

Why Charities Will Have to Change

Wall Street Journal

March 9, 2009

Upon reading Naomi Schaefer Riley's "[Philanthropy and Its Enemies](#)," (op-ed, March 3), it is evident that earnest efforts to address the flaws in the current philanthropic system will be demonized by a vocal few. It's far easier to mischaracterize this work as "political" or "misguided" than to take a critical look at why there are mounting pressures for change across the charitable sector.

Foundation leaders need to seriously consider how the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy's "Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best," and studies by the Greenlining Institute and Council on Foundations could strengthen their abilities to meet their founding donors' wishes instead of dismissing a priori certain recommendations as antidonor intent.

Why should grantmakers consider how they can be part of efforts to help the most vulnerable in this world? Andrew Carnegie, one of the first American philanthropists, himself acknowledged that the working poor helped create the excesses of wealth for a fortunate few. Consequently, a sense of justice compelled him to prioritize these alienated community members in his charitable work.

Finally, I encourage foundation leaders to read "Criteria." I think they will find the 10 recommendations will help their institutions amplify the social benefit and impact of their grantmaking. Each of us, particularly foundations, should have a role in improving the human condition. That is the foundation upon which philanthropy was created.

David R. Jones, Esq.

Chairman

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

Washington

[Read the article here](#) .