

# The Delray Democrat

## Was Marco's Mama a Socialist?<sup>1</sup>

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Socialism is [defined](#) as “collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.” Nothing *ever* advocated by *any* Democrat fits that definition.

That doesn't mean that Marco Rubio was displaying appalling ignorance when he claimed, “The \$3.5 trillion Biden plan isn't socialism, it's Marxism.” The actual meaning of a word becomes irrelevant if an audience has been trained to accept the speaker's meaning. The mere mention of “socialism” causes Republicans to lose what little reason they still possess and can also unnerve independents.

As Humpty Dumpty pompously expounded to Alice in *Through the Looking Glass* (itself an apt metaphor for the Republican perception of reality): “when I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

So what *do* Republicans mean by “socialism”? Do they mean programs like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Obamacare? If we take them at their word, they do.

After all, that's the label Republicans applied to these life-saving programs when they were first proposed by Democrats. Of course, once the programs became popular, Republicans stopped calling them socialism and stopped attacking them directly.

Instead, Republicans floated proposals to “save” or “improve” these programs (by starving or hobbling them). Their efforts failed because most Americans don't want to privatize Social Security or turn Medicare into a voucher system or “fix” Obamacare by allowing insurers to once again refuse coverage of pre-existing conditions. *If these programs are examples of socialism, Americans seem to like it.*

That's why Republicans become so unhinged when Democrats propose legislation that would improve the lives of average Americans rather than the bank balances of the top 0.01% of Americans. And that's what was behind Rubio's embarrassingly over-the-top attack on the Build Back Better Act (BBBA).

A key component of BBBA was reauthorization of the Child Tax Credit that had been part of Biden's America Rescue Plan Act but was expiring at the end of last year.

The Child Tax Credit was [estimated](#) to have cut childhood poverty by 30%, and it is likely to be included in a stripped-down version of BBBA to be introduced within the next few months. At that point, expect to see Marco once again trot out the socialist bogeyman, designed to whip the

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wingnuts into a frenzy as we move into the midterms.

Whether their strategy succeeds (and childhood poverty returns to the shockingly high levels seen in 2020) depends on whether we Democrats expose Republicans for their habitual abuse of language.

When Alice challenged Humpty Dumpty's arbitrary use of words, he dismissively responded that it all depended on who "is to be master." *Democrats simply cannot allow Republicans to make socialism mean whatever they choose it to mean whenever it suits them.*

If the dictionary is to be master, then Republican cries of "socialism" are patently absurd.

And if socialism is to be defined by the programs Republicans have labeled as such, then Marco Rubio's parents were socialists, and he'll be one too, once he qualifies for Medicare and Social Security.