

SURGEON GENERAL SOUNDS ALARM

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U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy recently said that from his own experience, parenting has been “more stressful than any job I’ve had.” He notes that his view is shared by parents across the nation.

After painting a dour picture of parenting, he explains, “That’s why I am issuing a surgeon general’s advisory to call attention to the stress and mental health concerns facing parents and caregivers, and to lay out what we can do to address them.” He further says that we must identify “policies” and “programs” to improve matters.

What he said is not backed up by the data. For example, married men in America are about twice as likely to be very happy, compared to their unmarried peers. Also, men and women who have the benefit of a spouse and children are the most likely to report being “very happy” with their lives. Finally, a combination of marriage and parenthood is linked to the biggest happiness dividends for women.

Now if these same people were asked if it is stressful to raise children, no doubt they would agree. So what? Experiencing stress does not negate the possibility of being happy.

Winning the World Series or the Super Bowl is stressful for the players. It is also a source of tremendous happiness. The two emotions are not necessarily contradictory.

This is a familiar pattern. Government officials announce they are going to fix a problem that is largely of their own making. They are good at contriving issues that demand an

expansion of the government.