



# FATHERLESSNESS IN MISSISSIPPI

Jack Brewer | August 25, 2022

Fatherhood is foundational to strong families, and strong families are essential to a strong Nation. An absent father affects all aspects of a child's life, from socio-cognitive and socio-emotional development to academic performance and criminality—and unfortunately, the effects of fatherlessness are visible in the state of Mississippi.

## FATHERLESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

- ★ Approximately **18.4 million** children in the United States live without a biological father, stepfather, or adoptive father present in the home.
- ★ **23%** of children in the United States are raised by a single parent. This is more than three times the world average (**7%**) of children raised by a single parent, and the highest rate of any country on Earth.
- ★ Approximately **41%** of children are born to unwed mothers. For women under age 30, the unwed birth rate increases to **53%**.
- ★ Fathers are absent in approximately 80% of single-parent homes.
- ★ Fatherless children are **more likely to suffer from** psychosocial development issues, live in poverty, drop out of school, engage in school violence, abuse substances, and enter the juvenile justice system.

## FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY IN MISSISSIPPI

- ★ **56%** of Mississippi babies are born to unwed mothers, totaling **19,792** births per year.
- ★ **294,000** children live in single-parent households, representing **46%** of all Mississippi children.
  - This includes approximately **184,000** Black children (**70%** of all Black children in the state) and **86,000** white children (**27%** of all white children in the state).
- ★ According to a 2022 fatherlessness report by State Auditor Shad White, nearly **2,000** fatherless young women gave birth in 2019, costing the Mississippi taxpayer more than **\$50** million dollars in that year alone.

## CRIME IN MISSISSIPPI

- ★ According to State Auditor Shad White, nearly **9,800** men in Mississippi's prisons most likely come from fatherless homes. This represents approximately **50%** of Mississippi's total prison population.
  - By this estimation, fatherless male prisoners cost the Mississippi taxpayer approximately **\$180** million in 2020 alone.
- ★ Mississippi has an incarceration rate of **1,031 per 100,000** people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities), compared to **664 per 100,000** for the United States as a whole.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN MISSISSIPPI



- ★ 68% of Mississippi fourth graders scored “below proficient” in reading for their class level.
- ★ 76% of Mississippi eighth graders scored “below proficient” in mathematics for their class level.
- ★ 26% of Mississippi fourth graders are considered “chronically absent” from school.
- ★ According to State Auditor Shad White, Mississippi taxpayers will lose approximately \$560 million attributable to fatherless students who dropped out of school in the 2021-2022 academic year alone.

### THE TOTAL COST OF FATHERLESSNESS IN MISSISSIPPI

- ★ According to State Auditor Shad White, the effects of fatherlessness cost Mississippi taxpayers approximately \$700 million each year due to increased incarceration rates, increased education costs, and other significant drivers of taxpayer spending.

