

Hillary Clinton and Income Inequality

☒ It looks like we won't be hearing much about income inequality from Hillary Clinton when she runs for president. And that's too bad.

Sure, it would be fun to hear Hillary drone on and on the way liberal Democrats do about how unfair it is that the rich have so much and the poor don't. Fun because this is a woman who reportedly hauls in \$200,000 for a one-hour speech and who, along with her husband, is worth at least \$100,000,000. If you got dizzy looking at all the zeroes, the number is one ...hundred ... million!

But the real reason it's too bad we probably won't get a serious debate between Mrs. Clinton and her Republican opponent on income inequality is because we desperately need it. And the inconvenient fact – a fact liberals don't want to acknowledge – is we shouldn't be targeting rich people for scorn; they're not the problem. Poor people are.

Two scholars from the University of Arkansas –Robert Maranto and Michael Crouch – have looked into why there's so much income inequality in America, and what they found, I suspect, won't please liberals like Hillary Clinton.

Recently they wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal that begins with this:

“Suppose a scientific conference on cancer prevention never addressed smoking, on the grounds that in a free society you can't change private behavior, and anyway, maybe the statistical relationships between smoking and cancer are really caused by some other third variable. Wouldn't some suspect that the scientists who raised these claims were driven by something–ideology, tobacco money – other than

science?

“Yet in the current discussion about increased inequality, few researchers, fewer reporters, and no one in the executive branch of government directly addresses what seems to be the strongest statistical correlate of inequality in the United States: the rise of single-parent families during the past half century.”

Turns out that the old-fashioned two-parent family is an idea whose time has come and gone. In 1960, the scholars tell us, more than 76 percent of African-Americans and nearly 97 percent of whites were born to married couples.

Today, only about 30 percent of black children are born to married couples and 70 percent for whites.

And here's why it matters: Kids who grow up in single parent families have a lot more problems than kids who don't. They are more likely to be abused, more likely to have behavioral problems, more likely to have problems concentrating in school – more problems in general.

And we don't need Milton Friedman to tell us that they're not going to make as much money when they grow up. Based on research they've culled, Moranto and Crouch report that more than 20 percent of children in single-parent families live in poverty long-term, compared with 2 percent of those raised in two-parent families.

It would be nice if Hillary tries to pass along the same old crummy liberal analysis that we've heard over and over again – about how we need to hike taxes on the rich so we can help the poor and all that. It would be even nicer to hear a conservative respond, saying “Mrs. Clinton, that's what's wrong with liberals like you: you just don't know what you're talking about most of the time” – before telling a hard to swallow truth: The reason we have income inequality is because too many poor people are dysfunctional; too many young girls

are having babies who grow up behind the proverbial 8 ball.

And where's the so-called mainstream media in all of this? Shouldn't they be telling us the truth about income inequality? Moranto and Crouch write that despite all the facts, despite all the scientific studies, "Mainstream news outlets tended to ignore the ... message about family structure, focusing instead on variables with far less statistical impact, such as residential segregation." Why? Because journalism is a business populated mainly by liberals who share the same values as liberals outside the media, especially liberals in politics – and journalists would rather walk barefoot on broken glass than side with social conservatives.

Then there's the race factor. The Arkansas scholars write that, "family breakup has hit minorities communities the hardest. So even bringing up the issue risks being charged with racism."

And who needs that?

The bad news is there's no easy solution. The good news is change can happen. "The change must come from long-term societal transformation on the subject," the op-ed concludes, "led by political, educational and entertainment elites, similar to the decades-long movements against racism, sexism – and smoking."

I don't think Hillary Clinton – elite as she may be – is up for that task. Taking on dysfunctional behavior is not something liberals like to do, unless, of course, it's conservatives who are being targeted.

But if Hillary won't try to make something out of income inequality, let her opponent bring it up. Let the Republican candidate show some guts by telling the truth about it. I get the impression that America is in the mood for a politician who isn't afraid; one who isn't constantly taking polls to

find out what to say; one who talks about personal responsibility and makes no apologies for it. And if along the way that politician is called a racist, so what? I get the impression the American people are tired of that kind of nonsense too.