The Toddler Wage Gap and the Mommy Wage Gap

by Phyllis Schlafly

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Just in time for International Women's Day on March 8, Facebook's feminist COO, Sheryl Sandberg, appeared on Fox News' top-rated Megyn Kelly show to complain that "There is a toddler wage gap in this country."

To prove her shocking charge of inequality within the traditional American family, Sandberg observed that "boys do fewer chores than girls and get paid more. Our sons take out the trash, [which] doesn't take that long. Our daughters set the table, [which] takes longer."

Supposedly, this injustice to little girls leads to discrimination against women in the workplace, so obviously we need intervention and a change of cultural attitudes. Little girls should "lean in" and demand the right to carry out the trash instead of doing cleaner household tasks.

This is the latest wrinkle in the Left's campaign to get moms into the labor force and eliminate the traditional middle class family with a father provider and a full-time mother caring for their own kids. President Obama made that goal clear in Providence, Rhode Island, last fall when he pronounced that whenever "mom leaves the workplace to stay home with the kids, which then leaves her earning a lower wage for the rest of her life, that's not a choice we want Americans to make."

If you thought Obama believed in giving choice to women, think again. It's only some kinds of choice he will tolerate, such as the choice whether or not to kill her baby; certainly not the choice of whether to be a stay-at-home mom, or work full-time or part-time.

A week earlier, at Hollywood's Academy Awards, Patricia Arquette used her acceptance speech for Best Supporting Actress to rouse up the audience with the statement, "it's our time to have wage equality once and for all, and equal rights for women in the United States of America." She wasn't talking about all women because it's well known that unmarried or childless women in the workforce make almost as much as men, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

No, Arquette was specifically addressing “every woman who gave birth.” She was giving voice and drama to the feminists’ new issue: the “motherhood pay gap” which results when pregnant women take time off and often choose to return to reduced hours after giving birth.

According to Obama, “that’s not a choice we want Americans to make.” In order to “ensure that women are full and equal participants in the economy,” he said, the taxpayers must pay the cost of caring for newborns and toddlers. In a government daycare center, you can be sure that girls will take out the trash and boys will set the table.

The mommy pay gap is even greater for married women (who earn 24 percent less than men) than single mothers (17 percent less). News flash: one reason a woman gets married is to be supported by her husband while caring for her children at home. So long as her husband earns a good income, she doesn’t care about the pay gap between them.

Obama’s $80 billion daycare plan would triple the current child-care tax credit to $3,000 for two-earner families with children under age five and a combined income of less than $120,000, plus sweeten the package with a new $500 credit for couples when both spouses are in the workforce. Tough luck for the one-third of families where the mom leaves the work force for a time to give her children personal (instead of commercial) care.

Obama wrapped his tax plan in a lot of rhetoric about fairness and claims that he will make “everyone play by the same set of rules,” but his plan isn’t fair and certainly does not set the same rules for all families. It’s highly discriminatory against families that want to give their babies mommy care rather than turning them over to hired caregivers whose salaries are paid by increased taxes.

Obama is not reflecting the polls or listening to what the American people want but following the playbook of the Left. A Pew Research Center survey reports that 60 percent of Americans say children are better off when one parent stays home to care for the children.

Candidates running for national office this year or next should be asked the question, Do you believe mothers should have the choice to leave the workforce for several years to care for their children?

Wikipedia defines “the war on women” as “an expression in United States politics used to describe certain Republican Party policies and legislation as a wide-scale effort to restrict women's rights, especially reproductive rights.” Since Obama’s Rhode Island speech, Wikipedia needs a new definition that includes the Democrats’ war on women.

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