Phony Divide Between Fiscal & Social Issues

by Phyllis Schlafly March 7, 2012



Phyllis Schlafly

Contrary to politicians who want to call a truce about social issues, there is absolutely no way to separate social and fiscal issues; they are locked in a tight political embrace. Politicians who say we can ignore social issues, or avoid talking about them, are really saying that they have no plan to cut federal spending and the growing national debt.

That's because the social issue of marriage, and its importance to our society, has become a tremendous fiscal issue. The problem of marriage absence is now costing the taxpayers even more than national defense.

We used to have a social structure in the United States where husbands and fathers provided the financial support of wife and children. Last year, 41 percent of all babies born in the U.S. (including 53 percent of babies born to women under 30) were illegitimate, growing up without their own fathers.

It is obvious that when the mother of these children has no husband to support her and her babies, she calls on Big Brother Government. You and I then pay the bills for what is labeled welfare.

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It's not poverty that causes broken families; it's the absence of marriage that causes poverty and puts kids below the designated poverty line. Social issues cause fiscal expenses.

I grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the American family, white and black, was not broken. It stayed together to face life's reversale.

The massive national problem of having babies without marriage started with Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty in the 1960s. LBJ Welfare channeled all the money and benefits to the woman, thereby making the husband and father unnecessary.

I'm not saying anything new; Charles Murray laid this all out more than 20 years ago. He said "Illegitimacy is the single most important social problem of our time ... because it drives everything else," imposing gigantic costs on the taxpayers.

After Barack Obama became President, he increased federal welfare spending by a third because, as he told Joe the plumber, Obama wants to "spread the wealth around." This was a conscious political strategy; it promotes dependence on government and more votes for the Democrats.

Most Americans are unaware that nearly $900 billion a year of federal taxpayers' money is handed out to non-taxpayers allegedly below a designated poverty line. Americans' lack of knowledge of the enormity of these handouts is why we sometimes hear reference to the "hidden" welfare state.

The Heritage Foundation reports that more than 70 types of federal means-tested handouts, in cash or benefits, are distributed. Half of Americans (47 percent) pay no income tax and depend for their living expenses in whole or in part on government handouts paid by the other half who do pay income taxes.

This federal welfare apparatus includes 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. Welfare recipients are eligible for a free cell phone with monthly minutes from the Universal Service Fund that the rest of us pay into.

So we get more illegitimate babies supported by taxpaying Americans every year. This extraordinary change in our social structure is the primary reason that government budgets, both federal and state, are so bloated.

The Rasmussen Poll reports that 78 percent of American adults rate marriage as at least somewhat important to U.S. society,

60 percent consider it very important, and 77 percent say it's better for children to grow up in a home with both their parents. So why are we using tax dollars to discourage marriage and subsidize illegitimacy?

We should ask our presidential candidates who are worried about extravagant government spending, unbalanced budgets, and repeated raising of the debt ceiling, how they will stop the flow of money that promotes more and more dependency on government. Welfare spending is a major cause of our unbalanced budgets and colossal debt.

This hidden welfare state is the fastest growing component of government spending. And these figures do not include Social Security or Medicare payments.

Nor do the Heritage Foundation figures count the social and fiscal costs of the expensive problems that come mostly from female-headed households. These include drug addition, sex, suicides, school dropouts, runaways, and crime.

Welfare spending is a failure; it doesn't advance us toward any constructive goal, such as helping recipients to get on their feet economically. It merely increases dependence on government handouts and increases votes for big-spending politicians.