

How well is the United States protecting children?

The U.S. government makes many claims to taking action to “protect children.” These claims are usually presented in the context of law enforcement, despite the fact that intentionally violent crimes against children are actually low in the United States. A larger question is how the United States really provides for the well-being of its young people, compared to the governments of other nations? Consider the following statistics, which should be an embarrassment to any person who is genuinely concerned about protecting American youth.

HEALTH

The USA ranks 120th among the nations of the world in the quality of food, which is dominated by saturated fats and sugars, and levels of steroids and antibiotics in meats that are not acceptable in the rest of the industrialized world.

This poor quality of food (due to agribusiness, especially sugarcane growers and cattle ranchers, bribing corrupt legislators to pass regulations favorable to their profits) results in over one-third of Americans being clinically obese. Consequently, the rate of diabetes among young Americans is higher than in any other nations except for Mexico and Turkey.

The USA has less than 5% of the world’s population, but it generates over 20% of the world’s poisonous carbon dioxide, which especially harms the health of children.

The USA ranks 36th in the world in access to clean water and sanitation, which harms children most of all.

The USA has one of the worst levels of infant mortality than any of the other industrialized nations. A baby born in the USA is 3 times more likely to die in infancy than in nations like Finland or Japan. Baby death in Alabama is so common that its infant mortality rate is worse than even Lebanon, a nation currently wracked by civil war and crumbling healthcare.

In a recent study of the overall health of children and youth in the 50 most industrialized nations, the USA ranked 47th.

High rates of childhood sickness and death contribute to lowering the overall life expectancy of Americans, to the rank of 49th among the 50 most industrialized nations.

EDUCATION

Educational levels of American youth are worse than in most industrialized nations. For example, in the second decade of the 21st century close to half of the US population still believed that climate change is not caused by human activities, despite the massive scientific evidence to the contrary. And according to surveys, more than half of Americans say that they do not believe in evolution, which is a basic tenant of biology, and a necessity for scientific and medical education.

American youth rank 41st in the world in mathematics knowledge, and 49th in the world in literacy.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING PRIORITIES

The federal government spends more each year to keep a person in prison than it does to pay for a young person's education. Many industrialized nations provide free university education for their young people, while Americans are often saddled with heavy college tuition debts.

The US government incarcerates more young people than any other nation. The total US prison population is over 2 million people, significantly more than the 1.4 million people imprisoned in China, the next highest nation (but keep in mind that China has a population over four times as large as the USA).

Each year, police kill more young people in the United States than in any other industrialized nation.

Why do such statistics exist in the United States, the country with more wealth than any other nation on earth? Part of the reason for lower priority being given to the health and education of youth is because the federal government spends so much of its budget on prisons and on the military. The US government annually spends more on its military than the next 26 countries combined.

Politicians who support increased military spending gain an electoral advantage, because companies that manufacture military equipment and services are among their highest campaign contributors. In addition, legislators who vote favorably in support of large corporations of all kinds commonly receive high-paying executive jobs in those same corporations after they leave politics. The end result is that American politicians often become wealthy through what are essentially corporate bribes, all of which are completely legal.

These are only a few of the statistical indicators which demonstrate the real priorities of the United States government. The facts show that, despite politicians' rhetoric, "protecting children" is not a high priority.