

The Four Froms

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Liberty was a straightforward concept.

Once.

Then *The New York Times* got ahold of it back in April with a featured editorial: "The America We Need."

"Our society was especially vulnerable to this pandemic," the paper alleges, "because so many Americans lack the essential liberty to protect their own lives and the lives of their families."

The fight against the Wuhan virus has been deficient due to a deficit of . . . "essential liberty"?

This isn't the Merriam-Webster definition of "liberty," i.e. the "quality or state of being free" or "freedom from physical restraint." Dump that retro "narrow and negative definition," advises

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the editorial; it represents an "impoverished view of freedom" that "has perpetuated the nation's defining racial inequalities and kept the poor trapped in poverty."



Freedom of speech, religion, the press, etc., are *all* negative. Trade them in for a "broad and muscular conception of *liberty*: that government should provide all Americans with the *freedom* that comes from a stable and prosperous life."

Prosperity for all! For free! Come on down!

Noting the "extraordinary nature of the crisis," the editorial calls for "permanent changes in the social contract" to take the nation "beyond the threadbare nature of the American safety net."

Free stuff from the government, housing, healthcare — all very *positive* ideas of liberty.

But what about these positives' negatives?

"A government big enough to give you everything you want," former President Gerald Ford once explained to Congress, "is a government big enough to take from you everything you have."

The cost of "positive freedom" is our freedom *from* dependence, *from* interference, *from* coercive control, *from* . . . oppression.

Positively negative, if you ask me.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.