

Ending the Marriage Crisis

Mike Adamo
Senior Editor

The marriage rate in the United States has consistently declined in the past 50 years while the percentage of children growing up with one parent has increased. If this doesn't seem alarming to many of us today, it's because we have a very different idea of marriage than the one that existed in the past. Until recently, marriage has been regarded as the means for starting a family and raising children. A decline in marriage means a decline in the only institution that can raise a new generation of people and ensure that they have the personal qualities and support necessary to succeed and be good individuals.

Whereas some traditionalists point to the expansion of marriage to same-sex couples as the cause of its degradation, other social attitudes and policies have had a far greater negative impact. On the one hand, those who consider the debate over gay marriage "settled" have probably not given much thought to what marriage actually is. But those who think gay marriage weakens the traditional family have become distracted from the greater marriage crisis—that of the high rate of divorce and single-parent households. While we've been focusing on the tiny percentage of Americans who would directly benefit from legal gay marriage, we've turned our backs on the most common household configuration. It's in bad shape.

The nuclear family was a hallmark of American society since colonial times. In America there existed a kind of geographic mobility and freedom that was unrivalled anywhere else, and it allowed a break with the traditional norms of aristocratic Europe. This

change constituted a redefining of marriage. It was no longer about "the uniting of goods," as Tocqueville wrote, but rather "the similarity of tastes and ideas that brings man and women together . . . and fixes them beside one another." In short, it was about the people.

For a long time, marriage being "about the people" meant that it was a route to the greatest and most respected joy in life: raising children. It also involved a sense of obligation. As Mary Beth Norton writes in *Liberty's Daughters*, women in the early American republic had the esteemed, if confining, role of raising and educating the next generation of citizens. As long as a thriving family remained the ultimate American goal, personal happiness and the good of society enjoyed a close bond.

Since the 1960s government policies and social attitudes—especially radical individualism—have begun to marginalize the role of the family not only as the foundation of a good life, but also as the central unit of society. The expansion of no-fault divorce in several states has made it easier for men and women to leave their families, while also making marriage a less serious decision than it used to be. "Til death do us part" is an absurdity when you consider the number of marriages that end when the partners get bored with each other.

Meanwhile, federal welfare programs have encouraged absentee fathers by providing greater benefits to single-mother households. Progressives want to replace the family with the state, but don't realize the consequences of doing so. They're under the impression that there's only one good way to raise children, and that we can't just allow any average American to take on that

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 11

Red Cross Blood Drive
Sponsored by AHI, Alpha Delta Phi,
and Psi Upsilon
8 a.m. to 2 p.m. | 21 W. Park Row

Saturday, October 11

AHI Family Weekend Open House
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. | 21 W. Park Row

responsibility. There's no better example of this than Barack Obama's "Life of Julia" online campaign advertisement, which tries to portray the government as a legitimate replacement for a family.

But the most significant cause of the marriage crisis is also the hardest to see. We don't think of marriage in the same way anymore because we can't conceive of a higher purpose than our own personal satisfaction. In this light, marriage isn't about fidelity or obligation or raising good children. It's about *me*. Who are we to judge people who rushed into bad marriages? It's their decision, their prerogative, their consequences. But we know that's an oversimplification.

The marriage crisis can't be fixed by laws. We need to have the confidence to not only believe in social values, but to promote them. The process is uncomfortable: it involves judging people, stigmatizing certain behaviors, and being able to adequately defend values in terms of both morals and practicality. If we're serious about marriage as a positive force in society we need to be concerned about the trend of diluting the institution into a temporary arrangement for personal interest. The greatest threat to marriage right now isn't its expansion to same-sex couples, but the apathy toward marital obligations and a lack of regard for the importance of the family.

Getting the Science Right on GMOs

Will Swett | Staff Writer

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have been hotly disputed since their inception over thirty years ago. Food altered by agricultural biotechnology has been approached with suspicion by groups who disregard legitimate scientific assurances to the safety of genetically modified foods. Mandatory labelling on GMOs would only serve to brand healthy food options as unsafe to those who do not understand the difference but fear the implication of danger. In fact, scientific research conducted on GMOs over the past decade has concluded that there is no credible evidence that GMOs pose any unique threat to the environment or the

public's health. Despite the presence of controversial and discredited anti-GMO studies, such as the one conducted by Gilles-Éric Séralini, the safety of genetically modified crops is still assured by the scientific community. Attacking the development of GM technology, would only limit the benefits such advances could offer to humanity: namely, an end to world hunger.

It is estimated that upwards of 70% of processed foods on U.S. grocery store shelves have genetically modified ingredients. To mandate the labelling of all these foods would do little to educate people on what they are eating, as the majority of Americans are unaware of what GMOs actually are. Anti-GMO activists lobbying for labelling cite a *New York Times* poll that shows 93 percent of Americans support

it. Whether those polled know what GMOs are or realize the amount of processed foods containing genetically modified ingredients remains to be seen. GMO skeptics say labelling would alert those who may oppose consuming GM foods, but mandatory labelling would contribute to the stigmatization of food that is perfectly healthy. A simple solution would be to allow organic farmers to label their foods as “100% organic,” which most do already. This way, skeptical consumers could still make the choice of purchasing unmodified foods without mandating discriminatory policies on GMOs and the farmers that grow them.

No credible scientific studies in top-flight journals support the claim that the consumption of GMOs is unhealthy and unsafe. A popular critique used by critics of agricultural biotechnology claims that there has been little to no evaluation of the safety of GM crops and there is no scientific consensus on this issue. Such claims are simply false. Recently, a team of independent Italian scientists produced an overview of the last ten years of genetically engineered crop safety research, analyzing the research of 1,783 studies. The scientists researched a staggering number of independent research papers, reviews, relevant opinions and reports, addressing all the major issues that emerged in the debate on GE crops. They concluded, “the scientific research conducted so far has not detected any significant hazards directly connected with the use of genetically engineered crops.” Despite the persistent accusations levelled against agricultural biotechnology by anti-GMO NGOs they seem to ignore the consensus formed by experts in the scientific community.

An oft cited study used to condemn GMOs, conducted

by anti-GMO activist Gilles-Éric Séralini, has been hailed as proof of the dangers of genetically modified crops in spite of the study’s scientific deficiencies. The controversial study reported spontaneous tumor growth in rats undergoing a GM feeding test. Séralini’s study was first published in *Food and Chemical Toxicology*—a reputable peer-reviewed scientific journal—but was later retracted because of the experiment’s poor design, the use of tumor-prone rodents, the lack of standard controls, the small sample size and the selective presentation of data. The report has recently been republished in *Environmental Sciences Europe*—a “pay for play” journal—without further peer review. Despite being discredited by the scientific community, the infamous study is still cited by GMO opposition as groundbreaking proof of the dangers of agricultural biotechnological practices.

Anti-GMO NGOs, such as the Non-GMO Project, hope to stop the consumption of GMOs by raising public awareness, believing that “[i]f people stop buying GMOs, companies will stop using them and farmers will stop growing them.” Not only have GMOs been proven to be safe for human consumption, but by attacking their development their opponents reject the impressive innovations that agricultural biotechnology offers. Advances in GM technology will result in more nutrition-enhanced and disease resistant crops produced in much higher yields than ever before. If anti-GMO groups evaluate the facts and respect the expertise of the scientific community, they may find that the development of genetically modified food is a proven way to effectively confront world hunger and malnourishment.

Corporate Tax Rate

Alex Klosner | *Staff Writer*

The United States suffers from the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world: an appalling federal rate of 35%. Comparatively, the UK has a corporate tax rate of 21% and Ireland a mere 12.5%. This excessive taxation hinders domestic investment and job growth and encourages corporations to relocate overseas.

Under current U.S. tax policy, corporations can avoid paying taxes on foreign profits as long as the profits remain abroad. Hypothetically, if a Dallas-based U.S. manufacturing company decides to build a factory in Dublin all profits this company earns in Ireland would be taxed at Ireland’s 12.5% rate rather than the 35% American corporate tax rate. As long as these profits remain in Ireland, the IRS cannot impose any taxes on the firm. However, if this manufacturing company decides to fund a new factory in the U.S. with profits earned in Ireland, it must pay a penalty for bringing these funds back home. This residual tax is equal to the difference between the U.S. tax rate and the taxes the company paid to Ireland. For example, if (assuming this company is in the highest tax bracket) this company earns \$10 million in Ireland, they end up paying \$1.25 million to the Irish Government. In order to bring the \$8.75 million back to the U.S. to fund a new factory, the firm would have to pay an additional \$2.25 million to Uncle Sam. In other words, this company ends up paying the same

\$3.5 million in taxes on revenue earned abroad as they would if they earned it in the U.S. This residual tax acts as a disincentive for domestic investment and prevents job growth crucial to our lethargic economy.

According to a report released by a Senate subcommittee, the American manufacturing company Caterpillar has taken advantage of a lower tax rate in Switzerland. Over the past decade, Caterpillar has avoided paying \$2.4 billion in taxes by keeping profits overseas. Similarly, Apple has \$54.4 billion in accumulated foreign profit and General Electric surpasses all U.S. companies with about \$110 billion in profits kept overseas. According to a Bloomberg report published last spring, U.S. multinational corporations stash over \$1.95 trillion overseas.

By implementing a territorial tax system, U.S. firms can invest profits earned abroad in America with little to no penalty. Several other developed nations such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom already have a type of territorial tax system. Implementation of a territorial tax system along with a lower corporate tax rate creates great potential for job growth and prevents corporate inversion. According to S&P Capital IQ’s Global Markets Intelligence research team, 35 U.S. companies have reincorporated overseas since 2009 in order to benefit from lower tax rates. Most recently, Burger King merged with Canadian restaurant chain Tim Hortons in order to move their headquarters to Canada to benefit from lower corporate taxes.

The high corporate taxes of the Obama economy are curbing job growth and eroding the tax base.

Elizabeth Warren stated in her 2012 address to the Democratic National Convention: “Corporations are not people. People have hearts, they have kids, they get jobs, they get sick, they cry, they dance. [...] That matters because we don’t run this country for corporations, we run it for people.” Last time I checked people with hearts, children, and the entire spectra of human emotion worked for corporations. It’s time to cut the “you didn’t build that” mantra and realize that when firms suffer, so do our American families, friends, neighbors, and patrons of elite liberal arts colleges.

Enquiry Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Joe Simonson

Senior Editor: Mike Adamo

Staff Writers: Taylor Elicegui, Amy Elinski, Alex Klosner, Sarah Larson, Andrew Nachemson, Phil Parkes, Will Swett

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Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at jsimonso@hamilton.edu and madamo@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.