

State of the Union at Odds With Religious Freedom, Core American Values

Tuesday night the president said one of the best “investments we can make in a child’s life is a high-quality early education.” Mr. President, you neglected to mention the very best investment in a child’s life—a married mom and dad.

A recent Harvard University study found that children raised by intact families have greater social mobility than their single-parented peers. The president also said the “best measure of opportunity is access to a good job.” No, Mr. President, it is a married mom and dad.

President Obama’s remarks didn’t address a key reason why our economy is just bumping along—the continued dissolution of the American family. Only 45 percent of our 17-year-old children have grown up in an intact married family. The mother and father of the remaining 55 percent have at some time rejected each other as husband and wife.

An intact family is better off financially than one that is broken. Its children do better in school and graduate from college in greater numbers than those from broken homes. Obama’s policies penalize marriage and families, which are vital to economic fairness and success. It is unfair to penalize marriage in the tax code, and it doesn’t make economic sense.

President Obama also failed to address how his policies undermine religious freedom. Obamacare contains a rule that requires employers, such as Christian colleges, religious hospitals and faith-based businesses, to offer their employees health care plans that cover pills and procedures that go against their deeply held convictions. If they don’t agree,

they face crippling fines.

Employers should not have to choose between violating their conscience or paying severe fines that threaten jobs and could even force them to drop health coverage for their employees. This rule, or mandate, hurts families and women. It's unfair and, thankfully, most Americans oppose it. I hope the president will listen to them.

From bakers in Oregon to photographers in New Mexico and court clerks in New York, people whose convictions are grounded in historic Christian teaching are being told there is no room for them in public life.

Mr. President, it's not an American value to trample someone else's conscience. It's not an American value to repress someone's practice of his or her religion. It's not an American value to use the federal government to undermine the will of the people in the states that believe marriage is between a man and woman and that children do best with a mom and dad.

If we want real hope and change, we'll enact policies that build stronger families and a stronger economy, preserve our heritage of religious liberty, and protect, rather than undermine, marriage.

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