From Phyllis Schlafly

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THE BLACK FAMILY

It is amazing how changes of vast magnitude can take place in our American society with hardly any reportage by the media or discussion by commentators or public officials until after the change is a fait accompli. Among the changes of truly tremendous significance that were generally not written about until the shift had been accomplished are (1) the shift of the income-tax burden onto the backs of people with children that took place between 1950 and 1980, (2) the shift in the strategic military balance from our 8-to-1 superiority in 1962 to our present inferiority, and (3) the drop in the birth rate around 1970 which observers didn't discover until empty seats appeared in first-grade classrooms.

Now a change of vast sociological significance, which has been going on unreported for 20 years, has suddenly burst into a front-page series in the New York Times. The Times candidly admits that "authorities for years were reluctant to speak out about the problem," and Ford Foundation president Franklin Thomas said "there was a taboo on even discussing the problem." Now the situation is so massive that it can no longer be ignored.

Put simply, "the problem" is the fact that the liberal welfare program has resulted in a black illegitimacy rate of 55 percent. Nearly one-half of black families are now headed by a woman; their children are growing up without a father in the home. The fathers are not dead; they have just evaded the father's responsibility.

George Gilder, the conservative economist and author of the best-seller "Wealth and Poverty," is one of the few who have written candidly on this subject and pointed out the devastating effect the welfare system has had on

young blacks. The sons "have hardly ever met a working man who supports his children, (so) they will find their manhood by fierce street rivalries with their peers."

But, Gilder continues, "any girl is offered an irresistible solution by the U.S. Government. It presents her, at age 16, a chance for independence in an apartment of her own; free housing, medicine, legal assistance, and a combination of payments and food stamps worth several hundred dollars a month. [redacted] There is only one crucial condition. She must bear an illegitimate child."

It's interesting that, in its in-depth series, the liberal New York Times, shows no concern about the private immorality of illegitimacy, or about the public immorality of a government spending scheme that provides financial incentives to illegitimacy. Nor does the New York Times series show any concern about the private default of responsibility when black men refuse to support their families, or about the public immorality of a government spending scheme that provides financial incentives to encourage fathers to default on their duties.

It is liberal ideology that the taxpaying Americans should be forced to support the poor in the lifestyle of their choice, and that sexual liberation must replace traditional moral standards in education, entertainment, and literature. It is feminist ideology that the concept of a "husband-breadwinner" is an obsolete stereotype which must be eliminated and replaced by [redacted] the "changing roles of men and women."

Nor is The New York Times series concerned about the large element that alcohol plays in black poverty, family disintegration, and thousands of "hard-core unemployables." Anyone who drives through urban areas cannot help but be impressed with how the percentage of taverns and liquor stores in black neighborhoods is so much higher than in the rest of the city.

The New York Times series focuses exclusively on the economic impact of the disintegration of black families, but at least that's a start toward the public discussion of a difficult problem. In addition to its moral and social ramifications, it is now clear that the policies of luring girls to illegitimacy and men to abandon their responsibilities is the principal cause

of black poverty.

Black leaders (and even liberals) are beginning to see that this poverty is undoing or frustrating all the civil rights gains of the last 20 years. Even Eleanor Holmes Norton, a liberal and a feminist, calls the family crisis "a threat to the future of black people without equal."

The liberals falsely told the blacks that voting rights, forced busing for school integration, public housing, affirmative action, and the appointment or election of a few token blacks to office were the road to black achievement and prosperity. At the same time, the liberal welfare programs, starting with Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, undermined the foundationstone of all wealth creation, the traditional family; and the liberal "progressive" educators gave dishonest diplomas to millions of blacks whom the schools had failed to teach to read and write.

Oh, how the liberals have cheated the blacks! The blacks would have done better to have cast their lot with conservatives who give primary emphasis to traditional family values, basic education, and the work ethic.