6 Things to Know About Biden's Anti-Family Budget Buster

The family is the bedrock of society. As the family goes, so goes the nation. Unfortunately, America's families haven't been doing so well as of late. We are currently grappling with the effects of low marriage[1] and fertility rates[2] and ever-increasing inflation that hits the working class the hardest. However, instead of fostering healthy families, the Biden administration's plan seems to favor the wealthy (often childless) coastal elites and seeks to superimpose the government into the role of caretaker and nurturer. Instead of "Build Back Better," the $3.5 trillion plan really ought to be called the Anti-Family Budget Buster.

Disguised as a plan to tax wealthy corporations to help working-class families, this plan would instead increase marriage penalties and weaken the institution of marriage, undermine the dignity of work, fund the killing of unborn children through abortion, incentivize all families to have two working parents outside the home by placing all newborn children in institutionalized daycare, and reshape early education to begin teaching things like gender ideology as early as age three.

What follows is an overview of six ways the Anti-Family Budget Buster would reshape American family life.

[1] Joseph Chamie, "The end of marriage in America?," *The Hill*, August 10, 2021, accessed October 19, 2021, https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/567107-the-end-of-marriage-in-america.

[2] "Baby Bust: Explaining The Declining U.S. Birth Rate," NPR, July 26, 2021, accessed October 19, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/07/26/1020810561/baby-bust-explaining-the-declining-u-s-birth-rate.

1. Childcare Entitlement Program

Waiting until children enter kindergarten at the age of five to introduce them into structured government institutions, like a public school, is not soon enough for progressives. The Biden administration's plan includes a "Birth Through Five Child Care and Early Learning Entitlement Program" that would:

- Only benefit families with two parents working outside the home;
- Require parents who do not work outside the home to pay for the childcare of those who do; and
- Incentivize parents to send their children to state-run childcare and educational centers as early as birth.

Who Is Eligible for the Program?

The childcare entitlement program would provide free (or nearly free) childcare services for parents. Initially, the program would have phased-in eligibility based on the state's median income. But by year four, it would be accessible to any family regardless of income.

The plan prioritizes center-based daycare services found mostly in commercial buildings over childcare provided by a parent or other close relative. Parents are allowed to use the childcare subsidies at center-based childcare, family childcare providers, or other licensed childcare providers in the state. However, parents who choose to stay home to care for their children are not considered "family childcare providers." Even though their tax dollars are funding it, stay-at-home parents would not benefit from the subsidy in this program.

The program fails to recognize the contributions parents who choose to stay at home to raise their children make to the community. Physically and emotionally, a child's attachment to their mother and father has huge benefits, including fewer autoimmune diseases, a better ability to respond to stressful social situations, and better relationships as adults.[3]

Although having both parents working outside the home might be what is best for some families, the government should not favor work outside the home over work inside the home. This plan creates a financial incentive for both parents to work outside the home and send their children to an institutionalized childcare program as early in life as possible. By creating a financial incentive for both parents to work outside the home—while simultaneously requiring families with one working parent and one childcare-providing parent to fund that program—the Biden administration removes authentic "choice" from parents and manipulates them into placing the economy ahead of their children.

Who Pays for the Program?

This program is similar to Medicaid in that states get to decide whether to participate. If a state does opt in, federal taxpayers would front 90 percent of the costs, with state taxpayers covering the remaining 10 percent. That means families with only one working parent or two parents working middle-class jobs would be paying the cost of childcare for wealthy parents. Such a high federal subsidy also allows the federal government to have even more control over the quality indicators used in childcare centers across the country. These quality indicators normally include things like small group sizes, licensures, and accreditation rather than focusing on the quality of the nurturing care each young child receives.

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[3] Tara O'Neill Hayes and Margaret Barnhorst, "How Children Benefit from Paid Family Leave Policies," American Action Forum, June 9, 2020, accessed October 20, 2021, https://www.americanactionforum.org/research/how-children-benefit-from-paid-family-leave-policies/.

Are Faith-Based Providers Eligible for the Program?

Yes, but only if the providers are willing to be subjected to further government regulations. The program specifies that funding from this entitlement will be considered federal financial assistance. Childcare provided through a church is not excluded from receiving funding from this program. However, if a church-based childcare provider accepts these "childcare certificate" dollars, they would be subjected to all of the government's social mandates on life, marriage, and human sexuality. These provisions would purposefully crowd out faith-based providers from participating in the childcare entitlement program, pushing more young children out of the home and away from their faith community.

What's the Problem with the Program?

Every family should have the flexibility to choose the childcare situation which best meets the needs of the parents and the children. Government policy should be designed to provide families with the things they value most, flexibility and choice—whether that takes the form of a tax credit to help parents cover the costs of parenting their own young children in the home or expanding the childcare development block grant to better meet the needs of families. Instead of providing what families want most, the Biden administration's plan incentivizes both parents to work outside the home and creates an institutionalized childcare model for all American families.

2. Universal Preschool

At the age of three, children would then enter a federally subsidized preschool program. This universal pre-K program would be operated through local school districts, Head Start Agencies, or licensed childcare providers. Just like with the childcare entitlement, faith-based early education centers that choose to participate would be subject to government mandates.

The program would be fully funded by federal taxpayers initially, with a decreasing split of funding with participating states, ending at a 60/40 split with federal taxpayers fronting the larger share. With the federal taxpayers supporting, at minimum, 60 percent of all costs, it would enable the federal government to increase its control over the curricula and education of America's youngest learners—an area in which states have historically led.

The program requires participating states to develop and implement state preschool standards, creating one-size-fits-all curricula for all three and four-year-olds. If these state curricula are anything like California's proposal to begin introducing gender ideology as young as three and four,[4] this ideology would begin taking advantage of children's young impressionable minds even earlier. Instead of fostering the growth and development of a variety of preschool options for families, each participating preschool program would be forced to adhere to these new state standards.

3. Radical Sexual Ideology Inserted into Family Programs

The Biden administration's plan also creates a federal paid family and medical leave program that includes controversial language that alters social policy and weakens the family.

It would insert the term "domestic partner" into the definition of "spouse," a word that should be reserved strictly for marriage. The injection of these terms into federal statute in this unprecedented way is unnecessary and further erodes the value our society places on the marriage covenant by equating a "domestic partnership" with the time-tested social building block of marriage.

The plan would also elevate sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) to protected class status and equate it with race and national origin in the outreach sections of these family policies. This would be

[4] Henry Olsen, "Opinion: California wants to teach kindergartners about gender identity. Seriously.," *The Washington Post*, May 13, 2019, accessed October 19, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/05/13/california-wants-teach-kindergartners-about-gender-identity-seriously/.

harmful to women, children, and families. This is an unmistakable push towards the goal of the Equality Act, namely, the total overhaul of our federal civil rights framework to mandate special privileges based on SOGI classes. We have already witnessed how the U.S. Supreme Court's opinion in *Bostock v. Clayton County*—which redefined "sex discrimination" in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include sexual orientation and gender identity—has spread like wildfire throughout executive agencies and been used to redefine "sex discrimination" clauses in other civil rights statutes.

4. Removal of Work Requirements in the Child Tax Credit

The Child Tax Credit (CTC) is a true pro-family policy; it acknowledges the economic burdens families face by providing a valuable tax credit to help cover the costs of raising a child. The Biden administration's proposal to permanently expand the amount of the CTC and allow a certain portion to be sent to families each month is a positive development, given the new and expanding economic burdens placed on families. However, by removing the work requirements, the proposal nevertheless manages to undermine the American work ethic, the dignity of work, and individual responsibility.

Currently, in order to be eligible for the CTC, a parent or guardian of a child for which the tax credit is owed must make a minimum earned income of $2,500 a year. It is important to note that this income requirement is not placed on both parents of the child; it only requires one parent to work enough to bring home an annual income of $2,500.

Removing this simple requirement devalues the dignity that work brings to a family as well as society. In Ecclesiastes 2:24, the Bible tells us, "There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil." Also, as Pope Saint John Paul II wrote in *Laborem Exercens*:

> Man must work out of regard for others, especially his own family, but also for the society he belongs to, the country of which he is a child, and the whole human family of which he is a

member, since he is the heir to the work of generations and at the same time a sharer in building the future of those who will come after him in the succession of history.[5]

5. Expanded Marriage Penalties

In any society that desires stability, government policy should encourage strong marriages and incentivize married couples to stay married. But the Biden administration's plan doesn't do this. Instead, it makes existing marriage penalties worse. Specifically, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a program that helps low-income working parents meet basic financial needs, would have its marriage penalty nearly doubled under the proposed plan.

The EITC was initially designed to assist low-income working parents with meeting basic financial needs. It continues to value the dignity of work and has proven to be one of the most important reasons single mothers join the workforce.[6] Despite this success, the Biden administration wants to increase the already existing penalty for single parents to get married and more heavily subsidize low-income workers without children.

As pointed out in a letter of concern from Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) and 34 of his colleagues in the U.S. Senate, a single mother who earns $12,000 could be forced to pay a $2,713 tax penalty if she chooses to marry.[7] That is an increase of $1,135 compared to the existing marriage penalty in the EITC. The changes to the EITC also double the reward for low-income workers without children. At a time when the U.S fertility rate is at an all-time low, economic policies should be promoting childbirth, not creating additional economic rewards for those without children. Biden's proposal seeks

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[5] "Laborem Exercens," The Vatican, September 14, 1981, accessed October 19, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html.

[6] "Policy Basics: The Earned Income Tax Credit," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, December 10, 2019, accessed October 19, 2021, https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/the-earned-income-tax-credit.

[7] U.S. Senator Mitt Romney, "Romney, Colleagues Call Out Harmful Marriage Penalties in Democrats' Reconciliation Bill," press release, September 30, 2021, https://www.romney.senate.gov/romney-colleagues-call-out-harmful-marriage-penalties-democrats-reconciliation-bill.

to permanently increase the childless EITC that triples the maximum amount of credit for low-income workers without children.

An economic plan geared towards families should seek to remove existing marriage penalties, not double them. These kinds of provisions make clear that Biden's vision for helping families does not include either helping married couples and those with children or promoting marriage as the foundational institution of society.

6. Radical Expansion of Taxpayer-Funded Abortions

In addition to all the ways the Biden administration's plan would burden working-class families, it would also radically expand taxpayer-funded abortions, a serious attack on the formation of families. Here are the specific provisions that would take federal taxpayer funding of abortion to new extremes.

Mandate Abortion Funding in Non-Medicaid Expansion States

The plan seeks to circumvent some individual states' decisions not to expand Medicaid (and with it, direct funding of abortion). It would mandate that Affordable Care Act (ACA) plans cover abortion and transportation for abortions in fiscal years 2024 and 2025. This would override state laws that exclude insurance from covering abortion in 11 of the 12 states that have not chosen to expand Medicaid (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin).

Abortion is excluded from being required as an essential health benefit under ACA section 1303. However, this plan would override that provision in the ACA by mandating coverage of any "family planning services" not already covered by insurance. This egregiously pro-abortion language—especially the transportation provisions suggesting the federal government would be paying to fly women out of state to obtain abortions that are illegal within the state—might be a response to the Texas Heartbeat Act that went into effect in 2021.These expanded subsidies also specifically reference that funded abortions will be covered at the individual's choice of provider, thereby creating yet another funding stream for Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion business.

Billions of Dollars in Public Health Grants Without Abortion Funding Restrictions

This plan includes over $18 billion in new public health grants that are not subject to the Hyde Amendment, thus opening these programs up to be used to pay for abortions, abortion trainings, or abortion referrals. Specifically, this includes $7 billion for health activities at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to fund health equity. Abortion advocates have been making a major push to further expand abortion as a means of health equity for women. It also includes $50 million for the doula workforce—including abortion doulas, a new and growing field in the abortion industry to normalize abortion and treat it like a health care service.[8]

Additionally, it includes over $3 billion for advance research projects and research on the health effects of pregnant women, without any protections against using the funding for aborted fetal tissue research or research on human embryos. There are also millions of dollars in funding for bias training, which could be used to go after pro-life health professionals who object to participating in or referring for abortions.

Expansion of Numerous Tax Credits and Cost-Sharing Funding to Cover Abortion

Since the ACA's passage in 2010, billions of taxpayer dollars have been used to subsidize health plans that cover abortion. This plan would expand the tax subsidies as follows:

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[8] Hannah Matthews, "Abortion Doulas Are More Important Than Ever," *Elle*, September 2, 2021, accessed October 19, 2021, https://www.elle.com/life-love/a37456775/abortion-doulas-texas-sb8-scotus/.

(1) Make permanent an expansion of the ACA premium tax credits that were first made available in the COVID-19 reconciliation package passed by Democrats in spring 2021. In 2020, prior to the expanded tax credits, an estimated 2.4 million people received a total of $13 billion in advanceable premium tax credits for plans that cover abortion on demand.[9]

(2) Create a permanent $10 billion-a-year fund to states in order to bolster the insurance market, which would provide additional subsidies for plans that cover abortion. Neither Hyde protections nor the ACA's more modest separate abortion payments requirement would apply. Accordingly, these funds can and would be used to reduce out-of-pocket costs for abortions (deductibles, co-pays, co-insurance) and subsidize overall plans that cover abortion.

(3) Expand and make permanent the Health Coverage Tax Credit for health insurance premiums for certain displaced or newly unemployed workers.[10] This tax credit helps pay premiums for employer-sponsored plans that cover abortion. This provision would also increase the level of its premium subsidies from 72.5 percent to 80 percent.

(4) Provide an employer-side refundable payroll tax credit for the childcare industry. Without Hyde protections, this would allow the subsidy to cover childcare employer plans that include abortion coverage.

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[9] "ObamacareAbortion.com 2021 Fact Sheet," Family Research Council, https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF20L25.pdf.

[10] "The Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC): In Brief," Congressional Research Service, January 5, 2021, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44392.pdf.