

How About Some of That Empathy For Our Children?

✘ It seems that not a day goes by without us hearing the often repeated narrative that Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, just doesn't care about regular Americans. Whether it's parroted by liberal pundits, Democratic spokespeople, or campaign ads, the charge is loud and clear: Romney's rich, so he can't empathize with people who aren't.

The portrayal is just another example of how the political game is played. One of the primary functions of campaigns is to frame their opponents negatively. They do it early and often, and judging by the national polls on the presidential race, the perception is still doing a number on Mitt Romney. Despite the fact that for the past three and a half years, President Obama has presided over steady American decline and an absolutely terrible economy that is only getting worse, Americans think he *cares* about them. They think he's *looking out* for them. Thus, half the country believes he's doing a fine job and supports his re-election.

It goes to show you just how much it means to Americans that their president *appears* to be empathetic toward their struggles, even if his policies aren't helping them. Personally, I don't get it. I couldn't care less if my president has a good bedside-manner or, like Lionel Richie, tells me *time and time again* how much he cares. I want a leader who actually accomplishes things – one who puts forth good policies and achieves positive results. Neither Romney nor Obama need to convince me that they *feel my pain*. I don't care if they feel it or not.

What I find curious is that Obama supporters, who clearly have a soft spot for empathy, don't seem to have a whole lot of

empathy themselves when it comes to our children.

No, I'm not talking about abortion, even though an uncomfortable number of speakers at the Democratic National Convention seemed almost jubilant at the prospect of increasing abortions.

I'm talking about the crushing burdens the U.S. government's decisions have put on our kids' shoulders. It's not as if Americans don't realize how deep of a hole we're digging for future generations. Recent polls, including one taken by Rasmussen Reports back in July, reveal that fewer Americans than ever before believe that today's children will be better off than their parents. Rasmussen shows that number at only 14%. That's down from 27% at the beginning of Obama's presidency.

The downward trend over Obama's term shows something important: As you might remember, at the beginning of Obama's presidency, our country was experiencing the darkest days of the *Great Recession*. Our economy was largely in free-fall, unemployment was even higher than it is now, the stock market was tanking, and uncertainty and anxiety were everywhere. It was a snapshot in time where American optimism should have bottomed out. It didn't, however. After four years of Obama administration policies, Americans are substantially less optimistic about their children's future.

And how *can't* we be worried?

Our national debt has exploded to over \$16 trillion because our government can't control its spending, and that bill is being sent directly to our children. In fact, every newborn baby in America now owes over \$50,000 to the federal government.

European levels of high unemployment have become the new norm. The workforce participation rate is at an all-time low. Last month, for every American that entered the workforce, four

left the workforce. The *real* unemployment rate is much higher than 8% because unemployed workers who have maxed-out on their unemployment benefits are no longer counted in the calculation. The situation is devastating for returning members of our military and recent college graduates – our children. According to recent studies, half of recent college grads have moved back in with their parents because they can't find substantive work. President Obama likes to boast in his stump speeches that 4 million jobs have been created under his presidency, which is a trumped-up number in the first place because it doesn't include the number of jobs *lost* during his presidency. Yet, he never bothers to mention that 13 million students earned their degrees during that same time. What opportunities exist for them in this American job market? Waiting tables? Bagging groceries?

It's estimated that one in every four American children now live in poverty. A recent UNICEF report stated that the United States has the second-highest child poverty rate of all developed countries.

Let's face it... The Obama administration has been about as kid-friendly as the Octomom.

Ironically, the president always talks about "investing in our future" as a way to rationalize his monstrous spending. Yet, he doesn't see that its those very "investments" of his that are ensuring our children won't have a prosperous future. Only serious economic growth and serious spending reductions can give the next generation of Americans a fighting chance, and Obama refuses to offer plans to achieve either. Where is that famous Obama empathy when it comes to our children?

Now, I can understand the skepticism of people who don't think Mitt Romney can fix all of these problems. But at least he has put his name on a plan to tackle them. More importantly, he has selected a running mate who has fearlessly dedicated his political career to getting our fiscal house in order by

addressing the major driver's of our debt. To me, *that's* empathy, especially compared to a president who has demonstrated nothing but stunning indifference when it comes to these burdens.

Again, an overwhelming majority of Americans believe that children in this country won't be better off than their parents. Yet, half of them seem like they're ready to accept that future as an inevitability by supporting President Obama. In accepting limitless debt, chronically high unemployment, and anemic economic growth, they're essentially trading in the concerns they have for their children's future for four more years of listening to a charming guy tell them how much he *cares*.

Is that empathetic to our children? Is that empathetic to anyone?