

America isn't having enough babies...but there's an easy way to fix that

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January 23, 2019 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) – As a people of life, we pro-lifers are naturally pro-natal. We not only abhor abortion, we offer positive encouragement to young couples to get married and have little blessings—lots of them.

Yet we live in a wider culture that teaches young people that babies are burdens and not blessings. Add to this government policies that discourage marriage and childbearing, and it is not surprising that U.S. birthrates continue to fall. In fact, our birth rate, which first dropped below replacement way back in 1971, is now *the lowest it has ever been in American history*.

Children are the only future a family has. Indeed, they are the only future a nation has. And we are simply not having enough.

Consider that the total fertility rate needed for a population to sustain itself over time is 2,100 births per 1,000. But America is not even close to that. We are currently averaging, [according](#) to the U.S. National Center for health Statistics, an anemic 1,765.5 births per 1,000 women. This is a recipe for demographic decline.

So, what can we as a country do about these dismal numbers?

The first thing we ought to do is overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the infamous Supreme Court ruling that has led to the deaths of 60 million unborn children over the past 45 years. In 2016 alone, the lives of [884,524 Americans](#) were snuffed out before they saw the light of day.

This number is roughly equal to the shortfall in births. In other words, absent abortion, the American fertility rate would be just about at replacement.

At the same time, we also have to address the “push factors” that propel young women into abortion clinics. Often it is not a matter of “her choice” at all, but rather pressure from a husband, a boyfriend, or a parent or grandparent that forces her hand.

How many of these women would have chosen life if just one friend or family member had stood by her side? Most of them, reported one study. So it is incumbent upon pro-lifers to be there for young women in need.

The second thing we have to do is help young people avoid the “debt trap” of student loans. Far too many millennials find themselves graduating from college with tens of thousands of dollars in debt that will take years, or even decades, to pay back. Others don't graduate at

all, which makes their student loans even more difficult to pay back.

Over the last two years, the rapidly improving economy should have sent birth rates higher. After all, factories are now moving back to the U.S., and unemployment rates are at historic lows. But a trillion-and-a-half dollars in outstanding student loans stand in the way of a fertility rebound. In a sense, student loans may be the most effective contraceptive ever invented.

Who would risk marriage with someone who is heavily in debt, or undertake the decades-long project of raising a family together? Instead they simply live together, an arrangement that is far less likely to produce children than tying the marriage knot.

Encouraging millennials to marry and have children requires giving them a way out of the debt trap they find themselves in. One way would be to forgive the student loans of those who are willing to marry and have children.

The first child would result in one-third of your debt being forgiven, the second two-thirds, and with the third your entire debt might be forgiven.

The slogan of the new policy might be “With three you study free.”

We at Population Research Institute (PRI) have long argued that couples who are willing to raise three or more children should be sheltered from all federal taxes. After all, such couples are providing for the future of their country in the most fundamental way, by providing the future generation, often at great personal sacrifice.

Such a policy would obviously encourage couples to be more generous in having children, since each additional child would, in a sense, pay for itself.

There are many benefits to a higher birthrate, including a natural and gradual easing of the entitlement crisis. More younger taxpayers improves America's worker/dependency ratio, making it easier for us to honor our social security promises to the elderly. For every one-tenth of an increase in the total fertility rate, for example, Social Security will remain solvent for an additional three years.

Raising the birthrate and strengthening families is a good in itself, of course. But the American people have been a great force for good in the world as well, and ensuring their survival is a worthy goal in itself.

Editor's note: Steven W. Mosher is the President of the Population Research Institute and the author of "Bully of Asia: Why China's Dream is the New Threat to World Order."

