Social Issues vs. Fiscal Issues

by Phyllis Schlafly June 18, 2010

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The media are forever trying to create a division in the Republican Party between those who care most about so-called social issues and those who want priority for fiscal issues. Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels is the most recent politician to fall into this trap by asserting that the next president "would have to call a truce on the so-called social issues."

The truth is that social and fiscal issues are locked in a political and financial embrace that cannot be pried apart. Those who emphasize runaway government spending and out-of-control debt and deficits must face the fact that those trillions of dollars are being spent by government on social problems.

Those who care about Big Brother's dictatorial intrusions into our daily lives and privacy must come to grips with how and why Big Brother has vastly increased his regulatory power. Government powers, as well as the money in government's hands, have expanded to deal with social problems.

In order to reduce government's size and power, and restore the limited government sought by fiscal conservatives, they simply must address the social issues. It's the breakdown in our culture that has caused millions of Americans to depend on government for their living expenses and for solutions to their personal problems.

In the not-too-distant past, we had a society where husbands and fathers were the providers for their families. The 1.7 million out-of-wedlock babies born last year

(41 percent of all births) and their unmarried moms now look to Big Brother as their financial provider.

The decline of marriage is not only the biggest social problem America faces today, but it's also government's biggest financial problem.

It is encouraging that some grassroots groups are now searching for remedies to the marriage problem. A ten-point agenda for rebuilding our society based on traditional marriage has just been articulated by two author-activists, David R. Usher of the Center for Marriage Policy and Mike McManus of Marriage Savers.

Their agenda recommends waiting periods both for marriage and for divorce. The agenda includes replacing our current system of unilateral divorce with permitting divorce based on two methods: Mutual Consent or Necessary Dissolution for defined and proven reasons.

Their agenda calls on churches to take the lead in fostering policies that promote and save marriage. This would include encouraging four to six months of marriage preparation so couples will know what they are getting into before they marry, and mentoring couples in troubled marriages.

Usher and McManus recommend effective shared parenting laws after divorce because all social studies show that children need parenting by both mother and father, unless a parent is found unfit.

Usher and McManus urge reforming welfare and child-support policies to remove financial incentives for non-marriage. Present policies of welfare-to-perpetual dependency should be replaced with policies that promote welfare-to-marriage because marriage is one of the best routes out of poverty.

The famous 1965 Moynihan Report on how welfare handouts destroy families by giving financial handouts only to women, thereby making husbands and fathers irrelevant, is now recognized as one of the most prophetic government reports ever written. The many financial incentives written into federal appropriations laws which promote cohabitation rather than marriage, must be eliminated.

Even Obamacare contains a marriage penalty by reducing the insurance subsidy when cohabiting couples marry. Financial incentives that penalize marriage are a reason why unmarried cohabiting couples soared from 430,000 in 1960 to 6.8 million in 2008.

The ten Usher-McManus recommendations include the economic factor by urging us to bring back sustainable manufacturing jobs for working-class Americans. Jobs used to be available to the average middle-class guy which enabled him to support his wife and children in their own home, but millions of those jobs have now gone overseas.

The decline of marriage is the major cause of the growth of the welfare state. This year we the taxpayers are spending $350 billion to support single moms, and this amount increases every year.

That's only the start of the costs because social problems come out of female-headed households: crime, drugs, sex, teen pregnancies, suicides, runaways, and school dropouts.

The left is content to let this problem persist because 70 percent of unmarried women voted for Barack Obama for president. They vote for the party that offers the richer handouts.

Abortion is another major factor in the social-fiscal controversy. The feminists who demand the right to abortion also demand that the taxpayers pay the costs, and

the people who opposed Obamacare discovered that the abortion-funding issue almost enabled defeat of Obama's Health Control Law.

Fiscal and social conservatives need each other. Remedying the culture and restoring a marriage society is the only way to reduce the size and costs of the welfare state.