 Can everyone please relax? Please?

Now that we have a new President - and an economic stimulus package - and health care reform promised before year's end ... everyone is up in arms over the impending wave of "socialism". The Rush Limbaughs of the world would have you think that we are just one small step away from the Red Threat. The diatribes have roused Republicans nationwide and re-started yet another episode of fear mongering.

It never ceases to amaze me how people have gone off the deep end based on some of the media's versions of the world as they know it. Language and rhetoric is powerful. I mentioned it in a previous post - the "cult of personality" so astutely tapped by none other than the Rush-meister himself. But with power, comes responsibility - and the indiscriminate use of words that people fail to understand simply doesn't cut it. There is a significant problem when the context is purposefully askew and the listeners hang on every word.

Agree or disagree with the economic and health care reform all you want - that's the beauty of the democratic process. But it is simply irresponsible to rouse peoples' emotions about "socialism" (which for most, ends up meaning "communism" by the time it reaches their collective cortex). Didn't they call this "McCarthyism"? And do we not learn from our history lessons?

So, being a free-thinking Canadian, with the desire to learn more about all the hoopla since the Inauguration, I did a little reading.

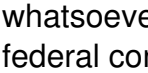
Let's start with this:

[Socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism "Socialism 101") refers to a broad set of economic theories of social organization advocating public or state ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods, and a society characterized by equal opportunities for all individuals, with a fair or egalitarian method of compensation.

Or this ...

[Socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism "Socialism 101") is inseparably interwoven with totalitarianism and the object worship of the state. It will prescribe for every one where they are to work, what they are to work at, where they may go and what they may say. Socialism is an attack on the right to breathe freely. No socialist system can be established without a political police. They would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo, no doubt very humanely directed in the first instance." (Winston Churchill, 1945)

When given these specific definitions, I don't think that anyone in their right mind (no Republican joke intended) would be able to extract these definitions from the Obama administration's proposed economic and health care policies. And based on Churchill's words, I really don't see a likeness emerging whatsoever.

 And what is the one primary factor that prevents the political aspect of socialism? The United States is a [federal constitutional republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional?republic "Constitutional republic")... "where the head of state and other officials are **elected as representatives of the people**, and must govern according to existing constitutional law that limits the government's power over citizens. In a constitutional republic, executive, legislative, and judicial powers are separated into distinct branches and the will of the majority of the population is tempered by protections for individual rights so that no individual or group has absolute power. The fact that **a constitution exists that limits the government's power** makes the state *constitutional*. That the head(s) of state and

other officials are chosen by election, rather than inheriting their positions, and that their **decisions are subject to judicial review** makes a state *republican*."

Bottom line: based on the way our system of government is founded, we have elected officials that decide the fate of our dollars, policies, etc - the country is governed by the people, for the people.

But of course, the average American won't take the time to look at what socialism is (or isn't) - they will huddle with Limbaugh around the Red Threat. [McCarthyism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCarthyism "McCarthyism") - oh how we should have learned from you the first time. Funny - we didn't seem to be too concerned when President Bush proposed changes to the constitution - affecting everyone - yet we're concerned about "socialism" and "socialized medicine" and "universal health care".

And instead of being a rabble rouser for the sake of it, why not try and create productive solutions and not just more problems?

Onwards with the Republic! Long live the Republic!