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The High Costs of Marriage Absence

Most Americans are unaware that about \$700 Billion a year of federal taxpayers' money is handed out to non-taxpayers allegedly below a poverty line (in addition to \$250 Billion a year given out by the states). After Barack Obama became President, he increased federal welfare spending by a third because, as he promised during his campaign, he wants to "spread the wealth," knowing that promotes dependence on government and votes for the Democrats.

This federal welfare apparatus consists of 69 means-tested programs: 12 programs providing food, 10 for housing assistance, 10 for social services, 9 for educational assistance, 8 programs giving cash, 8 for vocational training, 7 for medical assistance, 3 for energy and utility assistance, and 2 for child care and child development.

What is now called the hidden welfare state (because so few Americans know about its enormity) is the fastest growing component of government spending, and this does not include Social Security or Medicare payments. The total of these means-tested handouts is greater than what we are paying for our entire public school system and greater than what we are spending on national defense.

The temptation to cheat is ever present. The Census Bureau just reported that one quarter of the single moms receiving generous taxpayer cash and benefits actually have a partner living in the house whom she doesn't marry because marriage would cut off her government handouts.

We have also just learned that 2.3 million illegal aliens, who worked U.S. jobs in 2010, paid no federal income taxes but collected \$4 Billion from the U.S. Treasury in tax credit money.

The number-one reason people are below the poverty line is what a group in St. Louis labels "marriage absence," and so has created a new organization called the Center for Marriage Policy to make Missouri a model to deal with this problem. At a conference this October to launch its proposals, its founder David Usher said, "Marriage absence is driving America's greatest problems, including out-of-control spending, much of the home-loan foreclosure crisis, poverty, children who fail in school, lack of health care coverage, and personal bankruptcy."

The institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman has been fundamental to America ever since the founding of our nation. The famous French commentator Alexis de Toqueville wrote in the mid-19th century: "There is certainly no country in the world where the tie of marriage is more respected than in America."

Not only have our laws specifically recognized marriage as the union of one man and one woman, but many laws legislate special benefits. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified more than 1,000 federal laws that are based on the traditional definition of marriage, including the tax laws that permit married couples to file joint income tax returns and Social Security benefits awarded to fulltime homemakers (identified as dependent spouses).

The feminist movement started its attack on traditional marriage with Betty Friedan's 1963 book, which urged wives to leave their homes (called a "comfortable concentration camp"), join the workforce, and become independent of men. "Ozzie and Harriet," a traditional-couple sitcom of the 1950s, became an epithet, and it became *de rigueur* to speak of different kinds of "families" instead of "family." *Wikipedia* now considers the traditional family a relic of the 1950s and defines it as "usually considered conservative or reactionary by its critics who argue that it is limited, outmoded and unproductive in modern Western

society."

The first goal of the "women's liberation" movement was unilateral divorce, allowing one spouse (now usually the wife) to terminate a marriage without the consent of the other spouse. This drastic change in our social mores was marketed under the deceitful title "no fault."

Ronald Reagan called his signing of California's "no-fault" divorce the worst mistake he ever made, yet it was imitated by all other states.

The anti-marriage network fanned out in state after state to repeal the laws designed to honor morality and preserve marriage, such as the laws against adultery, fornication, sodomy, alienation of affection, and even the laws that made it the duty of the husband to support his wife and children.

Government's definition of marriage is society's way of establishing the clear responsibility of the father as well as the mother for caring for those little bundles of helpless infants who appear when men and women do what comes naturally. That purpose was ignored by Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

Beginning with LBJ's War on Poverty and its vast expansion of welfare, the system channeled all welfare money through mothers, making the husband and father irrelevant to the family's economic well-being. It should come as no surprise that this encouraged marriage absence and illegitimacy because, as Ronald Reagan said, if you subsidize something you get more of it.

The Costs of Missing Fathers

In 1993, pondering the sad plight of the 20 million American children growing up without their fathers in the home, Charles Murray identified "illegitimacy as the single most important social problem of our time . . . because it drives everything else." Last year, the U.S. illegitimacy rate had grown to 41%, and among whites it was 29%.

Prior to Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, husbands and fathers provided for their families. The 1.7 million out-of-wedlock babies born last year and their unmarried moms now look to Big Brother as their financial provider. The Left is content to let this problem persist because 70% of unmarried women voted for Barack Obama for president. They vote for the party that offers the richer subsidies.

Means-tested welfare handouts cost federal taxpayers \$700 Billion last year (not counting programs into which people pay, such as Social Security and Medicare). Spending by the states raises the annual total to \$950 Billion, more than we are spending on national defense, and most of these programs subsidize non-marriage.

The 69 means-tested programs include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, housing subsidies, Medicaid, daycare, WIC, EITC (which can be as much as \$5,657 a year to low-income families), School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food, SSI, Headstart, and S-CHIP. The Heritage Foundation estimates that these benefits amount to \$16,800 per person in poverty.

The financial subsidies that encourage non-marriage are the biggest reason why federal spending is out of control. There is no way to make significant cuts in the federal deficit unless we address the marriage-absence problem. Poverty is massively greater for children living with a single, divorced, or cohabiting parent than with parents who are married to each other. The poverty rate for single parents with children is 37%, but only 6% for married couples with children. Marriage breakdown is a double-edged sword. At the same time that it forces government to become the financial provider for millions of children and their caregivers, it reduces the government's tax receipts to pay for the handouts.

Income tax day now divides us into two almost equal classes: those who work for their income and those

who just vote for their income. In 2009, 47% paid no federal income taxes, and the bottom 40% receive cash or benefits financed by the 53% who do pay income taxes.

Among other unfortunate effects, the trends toward non-marriage and toward same-sex marriage are a direct attack on fathers. The bond between a child and his mother is an obvious fact of nature, but marriage is the relationship that establishes the link between a child and his father.

There are many causes for the dramatic reduction in marriage, starting with unilateral divorce, which spread across the United States in the 1960s and '70s, putting government on the side of marriage breakup. Then came the legalizing of abortion, diminishing the custom of shotgun marriages, which in earlier years was often the response to surprise pregnancies.

The feminist notion that women should be independent of men, followed by affirmative-action/female quotas in employment, tended to carry out the goal stated by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg that the concept of husband-breadwinner and wife-homemaker "must be eliminated." These feminist ideas and practices demean marriage by discriminating against men and also against fulltime homemakers.

Since the federal government created the child-support bureaucracy, the majority of divorces have been initiated by women. They confidently expect that pro-feminist family courts will award them a steady income for which they will never be held accountable.

The more child support that divorced fathers are ordered to pay, the more federal funds flow through the hands of the states, which compete for federal bonuses given to states that collect the most child support. It is profitable to state bureaucrats to make sure that fathers are permitted to see their own children only a few days per month so support payments can be set at the highest possible level.

Women have discovered they can use a request for an Order of Protection against their husband as "the gamesmanship of divorce" (in the words of the Illinois Bar Journal) in order to get sole child custody plus generous so-called child support. It's easy to get such Orders without any evidence of abuse or even a threat, without notice to the husband, and with no danger of prosecution for perjury. Federal and state laws and subsidies that undermine marriage are the biggest fiscal as well as cultural issue of our times.

Yes, Virginia, There Is a Gender Gap

Yes, Virginia, there is a gender gap. In fact, there are two gender gaps: one bad and one good. The bad gender gap is that the biggest losers in the Obama economy are men rather than women, a fact that is bad for men, for families, for the federal deficit and debt problems, and for the health of the U.S. economy. Men have lost twice as many jobs as women.

The 9.1% unemployment figure is not a good measure of the problem. The most important factor is that 20% of American men (one in five) are not in the workforce. Those 20% are not all included in the unemployment figure. Some have just dropped out of the count and are no longer looking for a job, maybe depending on the paychecks of their wives, girlfriends, or parents.

Most adults can remember the days when we had an economy where a man could work a job, professional or blue-collar, that paid well enough to support his wife as a fulltime homemaker and buy a house for his family. Since millions of those good jobs have been outsourced to China and other low-wage countries, the husband is now lucky if he gets a \$10-an-hour job and sends his wife out to look for a job. We've lost an average of 50,000 manufacturing jobs every month over the last ten years. We are now supporting 44 million Americans on food stamps.

I hope men are not counting on President Obama's much ballyhooed Jobs Plan to get them back to work.

Our first feminist President, Barack Obama will always toady to feminist demands, such as when he responded to their public tantrum by giving women the majority of his Stimulus jobs.

The National Economic Council report called "Jobs and Economic Security for America's Women" recites some of the many ways the Obama Administration is getting jobs for women. The report promises that President Obama "is committed to continuing the push for an economy that provides economic security and jobs for America's women."

You read that right. The Obama Administration is committed to finding jobs for women, not men, a goal that is steadily pursued by sex-based affirmative action, grants to feminist organizations and for feminist projects, and means-tested welfare that subsidizes non-marriage and makes husbands and fathers irrelevant.

The White House Council on Women and Girls issued a report called "Women in America." In proudly commenting about this report, Obama repeated one of the favorite feminist whines: that "women still earn on average only about 75 cents for every dollar a man earns."

Well, so what? The American people believe, and federal law requires, **not** "equal pay" (that's a Communist notion) but "equal pay for equal **work**." And women, on average, are not doing work equal to the men.

The scholar Kay Hymowitz has once again demolished the feminist argument about wage discrimination in a new article in *City Journal*. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines full-time work as 35 hours a week "or more."

The BLS reports that 27% of male full-timers have workweeks of 41 hours or more, but only 15% of females do likewise. Hymowitz reports statistics and comparisons of various categories and shows how women, on average, choose fewer hours of work and less demanding specialties after they train for various careers such as being a surgeon or a pharmacist.

The reason women choose fewer hours and less demanding specialties, and then earn less than men do, is that some, maybe most, of them have babies, and most mothers prefer the mommy track. Despite the long-running feminist propaganda that baby care is a demeaning job for an educated woman and that this burden, imposed by the patriarchy, should be lifted from their shoulders by the taxpayers, most women still want time off from a workforce job to be with their children.

The feminists are at war with Mother Nature, and she is still winning. Polls show that 60% of employed mothers who have minor children prefer part-time work, and 19% would like to give up their workforce job altogether.

The gender gap the feminists gripe about is a good gender gap because it gives babies what they most need, personal care by their own mother.

The Feminists Have a Tantrum

The feminists had a tantrum when they lost their case against Wal-Mart. The New York chapter of the

National Organization for Women and the New York Civil Liberties Union squealed about a 64-page decision in a workplace class-action suit brought by their friends in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The feminists are so accustomed to having their gender doctrines prevail in the courts, in the bureaucracy, in the media and in academia that they can't deal with being told the truth, i.e., that their notions don't make sense and are unfair to others, especially employers, husbands and fathers.

Judge Loretta A. Preska of the U.S. District Court in Manhattan tossed out this case in which the women accused the financial and media services giant Bloomberg L.P. of workplace discrimination because the bosses failed to pretend that pregnant employees and those who took time off for maternity or other purposes were really doing the same work as those who worked faithfully fulltime on the job. This is another example of the fact that the feminist goal was never equal pay for equal work but always was for more pay for less work.

Referring to the way the women's case was based on a few anecdotes, not statistics, the judge wrote, "'J'accuse!' is not enough in court. Evidence is required." *Mirabile dictu!* The judge really shocked the feminists since they usually win when they assert fault against the so-called patriarchy without any evidence or fear of prosecution for perjury.

The trouble with many younger women is that they've been falsely taught by feminism to plan their life career in the workplace without any space or time for marriage, husband or children. They have a total lack of understanding of how demanding a new baby is, and also of the way their own attitudes can change in regard to how they really want to spend their time after a baby arrives.

When Mother Nature asserts herself and babies appear, the women who have been misled by feminist ideology expect their employers and, indeed, the rest of the world, to accommodate their change of schedule. The feminists expect their employer to assume the costs of the priorities and the interruptions that once were easily absorbed in the traditional lifestyle of husband-provider and fulltime homemaker.

Employee decisions that preference family over job come with a price. Employers have no duty to accommodate their employees' children or child-care needs other than the unpaid leave required by the Family Medical Leave Act.

Judge Preska quoted Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, as saying: "There's no such thing as work-life balance. There are work-life choices, and you make them, and they have consequences." The Judge wrote that Welch's view reflects "the free-market employment system we embrace in the United States," and the law "does not require companies to ignore employees' work-family tradeoffs — and they are tradeoffs — when deciding about employee pay and promotions."

How to balance work and family is the number-one topic in women's magazines today. Article after article tries to present a plan for balance between baby and job, plus advice to help the mother feel not guilty when baby gets the short end of the stick.

However, the articles sound hypocritical because for years the feminist movement has carried on a strenuous campaign to move all homemakers out of the home ("a comfortable concentration camp," in Betty Friedan's words), and into the workplace on the argument that caring for babies is not a worthy occupation for an educated woman. Feminists have even propagated the myth that expecting mothers to care for their own babies is an example of the oppression of women by the patriarchy.

Some women have combined a successful career with the role of wife and mother. But that kind of

success usually requires a cooperative husband whom the feminists usually lack. Gloria Steinem noted that in a bitter comment when she launched a documentary about her life. Sneering at the two women she apparently hates the most, she attempted to demean Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann as women "only a man could love." That's right; men do love the non-feminists.

College Is Dangerous for Men

College is a dangerous place for men. They are not only a minority but they are victimized by discriminatory and unconstitutional anti-male rules. In another striking proof that the Obama Administration is totally manipulated by feminists, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights sent out a 19-page "DCL" (Dear Colleague Letter) to colleges and universities that should make men fear attending college at all. The letter adopts the feminist theory that in all sexual controversies or accusations, the man is guilty unless he proves himself innocent.

This DCL carries the force of law since it purports to be an additional implementation of Title IX, the 1972 federal law that bans sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal assistance. But the DCL was never legislated by Congress, and it was not even launched as a regulation that requires posting for comment in the *Federal Register*.

The DCL is just a federal order, issued by a feminist bureaucrat named Russlynn Ali, which colleges and universities must obey under threat of losing their funding. Colleges have dutifully fallen in line by spelling it out in their fall orientations under the rubric of making campuses friendly to women and requiring sensitivity about offensive words and ideas.

The most unconstitutional part of Ms. Ali's impertinent DCL is that it orders colleges to reject use of the criminal justice standard of proof. The DCL rules that an accused man doesn't have to be judged guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt," or even the intermediate standard of "clear and convincing" proof. Instead, Ms. Ali instructs colleges that they must judge an accused man based on "a preponderance of the evidence" standard. That means the campus disciplinary board (which may include feminist faculty from the Women's Studies Department) only has to believe that the female accuser is 51% likely to be truthful and accurate.

Furthermore, the DCL "strongly discourages" colleges from permitting an accused man "to question or cross-examine the accuser" during the hearing.

The punishment of a man convicted under these DCL rules will far exceed what the campus disciplinary committee may hand out. He will likely be expelled, barred from graduate or professional school and some government jobs, suffer irreparable damage to his reputation, and possibly be exposed to criminal prosecution.

The feminist apparatus is constantly grinding out phony statistics about sexual assault and harassment, accusations that men are naturally batterers, and that women never lie or make errors in sexual allegations. The feminists are unrepentant about the way they and the prosecutors (toadying to the feminists) accepted and publicized lies that destroyed the reputations of the Duke Lacrosse men.