

CHILD SUPPORT IS A PRO-LIFE ISSUE

Mark Schmitt has an important post up about Republican cuts in child support enforcement in the Budget bill. I agree with him that cutting enforcement funds for child support is about the most churlish short-sighted thing you can do.

And it worked. In 2004, 51% of child support was paid. From 18% to 51% is a huge transformation. I doubt that anyone in the mid-1990s would have predicted that. One study showed that improved child support enforcement was responsible for a quarter of the reduction in welfare caseloads. See [this report](#) from the Center on Law and Social Policy for a summary of the success.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the cuts in the incentive payments to states will cost families \$8.4 billion in child support. Even that estimate assumes that states will make up half of the federal money they will lose; if they don't, children will lose twice as much in child support.

The era of bipartisan collaboration on basic problems like child support or health care is long gone. I've gotten used to that. What I can't grasp is why this Republican majority wants to take some of the basic accomplishments of that era, accomplishments that took a decade or more of serious work, and casually toss them aside.

I'm no expert about this issue. But I remember clearly friends' stories about how impossible it was to collect child support across state lines in the early 1990s. Men basically could leave the state, go to a lax enforcement state (I lived in UT at the time and everyone seemed to head for TX), and basically hide from any and

all responsibility for the children they had fathered.

I'm not just disgusted with Republican attempts to turn back the clock to the deadbeat dad days. I'm disappointed Democrats haven't more clearly demonstrated the hypocrisy of dedicating your political energy to eliminating access to choice, while at the same time effectively absolving men of all responsibility for the fetus-people they father.