this sentiment many times by making statements such as, "we must accept the restriction as needful, not to hamper individualism, but to protect it" (Roosevelt, "Commonwealth Club Speech," p. 1178).

Theodore Roosevelt shared this perspective with his nephew, even though they came from opposing parties. Roosevelt was aware that the country lacked equal opportunity and stated, "the essence of the struggle is to equalize opportunity, destroy privilege, and give to the life and citizenship of every individual the highest possible value both to himself and to the common wealth" (p. 1088). He believed that because of this inequality it was clear that capitalism needed to be supervised by the government since a person cannot be free and an individual if they are economically bound. He stated, "Absence of effective state, and, especially, national, restraint upon unfair money getting has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power" (Roosevelt, p. 1091). When classes become part of a society people become more oppressed and are then incapable of overcoming their circumstances, no matter how hard they work.

This side also argues that those that are demanding that the government not regulate economic freedom are also those that frequently demand the government's assistance. Franklin D. Roosevelt stated that, "it has been traditional… for business urgently to ask the Government to put at private disposal all kinds of Government assistance" and "the function of Government must be to favor no small group at the expense of its duty to protect the rights of personal freedom and of private property of all its citizens" ("Commonwealth Club Speech," p. 1174). In other words, the government is already a part of the economy, but has favored a small group to such an extent that it has harmed the majority. Franklin D. Roosevelt claimed that the "small man starts under a handicap" and the "independent business man is running a losing race" ("Commonwealth Club Speech," p. 1175). This was also represented in Charles A. Beard's *The Myth of Rugged Individualism*, when he stated that Daniel Webster had "spoken truly when he said that one of the great reasons for framing the Constitution was the creation of a government that could regulate commerce" (p. 1153). Beard believed that the cry for American individualism was about nothing more than greed and it had become detrimental to society.

Herbert Hoover also recognized the existence of inequality of opportunity, but found his stance somewhere in between the two opposing sides. He believed the United States was still a classless nation and that people were capable of becoming successful no matter where they started in life. However, he was also aware that "the foremost are not always the best nor the hindmost the worst," effectively rejecting a social Darwinist perspective (Hoover, "American Individualism," p. 1134). He believed in ensuring equal opportunity by protecting individuals from any obstacles that would limit their progress and success. He was aware that unrestricted individualism would lead to greed, inequality, and injustice,

but believed that American individualism was tempered by the value of equal opportunity and a "sense of service that lies in our people" that would prevent such injustices (Hoover, "American Individualism," p. 1134).

This debate is still present in today's society and is especially clear in discussions between Liberals and Conservatives. A recent Michael Moore film, *Capitalism: A Love Story*, portrayed the big successful businesses' urge to keep government out of regulation while still asking for their support. It showed Americans across the nation working hard everyday and still losing their homes. For example, a farming family lost their home and the family farm because interest rates at the bank continued to rise unregulated. It also denied the conservative view that any governmental regulation was infringing on citizens' rights by pointing out that these rights do not exist anywhere in the constitution. This documentary highlighted the issues of greedy individualism that is present in today's society which oppresses others' ability to be individuals as well. This view is also portrayed in the current health care debate. President Obama claimed that it is our duty to help our neighbor, that these inequalities are unjust. He believes that we all need to "take some measure of responsibility for the well-being of people we may not know or worship with or agree with on every issue" (Obama, "President Barack Obama's speech at national prayer breakfast," 2009). The Conservatives view governmental healthcare as an infringement on their rights. They believe that if people work hard they can provide their own healthcare and therefore those who are succeeding should not be asked to support the unsuccessful, a stance that clearly represents social Darwinism.

Throughout American history, governmental action has been debated in relation to how it affects individualism. One side believes that any governmental action involving society and economy will only infringe upon rights and hinder individualism. The other side believes that without government involvement and regulation, individualism cannot exist. This is due to either side's beliefs about the American frontier. For those that see the frontier as closed it is clear that the government needs to take action to assist those that are no longer capable of being self-reliant. Those that see it as open intrinsically believe in social Darwinism. They take a more optimistic view about the ability of Americans to "pull themselves up by their boot straps." This debate is clearly still present in society today. Advertising campaigns frequently appeal to the American spirit of the pioneer and exploration. Popular culture takes the opposing side in films, such as Michael Moore's *Capitalism: A Love Story*, which portray the American public as fighting an impossible battle in which even the best and brightest cannot succeed. This is a debate that has always and will always exist. As strong as the two parties are, the conflicting views over individualism are not likely to be resolved.