

An **OPEN LETTER** to the
President, Congress, and other Elected Officials
 concerning the
DESTRUCTION of the **AMERICAN FAMILY**

Americans today are deeply concerned about the **family**. We hear of a **50% divorce rate** and an alarming **out of wedlock birth rate**. **Children of divorce** are more likely to commit crimes, abuse drugs, suffer mental and physical ill health, do poorly in school, become marginally employed adults, and lack the skills to keep their own marriages together. We see the effects in **our own homes** and on **our own children**. Controversies surrounding **marriage** are debated on federal and state levels. Government spends hundreds of millions of dollars to **promote marriage, fatherhood, and family stability**. *What many Americans and even some policymakers do not realize is that **families are being forcibly dissolved by family courts and other agencies of government**.*

We believe family destruction proceeds directly from government programs and policies, *paid for with our tax dollars*:

- **Easy divorce laws allow divorce to be forced upon unwilling parents, guilty of no grounds such as adultery, desertion, or abuse.**
- **Over 4,000 children are forcibly separated from their parents by family courts in America each day.** Most of these parents have committed no legal infraction.
- **Federal family policy drives family destruction, and divorce has become a major revenue source for state governments.** Federal financial incentives paid to states to collect child support (US Code, Title 42, Chap 7, Subchapter 4, part D, Sec 666) impel states to set support guidelines so high as to encourage divorce. Federal payments remove the *moral and political* incentive for states to reduce divorce rates.
- **Federal child support law undermines the morale and readiness in the Army Reserve and National Guard.** Many reservists deployed to Iraq with child support obligations had no time before reporting for duty to seek reductions because their military pay was insufficient to pay their current obligation. The Bradley Amendment (1986) and US Code, Title 42, Sec 666, subsec (a), para (9), part c bars courts from reducing child support arrearages. *Thousands of reservists could return home to face financial ruin and even jail.*
- **Young men are now reluctant to marry** knowing they can lose their children, homes, earnings, and can be jailed, groundlessly. This works at cross-purposes to stated policy objectives of encouraging family formation, including programs costing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to promote marriage and fatherhood.
- **Family courts routinely violate the constitutional rights of parents.** Parents' rights to the "care, custody and companionship" of their children — rights recognized for centuries as among the most fundamental — are simply ignored by family courts. *Erosions and violations of constitutional protections and due process are routine in family law.*
- **Controversies over marriage are seriously dividing the nation.** Americans are concerned about innovations that redefine marriage and the family. Yet the most serious redefinition of marriage has already been effected *with no public debate* for more than three decades by family law practitioners.

We call upon our elected officials at all levels to open an immediate review of these policies and programs, to solicit citizen input, and to render a full and candid report to the American people.



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