The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Disappearing Motherhood: Who's to Blame?

By John and Andy Schlafly

October 24, 2023

A British tabloid carried a grim headline Monday announcing "America's fertility crash," over an article detailing the precipitous drop in the U.S. birth rate during the last 15 years. The decline was greatest in Utah, whose birth rate fell by more than a third despite the Beehive State's reputation for large families.

Ignoring such a dire long-term trend that harms the health and happiness of the American people, our media have spent most of 2023 promoting entertainment aimed at single young women, starting with Barbie. That blockbuster movie featured an unmarried woman without children, with merely a cameo appearance by one pregnant character who is portrayed as an outcast.

The Barbie phenomenon is joined by the female pop star Taylor Swift, whose record-setting concert tour caused an unprecedented meltdown at Ticketmaster. Now the film version has broken the box office record for a concert movie, drawing mostly young women to theaters where they dance on chairs and sing off-key rather than merely watching.

Taylor Swift, herself childless and nearly 34 years old, was asked when she turned 30 whether she wants to have children. She curtly replied, "I don't really think men are asked that question when they turn 30, so I'm not going to answer that now."

A man's fertility, of course, doesn't begin falling at age 30. But every young woman should be warned how much more difficult it becomes to have children as she moves through her 30s.

Taylor Swift won't need children to support her financially in her old age, due to her fortune. But the future of our country and the "Swifties," as her followers are called, is less rosy in our increasingly childless society.

The percentage of women under 45 having children has fallen to barely half today. Childless young adults will eventually become an elderly population dependent on public support, but Social Security works only if there are enough young workers to fund the system on a continuing basis.

For the most part, Swifties have not been attending these concerts on dates with young men. An estimated 90% of these concert fans are women, an imbalance so severe that it has caused havoc with the availability of restrooms at performance venues.

Our nation already has a record number of women and men who are single in the 18-29 age group: 34% of women and 63% of men. Many of them have given up on seeking a relationship.

This isolation is not healthy for our society, or for young women. Single women are obese at a rate of 7-12% more than married women, and Taylor Swift had to remove a reference to “fat” in one of her music videos last year to appease her fans.

Meanwhile, the number of men who have no close friendships has increased five-fold in the last 30 years, to 15%. The hordes of young men and women who are unmarried today are having difficulty finding partners who share their political views, while Democrat politicians play gender-gap politics for their benefit.

Married women typically vote Republican as married men do. But single women vote overwhelmingly for the Democratic candidates, in part because Democrats spend billions of dollars advertising to them.

The percentage of 18- to 34-year-olds who are married today is less than half of what it was a generation ago. In liberal Seattle, it is predicted that soon the number of older teenagers and adults who have never been married will surpass the number of married residents there.

Educated women are deciding not to have children at all. About 25% of women nearing the end of their childbearing age who hold at least a master’s degree are childless.

The decline in the birth rate is something that President Trump and the Republican Congress addressed over Democrat opposition back in 2017, by instituting a $2,000 annual tax credit for each child under age 17. But this child tax credit has fallen in real value due to inflation, and a boost in it during Covid was not extended beyond 2021.

This child tax credit is paltry compared with the benefits that every newborn American contributes to our country over a lifetime. In addition to military service and other sacrifices, the average American will pay $500,000 in taxes over his life, so the child tax credit should be far higher than $2,000.

Other countries have changed their policies to encourage more childbearing. Communist China replaced its one-child policy with a two-child policy in 2016, and then ended its two-child policy in 2021 in favor of promoting having three children.

Poland's conservative-leaning government was just ousted from power in part because it allowed Poland's birth rate to decline to its lowest level since World War II. Our minuscule, inflation-depleted child tax credit should likewise become an election issue as our birth rate plummets.

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