

The Heart of the Matter: Families and Fatherhood

In "[Back To Discipline: Disparate Impact Reflects Disparate Reality](#)", Heather MacDonald applauds the Federal Commission on School Safety's repudiation "of disparate-impact analysis." She writes:

Disparate-impact analysis holds that if a facially-neutral policy negatively affects blacks and Hispanics at a higher rate than whites and Asians, it is discriminatory. Noticing the behavioral differences that lead to those disparate effects is forbidden. In the area of school discipline, disparate-impact analysis results in the conclusion that racially neutral rules must nevertheless contain bias, since black students nationally are suspended at nearly three times the rate of white students. In 2014, the Obama administration relied on this methodology to announce that schools that suspended or expelled black students at higher rates than white students were violating anti-discrimination laws.

MacDonald gives evidence demonstrating why this policy increased violence and poor discipline in the classroom. Faced with possible charges of discrimination if they dismissed a disproportionate number of black students, regardless of their offenses, school administrators allowed troublemakers and gang members to remain in classrooms. Once they realized the school would not punish them for their misbehavior, these miscreants spread disorder, including physical attacks on teachers and fellow students.

That such permissiveness would only encourage aberrant behavior may seem obvious to even casual observers, but apparently not to some school and government officials. They maintained the policy, classroom discipline in many schools

took a dive, and the schools suffered accordingly.

Embedded in MacDonald's article are the real reasons for juvenile crime and incivility, both in and out of school: the breakdown of families and absentee fathers.

About 33% of American children live in single-parent households. Among African-Americans, approximately 72% of children live with a single parent, most often the mother. Family breakdown, MacDonald asserts, is the "cause of urban crime and disorder."

As is so often the case, however, we look to the government for Band-Aids rather than getting to the root of a problem. Many Americans, liberals and progressives, yes, but even a large number of conservatives, turn to the government for help when there are problems with our young people. Every time these people genuflect to the federal government, they not only allow that government to take the place of the traditional family, but they also hand over more power to an entity that is both inept and greedy for control.

Many observers understand the devastation done to our culture and society by the implosion of the family. Which raises the question, as MacDonald does in the article: Why don't our politicians and others begin a campaign to "revalorize fathers and men?"

Such a campaign would cost little money but might bring great gains in nearly all parts of our society. Think what might happen if local leaders, business executives, pastors, teachers, the media, Hollywood, members of the Congress, and the president himself made an effort, whenever the opportunity presented itself, to stress the importance of the intact family. Think what might happen if we began a serious national dialogue on the importance of fatherhood. Think what might happen if we put aside our current disparagement of men and manliness, our assaults through the law and culture on

marriage, and the sneering attacks, mainly from radicals in so many of our universities, on the traditional family unit, and instead promoted the family: mothers, fathers, and children.

Such a program might diminish the battalions of inmates in our prisons, decrease the discipline problems in our schools, increase the capabilities of our students, and reduce monies spent on federal welfare programs.

Perhaps most importantly, by making the family once again the foundation stone of society and by stressing the importance of men and fathers to our culture, we might recover our diminishing freedoms, liberties lost to the government as the family has broken down, a crack-up [predicted over fifty years ago](#) by Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

“The family is the test of freedom,” G.K. Chesterton wrote, “because the family is the only thing the free man makes for himself and by himself.”

Revalorize fathers and men. Revalorize the idea of family. And maybe in the process we will revalorize the United States of America.

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