our current government processes. His national program, syndicated by Air America Radio, is carried on more than 80 radio stations across the US and draws some 3 million listeners each day. He is the author of 17 books, including *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight: The Fate of the World and What We Can Do Before It's Too Late*; *We the People: A Call to Take Back America*, and *Unequal Protection: The Rise of Corporate Dominance and the Theft of Human Rights*. Hartmann has been featured in countless media outlets, including NPR and BBC radio, CNN television, the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Time Magazine*.

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**By Thom Hartmann**

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