

Institute
for
family
studies

2025
Annual Report

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Dear Supporters and Friends,

As I reflect on 2025, my first year with The Institute for Family Studies, I am filled with gratitude. It is truly a joy to lead this organization, and your support has enabled IFS to build a peerless research team, do more to shape the elite conversation, and inspire state and federal policies, all to strengthen American marriages, family formation, and family life.

This past year, our research reached over 2.6 million readers, our scholars were featured everywhere from *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic* to *The Wall Street Journal* and *Fox News*, and our policy work inspired tangible wins at the highest levels of government. Highlights include:

Get Married Initiative — Brad Wilcox’s September essay in *The Atlantic*, “Why Marriage Survives,” articulated one of our core contentions at IFS: that marriage remains a vital institution offering real emotional, economic, and social benefits. Our research consistently supports that message with rigorous data, our media influence brings our findings to millions of people, and our policy ideas deliver results for families across the nation, with Alabama and Tennessee passing legislation to teach the Success Sequence legislation and several more states moving similar bills forward. IFS also produced groundbreaking research on happiness and work preferences of married moms, along with new insights into how to forge strong and stable marriages.

Letter from the Executive Director

Pronatalism Initiative — Led by Lyman Stone, this initiative shaped federal housing and family policy at the highest levels. After surveying nearly 40,000 Americans and briefing dozens of state and federal officials — including multiple meetings with the White House Domestic Policy Council — IFS research has informed a forthcoming Executive Order on family policy and fundamentally reshaped the conversation around family-friendly housing.

Family First Technology Initiative — The U.S. Supreme Court upheld age verification for pornographic websites, a cause IFS championed with an amicus brief co-signed by Jonathan Haidt and Jean Twenge. We also helped remove a sweeping ten-year A.I. regulation moratorium from federal legislation in a 99-1 Senate vote, preserving the rights of parents to determine the best way to integrate technology into their own families.

In so many ways, your generosity in 2025 elevated IFS to new heights, giving nearly \$3 million to advance our critical mission and work. Your support has placed IFS at the very center of American society’s most important conversations, enabling us to produce trusted research and translate it into real cultural and political impact for American families. Thank you for standing with IFS.

With profound gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carter Skeel".

Carter Skeel
Executive Director

Get Married Initiative

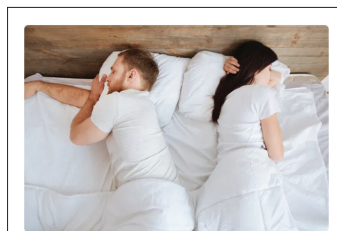
“The Get Married Initiative is dedicated to making marriage both more attractive and attainable for today’s young adults. In the last year, we’ve spotlighted the value of marriage for women in new research by psychologist Jean Twenge and explored the changing landscape of work for women with IFS Director of Research Wendy Wang. In 2026, I will be doing new work showing that marriage matters more than ever for the emotional and financial well-being of today’s young men and women.”



—Brad Wilcox,
Senior Fellow & Director of the Get Married Initiative

Select Media

- Wilcox and Research Fellow Grant Bailey’s piece “The Sex Recession: The Share Of Americans Having Regular Sex Keeps Dropping” was cited in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, and *Fatherhood*.
- Wilcox published a print essay in *The Atlantic* entitled “Why Marriage Survives” that was featured in *The Wall Street Journal* and led to appearances on *Fox and Friends* and *The Ben Shapiro Show*.
- On *Family Studies*, Wilcox and Research Coordinator Sophie Anderson published “Married Women Are (Increasingly) Happiest Of All,” drawing mentions from *NPR*, the *New York Times*, and *Fox News*.



August 30, 2025

The Sex Recession: The Share Of Americans Having Regular Sex Keeps Dropping

by Grant Bailey

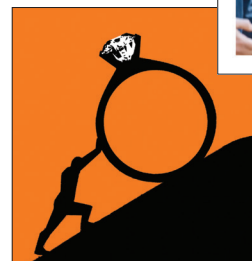
Sorry, Liz Gilbert, Married Women Are (Increasingly) Happiest Of All



WHY MARRIAGE SURVIVES

The institution has adapted, and is showing new signs of resilience.

By Brad Wilcox



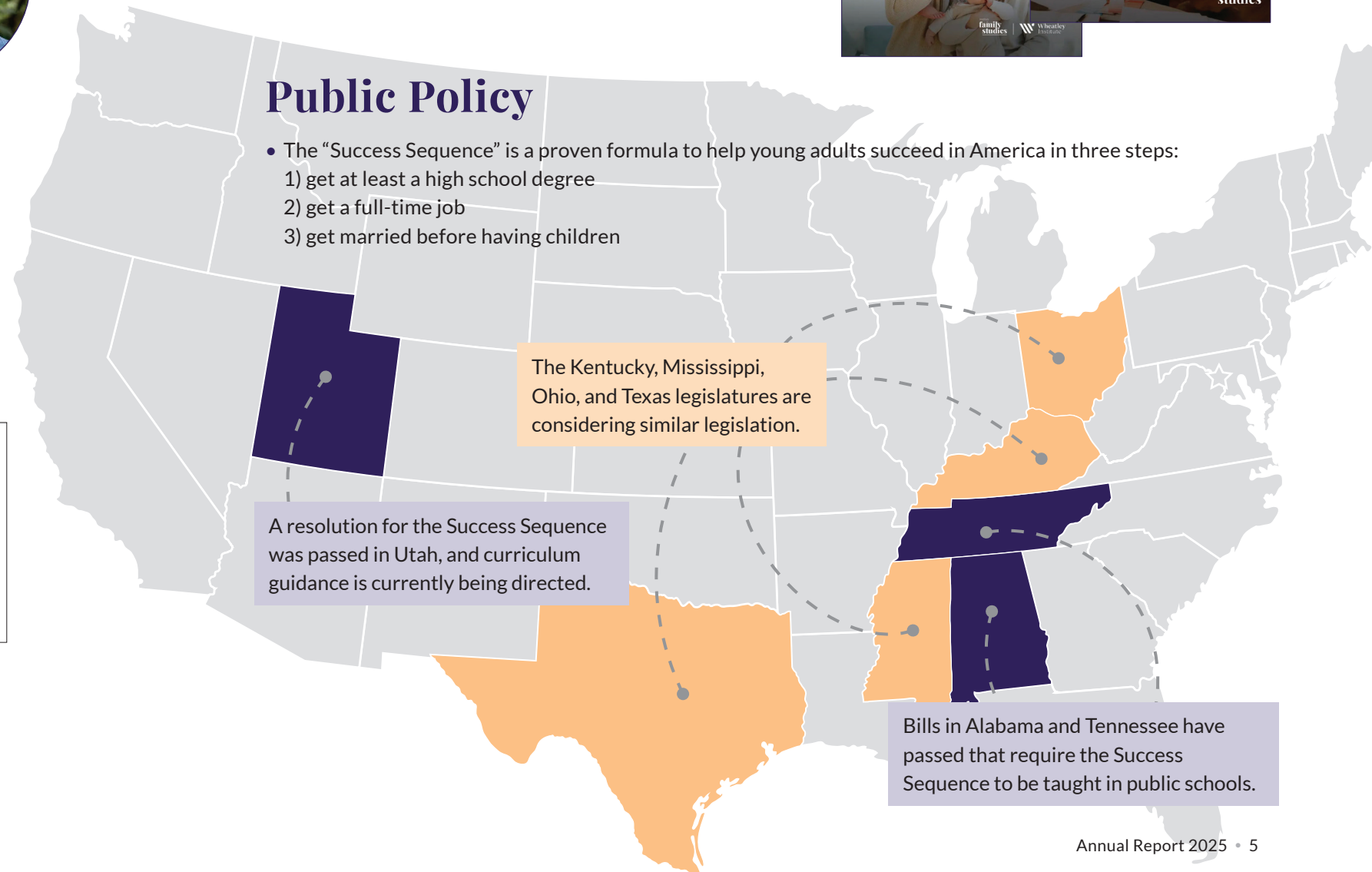
Select Research

- **More Married Mothers Of Young Children Are Working Full Time:** paid parental leave, flexible work, and Child Tax Credits are top policy priorities for moms.
- **In Pursuit: Marriage, Motherhood, And Women’s Well-Being:** marriage and motherhood are linked to women’s happiness.
- **Family Structure Index:** a measure of the most important family structure trends in the US, focusing on each state’s share of adult residents who are married, have children, and raise those children together through their high-school years.
- **Good Jobs, Strong Families:** men with stable, well-paying jobs and good benefits are much more likely to marry and raise families.



Public Policy

- The “Success Sequence” is a proven formula to help young adults succeed in America in three steps:
 - 1) get at least a high school degree
 - 2) get a full-time job
 - 3) get married before having children



Pronatalism Initiative

“In 2025, the Pronatalism Initiative led the national conversation on family housing policy, published two major research reports, and pushed Congress to refocus reconciliation efforts on family life. In total, we surveyed almost 40,000 Americans, presented at multiple conferences, and briefed dozens of state and federal officials, including multiple meetings with the White House Domestic Policy Council. In 2026, we plan to do even more as we work to create a more family-friendly nation.”

—Lyman Stone,

Senior Fellow & Director of the Pronatalism Initiative



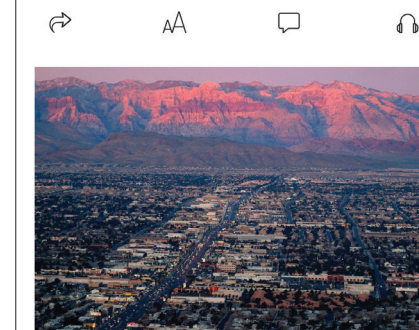
Select Media

- Stone and Wilcox coauthored a piece in *The Atlantic* entitled “Musk’s High-Tech Polygamy Is a Dead End.”
- Stone published a Letter in *The Wall Street Journal* entitled “A Beautiful Land Sale Is a Boon for Families.”
- Stone’s media appearances included *NPR* and Louise Perry’s podcast.

A Beautiful Land Sale Is a Boon for Families

‘A limited sale of federal lands that can be used for much-needed housing is long overdue,’ writes Lyman Stone.

June 25, 2025 at 2:10 pm ET



Musk’s High-Tech Polygamy Is a Dead End

The billionaire’s vision of family is bad for women and children.

By Lyman Stone and Brad Wilcox



Select Research

- “Homes For Young Families: A Pro-Family Housing Agenda”: rising housing costs and restrictive zoning reduce young family home ownership and delay marriage and child-rearing.
- “Homes For Young Families, Part 2: Americans Are Willing to Pay for Family-Friendly Apartments”: there’s strong demand for larger, family-friendly apartments if we unlock it.
- “Three Fixes for American Families”: three policy solutions that limit government expansion while supporting families

Homes for Young Families: A Pro-family Housing Agenda

March 2025

The Institute for Family Studies

Wendell Cox | Lyman Stone

America Needs More Family-Friendly Apartments



Public Policy

- Stone presented his housing research to dozens of state and federal lawmakers, with the White House saying that his policy suggestions will be incorporated into a forthcoming Executive Order.



Family First Technology Initiative

“FFTI meets an urgent need in the discourse about how technology is shaping contemporary society by centering a simple question: *Does this change help or hurt families?* This framework enables IFS to balance an openness to new technologies with a rigorous analysis of how they affect the family. It also gives us a credible position from which to critique public policies that seek to unleash technologies without any protections for families.”



—Michael Toscano,
Senior Fellow & Director of the Family First Technology Initiative

Select Media

- Brad Wilcox coauthored a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece with Utah Governor Spencer Cox entitled “Utah Hands Parents the Keys to the App Store.”
- Toscano co-lead the drafting of “A Future for the Family,” a policy statement with hundreds of prominent signatories that provides ten guiding principles for directing “technology toward the flourishing of the family and the human person.”

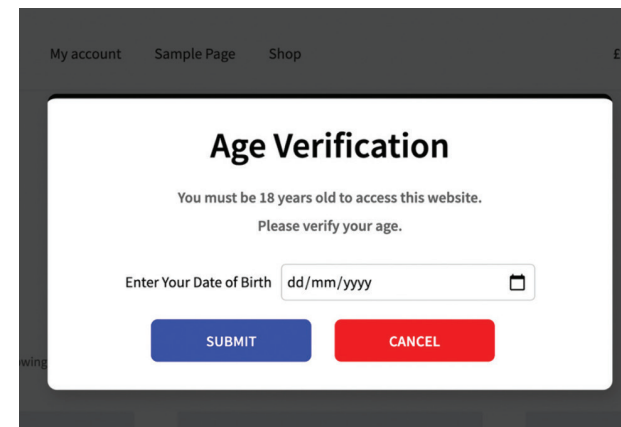


Select Research

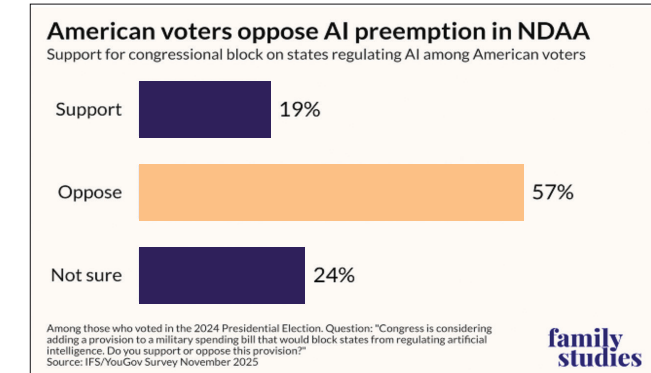
- **Protecting The Family In The Age Of Artificial Intelligence:** provides recommendations for a federal AI policy that supports family flourishing.
- **Unprotected From Porn:** widespread access to pornography among children leads to harmful effects on development, behavior, mental health, and future relationships.

Public Policy

- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton* that age verification for pornographic websites is constitutional. IFS has long championed age verification laws and submitted an amicus brief co-signed by Jonathan Haidt and Jean Twenge.
- IFS policy ideas helped to inspire the GUARD Act, which requires age verification and criminalizes explicit chatbots for children.
- Early versions of the “One Big Beautiful Bill” included a ten-year moratorium on state regulation of A.I. IFS coordinated opposition efforts with a poll showing that most Americans oppose the moratorium and by briefing legislators. The moratorium was voted down 99-1.



Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) speaks at a press conference to introduce the GUARD Act.



New Content Offerings



The Third Oikos project was launched as a partnership between IFS and the Foundation for American Innovation. By interviewing flourishing family, community, and technology builders, *The Third Oikos* publishes regular “newsletters about what the good life looks like when technology is reshaping the household.”

“Leading *The Third Oikos* has been an incredible opportunity to bring thoughtful, long-form analysis on family and culture to a growing audience who is hungry for it, particularly west-coast technologists who are considering their role in the future of American families. The reception across venture capitalists, young software engineers, and big tech employees has been especially exciting as they reach out and express their excitement to find something that both inspires them and points them to IFS’ wealth of data-based research.”

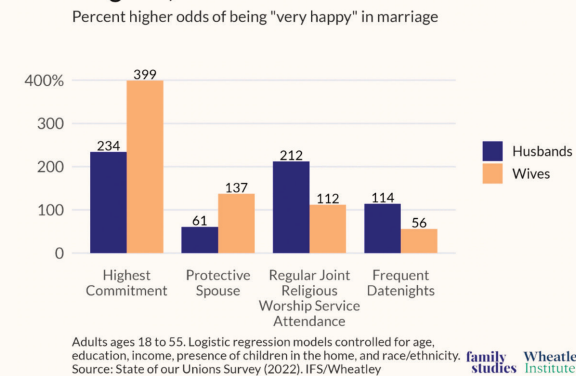
—Nicole Ruiz,
Visiting Fellow of IFS & FAI



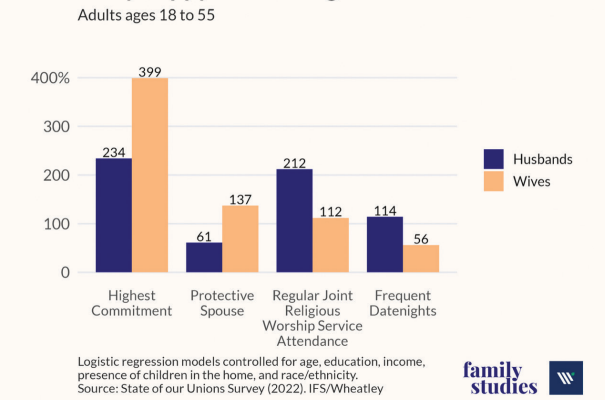
IFS Insights

In October, IFS launched a new content feature: IFS *Insights*. Edited by Research Fellow Grant Bailey, *Insights* present new and interesting research in a highly accessible format. *Insights* aim to increase engagement with our core research work, especially among busy journalists, policymakers, and other leaders.

Odds of happy marriage increase when spouse is committed, protective, religious, and romantic



Percent higher odds of being “very happy” in marriage



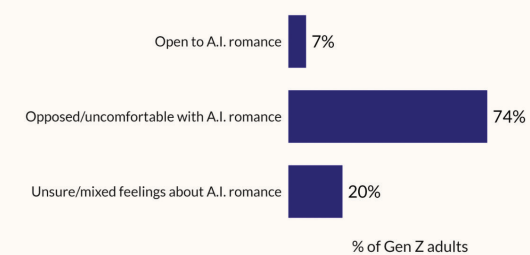
“Insights presents the best of IFS research in an easily accessible, bite-sized package on one page. Whether it is the latest trends, our biggest findings, or hidden gems, IFS Insights provides our readers a single location to stay informed.”

—Grant Bailey,
Research Fellow & Editor of Insights



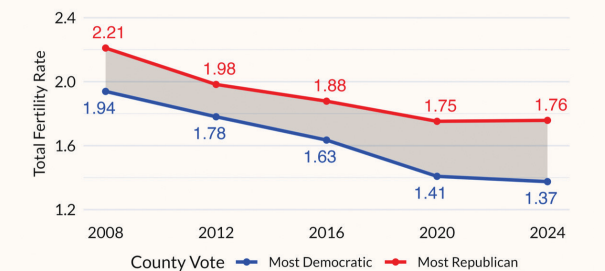
Young adults don't want AI companions

Proportion of Gen Z adults by attitude to AI companion/romantic partner



Widening fertility gap by county partisanship

Top 20% most Democratic/Republican counties from presidential election



BY THE NUMBERS

Pageviews:
2,674,634

Number of Reports:

8

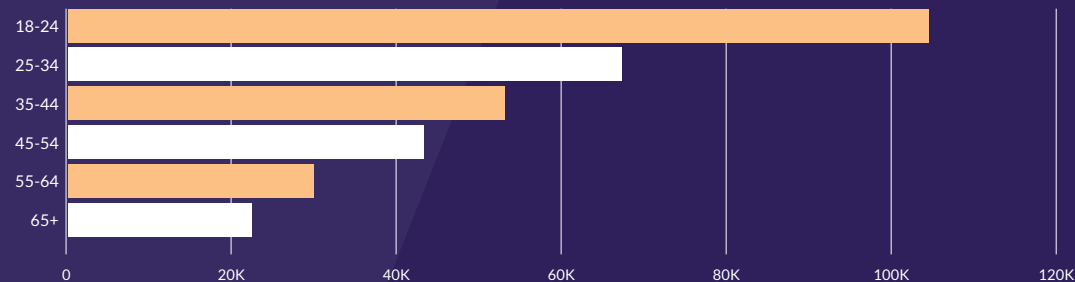
Number of Research and Policy Briefs:

10

Number of Articles:

305

Active users by age



YOUR SUPPORT

Total given: **\$2,975,405**

Fall appeal: **\$27,501** (Goal: **\$25,000**)

Year-End Campaign: **\$78,180** (Goal: **\$75,000**)

128 new donors • **34** states + DC represented (donors)

From all of us at The Institute for Family Studies,
thank you for your indispensable support.

AS FEATURED IN



Top 10 Family Studies Articles

1



August 30, 2025

The Sex Recession: The Share Of Americans Having Regular Sex Keeps Dropping

by Grant Bailey and Brad Wilcox

2



September 15, 2025

'Get Married'—Charlie Kirk's Most Important Advice To Young Men And Women

by Brad Wilcox and Maria Baer

3



February 13, 2025

Why So Blue: Liberal Women Are Less Happy, More Lonely. But Why?

by Grant Bailey and Brad Wilcox

4



January 21, 2025

Sexless America: Young Adults Are Having Less Sex

by Lyman Stone

5



April 23, 2025

Five Reasons Porn Is Bad For Your Marriage

by Brian J. Willoughby and Jason S. Carroll

6



September 8, 2025

Men And Women With Multiple Sex Partners Are Less Desirable As Long-Term Mates

by Rosemary L. Hopcroft

7



May 20, 2025

New Study Finds Lasting Effects Of Divorce On Kids

by Grant Bailey

8



July 21, 2025

High-Status Men Are Attracted To Ambitious Women

by Lyman Stone

9



December 1, 2025

What's Killing Marriage—Unmarriageable Men Or Liberal Women?

by Maria Baer and Brad Wilcox

10



February 13, 2025

Counterfeit Connections: The Rise Of AI Romantic Companions

by Brian J. Willoughby and Jason S. Carroll

1. "The Sex Recession: The Share of Americans Having Regular Sex Keeps Dropping"
by Grant Bailey and Brad Wilcox (Aug. 2025)
2. "Get Married—Charlie Kirk's Most Important Advice to Young Men and Women"
by Brad Wilcox and Maria Baer (Sept. 2025)
3. "Why So Blue: Liberal Women Are Less Happy, More Lonely. But Why?"
by Grant Bailey and Brad Wilcox (Feb. 2025)
4. "Sexless America: Young Adults Are Having Less Sex"
by Lyman Stone (Jan. 2025)
5. "Five Reasons Porn Is Bad for Your Marriage"
by Brian J. Willoughby and Jason S. Carroll (April 2025)
6. "Men and Women With Multiple Sex Partners Are Less Desirable as Long-Term Mates"
by Rosemary Hopcroft (Sept. 2025)
7. "New Study Finds Lasting Effects of Divorce on Kids"
by Grant Bailey (May 2025)
8. "High-Status Men Are Attracted to Ambitious Women"
by Lyman Stone (July 2025)
9. "What's Killing Marriage—Unmarriageable Men or Liberal Women?"
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10. "Counterfeit Connections: The Rise of AI Romantic Companions"
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