

LBJ's Legacy in Contemporary Social Welfare Policy: Have We Come Full Circle?

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Abstract

This paper reflects on today's social welfare policies and the extent to which they are influenced by Lyndon B. Johnson's vision of a Great Society that helps "more Americans, especially young Americans, escape from squalor and misery, and unemployment rolls where other citizens help to carry them." (LBJ, First State of the Union Address, January 1964). LBJ's original vision for a War on Poverty is arguably quite different than the war that was eventually fought (and some would argue lost). However, it is his vision of what could have been, indeed what should have been, that is his legacy.

We contend that today's policy priorities are heavily influenced by the initial priorities of the War on Poverty, although this has not always been the case. U.S. social policy has come full circle in many respects. Today's policies emphasize job creation, work supports, and human capital development, all original tenets of the War on Poverty. In the interim, social welfare policy focused almost exclusively on cash assistance, or "welfare," which was not a centerpiece of LBJ's vision. Significant changes in the social, political, economic, and demographic climate over the past 50 years pose new challenges for today and call for a renewed strategy to fight poverty and disadvantage.

Introduction

In this chapter, we reflect on today's social welfare policies and the extent to which they are influenced by LBJ's vision of a Great Society that helps "more Americans, especially young Americans, escape from squalor and misery, and unemployment rolls where other citizens help to carry them." (LBJ, First State of the Union Address, January 1964). LBJ's original vision for a War on Poverty is arguably quite different than the war that was eventually fought (and some would argue lost). However, it is his vision of what could have been, indeed what should have been, that is his legacy.

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social, political, economic, and demographic climate over the past 50 years pose new challenges for today and call for a renewed strategy to fight poverty and disadvantage.

We begin this chapter with a discussion of the scope of today's poverty problem and compare it to the problems that LBJ highlighted in the mid 1960s. Unfortunately, poverty remains pervasive and is increasingly concentrated among single-mothers and their children and less educated minorities. Additionally, many families who do not fall below the official poverty threshold are struggling to make ends meet and for too many the middle class remains elusive.

We then highlight today's social policy priorities and discuss which elements are influenced by LBJ's legacy and which are designed to meet contemporary challenges. For example, today's work support policies now focus on allowing single-mothers to transition from welfare to work rather than focus on income maintenance for low-wage male breadwinners. Additionally, an emphasis is now being placed on strengthening families due to the dramatic demographic changes that have taken place since the 1960s.

We then discuss the approach and structure that the federal government has taken toward fighting poverty, and how this has changed over the time period. In his inaugural address in 1964, LBJ stated "Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it, and above all, to prevent it." His vision was premised on a comprehensive, coordinated approach that included efforts at the federal, state, and local levels. Regrettably, today's approach toward fighting poverty is more segmented and funding streams are siloed which makes coordination of services difficult.

We end by providing recommendations as to how we should meet the social challenges of today and the next 40 years. No longer are we fighting poverty simply because it is the just thing to do. Today, our challenges are greater. We live in an increasingly global and competitive world; our families are more fragmented and less able to support their children; and many of our schools continue to fail to educate our young people. The growth in our population is fueled only by those who are relatively disadvantaged, and our next generation of workers and parents is simply not prepared for the coming challenges. To remain economically competitive and to keep the promise of the American dream alive, we must adopt a new commitment to invest in this nation's children and provide the support necessary for our citizens to be self-reliant.

The Poverty Problem

The proportion of Americans living in poverty has remained persistently high since we waged a War on Poverty. In 2007, over 37 million people, or approximately 12.5 percent of the population, were officially poor. This rate is alarmingly similar to the poverty rate in 1968, when 12.8 percent of the population was poor. Although the rate has fluctuated somewhat with changes in the economic cycle, since 1967 the poverty rate has not exceeded 15.2 percent (in 1983) and has not been less than 11.1 percent (in 1973). This lack of progress leaves many asserting that we waged a war on poverty, and poverty won.

Our poverty measure, however, is increasingly inadequate to reveal those who are in need. On one hand, it may overstate the number of Americans who are poor because the poverty measure does not reflect in-kind transfers and other resources designed to help the poor (Blank, 2007). On the other hand, our poverty measure may underestimate those truly in need. It is a derivative of the 1963 frugal food budget when the average family spent one-third of their income on food. Mollie Orshansky, a researcher in the Social Security Administration, multiplied the frugal food budget by three to set the initial poverty threshold, and subsequently Congress has only indexed that number to inflation and adjusted for family size. The threshold may have overstated the number of poor in 1963, because poor families spent more than the average family on food. Today, however, food is relatively cheap, but costs for housing, health care, education, and energy have risen faster than inflation, making it increasingly difficult for families to make ends meet.

Families with incomes up to twice the official poverty measure are generally considered low-income, and these families are at high risk of falling into poverty and have a difficult time affording their basic needs. Over one-third of Americans are low-income, and fully 40 percent of children live in low-income families. Therefore, whereas our poverty challenge is large, our challenge to ensure that families can provide for themselves without the risk of falling into poverty is even greater.

Composition of the Poor

Although the poverty rate has remained relatively stable over the past 40 years, the composition of the poor has shifted quite a bit, which means that the target of social welfare policies has also changed. Today, those in poverty are more likely to be ethnic minorities and single mothers and their children, and less likely to be elderly or to live in families.

Children are increasingly overrepresented among the poor (see Table 1). Today, although they constitute only 25 percent of the population, children comprise 36 percent of those in poverty. By contrast, the elderly are significantly underrepresented among the poor, which is different than their situation in 1967. Elderly poverty was quite high 40 years ago; approximately 30 percent of those 65 years of age and older were poor, yet today due to Social Security payments being reflected in the poverty measure, fewer than 10 percent of senior citizens live in poverty. Child poverty has remained high, and is highest among race/ethnic minority children. Today 18 percent of children live in poverty, however, 33 percent of African American children live in poverty and 27 percent of Hispanic children, as compared to 14 percent of white children. As the number of Hispanic children increases in the population, we can expect to see child poverty increase as well, unless there is a significant change of course.

Whites have always been underrepresented among the poor, but in 1967 they constituted a majority. This is no longer true. In 2007, 43 percent of the poor were Non-Hispanic White, and there was no clear race/ethnic majority group of poor individuals. Poverty

rates also differ considerably across race/ethnic groups. The poverty rate for Non-Hispanic Whites is approximately 8 percent compared to 25 percent for African Americans and over 21 percent for Hispanics.

Table 1. U.S. Poverty Composition and Rates, 1967 and 2007

	Percent of Population 1967	Percent of Poor 1967	Poverty Rate 1967	Percent of Population 2007	Percent of Poor 2007	Poverty Rate 2007
Total			14.19%			12.5%
Age						
Less than 18	35.98%	41.97%	16.55%	24.77%	35.74%	18.01%
18–64	54.70%	38.62%	10.02%	62.91%	54.72%	10.85%
65 and older	9.32%	19.40%	29.54%	12.32%	9.54%	9.67%
Race/Ethnicity						
White ³	87.92%	68.36%	11.03%	65.81%	43.01%	8.16%
Black	11.03%	30.56%	39.31%	12.61%	24.78%	24.52%
Asian	NA	NA	NA	4.44%	3.62%	10.18%
Hispanic	NA	NA	NA	15.38%	26.53%	21.53%
Other	1.04%	1.08%	14.68%	1.76%	2.06%	14.60%
Family Type ¹						
Married	90.26%	69.71%	9.63%	74.95%	37.37%	4.88%
Single Mother	9.74%	30.29%	38.78%	18.50%	53.50%	28.30%
Single Father	NA	NA	NA	6.55%	9.13%	13.64%
Work Experience ²						
Full Time	NA	NA	NA	46.44%	10.94%	2.55%
Part Time	NA	NA	NA	21.31%	24.98%	12.98%
Not Working	NA	NA	NA	32.25%	64.07%	21.49%

Source: U.S. Census.

1. Includes only the population living in family households in which there are at least two people related through either blood or marriage.
2. Includes only the population over age 16.
3. Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Whites are combined in 1967 only.

Over 70 percent of the poor live in families, meaning that they share a household with a person who they are related to by blood or marriage. In 2007, almost two-thirds of poor families were headed by a single parent (most commonly a single mother), which is in sharp contrast to 1967 when the opposite pattern held. This change is concerning because of the much higher rate of poverty among single parent families. Fewer than 5 percent of married parent families are officially poor, whereas the poverty rate for single mothers is over five times as high. As families become more complex and less stable and more children are born and raised in single-parent families, poverty will remain high.

Changes in Family Structure

The dramatic changes in the family over the past 40 years pose perhaps the biggest challenge toward fighting poverty and promoting self-sufficiency. More children live in single-parent families than at any time in the past, and this is especially true for race/ethnic minority children and children whose parents have lower-levels of education. These children are at an increased risk of negative social, emotional, and academic outcomes relative to their peers who live with both of their biological, married parents.

In 1965, Daniel P. Moynihan predicted that if not addressed, nonmarital child-bearing and family instability would become a major problem in our country and hinder social policy efforts. His report focused on African Americans and lamented the high unemployment rate among African American males and the destruction that this had on the Black family. At that time, 22 percent of Black children were born outside of marriage and approximately one-third lived in single-parent homes. Today, nearly 40 percent of all children are born to an unmarried mother, yet this number differs considerably by race/ethnicity. Indeed, over 70 percent of African American children are born outside of marriage, half of Hispanic children, and slightly over one-quarter of Non-Hispanic White children. Additionally, more than half of all children will spend some part of their childhood without both of their biological, married parents, but again this is much more common for race/ethnic minorities and children with less-educated parents.

Persistently high rates of male unemployment and a decline in returns to skills among less-educated males have certainly contributed to the increase in the share of children living in unmarried parent households, however, it is not the only story. Marriage has become an unobtainable goal for many; indeed, marriage is now a proxy for success within each socio-economic group. Non-marriage often reflects significant personal barriers, including substance abuse, depression, and incarceration; all characteristics that make a successful marriage difficult and that negatively influence children's well-being, and these factors also limit their ability to find and hold stable employment.

Population Growth

Another important demographic change is that our population growth is being fueled by those who are relatively disadvantaged. Latinas and women with lower-levels of education have birth rates that are significantly higher than other women. In fact, the birth rate of college educated women is below replacement. At current rates, our population will likely expand to 438 million people by 2050, up from approximately 300 million today, and approximately 82 percent of this growth will be driven by immigrants and their descendents. This will pose new challenges to social policy and to our country's prosperity because currently fewer than half of Hispanics graduate high school and their median household incomes are less than half that of their Non-Hispanic White counterparts.

Changing Labor Market

Changes in the labor market over the past 40 years which have led to an increase in inequality also pose a significant challenge for today's battle against poverty. The emergence of a technology and service based economy has led to a bifurcation in necessary skills sets, such that today's jobs are now high-skilled/high wage or low-skilled/low-wage. No longer can a high school graduate expect to earn enough and garner sufficient benefits from his company to support a family. Indeed, work does not guarantee an escape from poverty; 11 percent of those who are poor work full-time, full-year, and an additional 25 percent work part-time. Thus, social policy cannot simply rely on creating jobs because many low-skilled jobs simply do not pay enough to lift a family out of poverty.

Two incomes are now necessary to support a low-skilled household. Yet, among the very low-skilled, two parent families are increasingly rare, and it is generally a single-mother trying to support her children through a combination of her earnings, social support (e.g. TANF, food stamps), and sometimes support from the father. Women have entered the labor market at high rates over the past 40 years. Today, approximately 80 percent of women work, and the fastest entrants into the labor market are women with young children. Thus, there is a growing need for child care and other work supports that allow families with two earners and single-parent families to fulfill their dual obligations of employment and childrearing.

Social Policy Priorities

The shifting policy priorities of U.S. poverty policy reflect changing beliefs about both the sources of poverty and the role of government in the lives of the poor. During the nineteenth century, poverty was viewed as an individual problem attributable to a lack of motivation. Strategies to prevent poverty focused on improving the individual person. During the early twentieth century, poverty came to be viewed as more of a social problem that resulted from the broader economic context of the Great Depression. Consequently, FDR's anti-poverty policies focused on job creation.

LBJ viewed poverty as the result of both the economic context and individual human response to a lack of opportunity. The bold objective of the War on Poverty was to eliminate poverty through job creation and human capital development. This policy priority responded to LBJ's belief that poverty in a prosperous society was perpetuated by a lack of access to stable employment at a sufficient wage. Strategies to promote job creation focused on federal investment in community economic development. Strategies to develop human capital included skills training and placement opportunities for adults and early childhood interventions to improve the educational prospects of the next generation. Clearly, LBJ saw employment as the single most important factor in breaking the cycle of poverty. Other strategies, cash and in-kind assistance in particular, were considered to be short-term solutions, and were not prioritized by the administration. Strategies that focused on individual motivation were also used, but

always in conjunction with human capital development such as the parenting components of Head Start or the motivational components of Job Corps.

The social and economic context of the time is also reflected in the populations prioritized by the Great Society programs. The target of job training was young men who were perceived to be the primary breadwinners for families. A second target was the next generation of workers. Head Start and the programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act combined to provide federal support for children's education from pre-kindergarten through high school. LBJ also extended opportunities for college through federal loan and work study programs.

Much of this policy agenda was focused on gains that could only be made in the long-run. Job creation takes time for economic planning and investment to develop new industries. New opportunities for early childhood education and college would take a full generation. The short-term priorities of the Johnson administration, job training and work opportunities, were unlikely to have a long-term impact if new jobs were not created to absorb the newly trained workers. Many critics argue that the failure of the War on Poverty is attributable to the public focus on short-term results for policies that required long-run implementation.

The economic, political, and social context of the 1960s, meant that job creation was more difficult than LBJ and his planners envisioned. Efforts to promote jobs through investment in local communities were largely ineffective. Racial problems in inner cities, low-quality education systems, and eventually a declining U.S. economy meant that large employers were not eager to cite new jobs in areas of high unemployment. Efforts to provide job training rarely resulted in a net gain in employment, but rather increased competition for a scare supply of jobs. The Office of Economic Opportunity could brag about large numbers of individuals who participated in job training, but urban unemployment persisted. One important lesson of the War on Poverty is that meaningful job creation is increasingly difficult as the economy becomes more technical and more global. At the very least, job creation and significant economic development requires a long-term commitment to a policy approach, and the War on Poverty was too short-lived to achieve this goal.

The failure of the War on Poverty led to a new set of policy priorities in the 1970s and 1980s, with a focus on increasing cash assistance. Here, the priority was providing cash support to prevent children from growing up poor. AFDC entitlements grew, as well as food stamps, housing subsidies, and other in-kind programs. The demographics of families in poverty were also changing (as noted above), as rates of single-motherhood increased and women entered the workforce in greater numbers.

By the mid 1990s welfare reformers were faced with a new set of policy priorities with a primary goal of reducing welfare dependence. But like LBJ, President Clinton prioritized employment as the central policy strategy. The policies of welfare reform echo LBJ's focus on employment. Job training or work are now required for eligibility for cash

assistance. Responding to the new demographics, welfare reform has also prioritized policies that give women greater access to work such as child care and transportation. Welfare reform, however, has not prioritized the creation of new jobs, and the success of employment policies is mostly dependent on macro economics that determine whether jobs are available for the target population.

Today, there is a new emphasis on early education. This focus is influenced by Head Start, but the goal is to expand pre-kindergarten services to all low-income children to close the achievement gap early on and provide a stronger footing for children to compete. There are competing views among policy makers as to whether the focus should primarily be on cognitive development or the child's socio-emotional development and health, but the lessons from Head Start reflect that all are important. Head Start has not proven as effective as we would have liked, thus we need to commit to determining how to provide children with the opportunities they deserve.

Finally, today, there is an emphasis on family strengthening programs that were largely ignored by the War on Poverty. This failure might have been the single greatest failure. The current emphasis on marriage promotion might be missing the mark, but we are perhaps on the right track. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on reducing unprepared pregnancies, rather than only focusing on teen childbearing. The 1996 welfare reform efforts pushed for family strengthening, although only recently have any efforts been applied in that direction.

Social Policy Approach and Structure

In this section, we examine LBJ's legacy as it applies to the structure and governance of the social safety net in the U.S. When LBJ declared a national War on Poverty, he ended debate on *if* the federal government should contribute to the social safety net and began a debate on *how* the federal safety net should be structured.

LBJ's vision to eliminate poverty required a new approach to governance of anti-poverty programs. From an administrative perspective, the War on Poverty represented an innovative expansion and restructuring of federal social policy, which continues to influence welfare policy today. The governance structure of the War on Poverty was characterized by central coordination of federal anti-poverty programs, expansion of federally-funded entitlements and mandates to the states, a new relationship between the federal governments and non-governmental organizations, and new ways of measuring the effectiveness of policies. In this section, we discuss how these governance changes continue to influence welfare policy today.

LBJ's first important contribution was to centralize governance of anti-poverty programs. LBJ inherited a fractured system of government anti-poverty programs, with food, housing, jobs, and cash assistance programs housed in different administrative agencies. He planned to centralize command of the War on Poverty in a single administrative office (Plotnick & Skidmore). The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was designed to

address both individual and social causes of poverty by increasing individual job skills while improving communities from the bottom up. One set of OEO programs—including VISTA, job corps, work study, and Neighborhood Youth Corps—sought to teach job skills and provide work experience to individuals. A second set of programs sought to improve neighborhoods through Community Action Programs, which included organizing non-governmental organizations at the local level. The Head Start program sought to address the cycle of poverty through early intervention. Cash transfer programs remained outside the OEO, as LBJ believed that these programs would not be necessary when individuals could access jobs (Plotnick & Skidmore,).

Although the OEO itself was short-lived, the vision for coordinated anti-poverty programs was revived in the 1994 welfare reform legislation. Under welfare reform, programs are intended to coordinate services that help individuals enter the job market and maintain stable employment. The key difference is that coordination is now the responsibility of the states. The federal government encourages coordination at the state level through incentives to coordinate federal funding streams for TANF, child care, and job training and placement. While LBJ failed to anticipate the importance of cash assistance programs as a component of a coordinated anti-poverty strategy, welfare reform explicitly integrates work promotion and supports with the cash assistance of TANF. Thus, welfare reform restructures LBJ's vision for a coordinated attack on poverty by using incentives to states to coordinate cash assistance and job promotion.

Prior to the war on poverty, the federal government's role in welfare policy was limited. Cash assistance programs were small. FDR's federal employment programs set a precedent for federal government involvement that LBJ built upon through the work of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The OEO structure fundamentally changed the role of the federal government by providing a combination of federal job training programs and local community programs to promote job growth. These community programs not only bypassed state government, but in many cases were established in an adversarial relationship to the states. Grassroots groups received legal assistance from OEO to sue states for welfare entitlements. At the time, it was common for states to deny eligibility or benefits for groups of families that were entitled to assistance under federal regulations. A new role for the federal government in the war on poverty included ensuring that states met their welfare obligations through the courts.

During the War on Poverty, the federal government took poverty and community-building as a national issue, which had previously been issues for the states. One strategy in War on Poverty was the expansion of federal entitlement program and mandates for the states. LBJ used federal mandates to force states to increase welfare benefits and extend eligibility to excluded groups. This strategy included providing legal assistance to local community groups to sue states for benefits. Melnick argues that while OEO did not intend to increase entitlements, the precedents of the Great Society quickly led to the routine use of entitlements and unfunded federal mandates in the 1970s.

The legacy of this implementation structure is an incrementally expanded role of federal mandates and court involvement in policy making. The practice expanded from welfare to environmental policy to workers rights, and today a great deal of public policy has been litigated and negotiated through court processes with an increasing impact on government budgets at all levels (Melnick). Welfare reform responded to the problem of growing entitlements and unfunded mandates by removing the AFDC entitlement. States are now permitted to determine eligibility locally and time limits are placed on individual recipients. Other social programs of the Great Society, such as Medicare and Medicaid, remain as entitlements and debates continue about strategies to contain growing costs.

The Great Society also altered the structure of federalism was through its use of private community groups to implement federal social policy. The OEO bypassed state government in its efforts to develop local capacity to provide anti-poverty services. LBJ called for “maximum feasible participation” in local communities including partnership with local nonprofit services providers and advocacy groups to create locally relevant responses to cyclical poverty. OEO programs worked to develop local nonprofits as service providers and advocacy organizations and even helped local legal aid organizations to sue states for welfare benefits. The impact of maximum feasible participation on public administration in the U.S. has been profound. This strategy of building local capacity was the basis for the rise in participatory democracy in 1970s and spurred the growth of political and intellectual movements focused on participation in public administration (Milkis , Piven & Cloward).

Much of today’s social policy continues to depend on private service providers. However, the practice has spread its roots of cultivating locally-grown service and advocacy organization to a culture of outsourcing to both non-profit and for-profit organizations. Welfare reform, for example, encourages the use of private for-profit educational institutions including corporate for-profit universities and job training centers. No Child Left Behind encourages the use of for-profit corporations to provide tutoring and even school management. This shift from local non-profit to national for-profit subcontracting reflects a new focus on privatization as an efficiency enhancing governance strategy. Meanwhile, some programs such as Head Start continue to support local child care organizations in line with LBJ’s vision of community building through non-profit provision of government-supported services.

The OEO also began the practice of measuring the impact of anti-poverty programs in a systematic way. All social programs were required to demonstrate an impact on the number of families living in poverty. This requirement led to the development of better measures of poverty and a coordinated approach to analysis of the social safety net. While many programs remain uncoordinated, it is common for researchers today to examine the holistic effect of federal and state programs on families and the poverty rate.

Welfare reform, however, fundamentally changed the way government planners approach social policy. In debates over welfare reform, reducing welfare dependency explicitly replaced combating poverty as the goal of welfare policy. States are no longer held

accountability for lifting families out of poverty, but rather for dropping families from welfare rolls whether through work, time limits, or stringent eligibility requirements.

LBJ's influence on the governance of current social policy is complex. Many of LBJ's strategies are being applied to new goals. The vision for a coordinated attack on poverty remains in welfare reform's coordinated approach to supporting work. However, with the new goal of reducing dependency, this strategy is no longer designed to eliminate poverty. The strategy of decentralization to non-governmental service providers also remains, but again the goal has shifted from grassroots community development to reducing costs and improving efficiency through the use of for-profit contractors. States have been freed from many of the requirements of entitlements. This has allowed for local experimentation and innovation that can either promote or subvert LBJ's vision depending on local preferences.

Recommendations for Future Policies

1. Begin a new conversation about poverty and inequality that is framed in terms of investment. Social justice and equal opportunity are things that we should certainly strive for, but they no longer seem to motivate our public to act. The notion that our country will not be as strong or economically competitive if we continue to permit more than half of our low-income kids to drop out of high school, over 40 percent of our low-income boys to go to jail, close to 40 percent of our young girls to get pregnant before age 20, and more than half our kids to grow up in unstable home environments might motivate our public to act.
2. Commit to invest in young children and sustain this investment through their transition to adulthood. This includes pre-kindergarten which is the topic of much discussion, but earlier investments are also essential. If we wait until children are age 4 to try to intervene, we will continuously be trying to close a gap. The results will be no different than they are now at kindergarten and beyond. Prenatal investments and early parenting interventions have proven effective, and high quality child care has lasting effects for low-income children. These interventions are costly, but so is the cost of grade retention, teen pregnancy, and incarceration. After school, summer, and service-learning programs have all proven effective at closing the achievement gap, keeping kids in school, and reducing teen pregnancy.
3. Job creation should continue to be the signature of social policy. It is not just good economic policy to have a strong economy, it is also great social policy. However, a rising tide no longer seems to lift all boats in the same way it did in decades past. In the late 1990s we had a tsunami of economic growth that made an impact in people's lives, but other periods of prosperity have not translated to significantly better lives for those at the bottom. We have to be more targeted about our job creation strategies and take into consideration local area markets and unemployment rates.

4. We also have to recognize that a job is often not a guarantee that a person won't be poor, and certainly not a guarantee that they will live in the middle class. Work supports that allow dual-earning couples and single-parent families to balance providing and caring for their family are necessary. Early child care is one of these supports that will serve dual roles. Additionally, wage subsidies like the earned income tax credit (EITC) are necessary and should be expanded to all workers, not just parents.
5. Family strengthening programs should be continued. The current policies emphasize increasing marriage through providing relationship skills training. The skills are a necessary step and can translate into other relationships in people's lives, but this is insufficient. The barriers to marriage among low-income parents are multifarious and need a multidimensional approach. The emphasis should be on relationship stability and the stability of resources, which we know is crucial for healthy child development. A renewed emphasis on limiting unprepared pregnancies should be a central tenet of our social policy agenda, because by the time the child has arrived, focusing on marriage is too little too late.
6. Finally, we need to renew our focus on men. Our social policies have largely focused on women and their children for the past 40 years. For men, we've provided limited job training programs, child support enforcement, and prison. Expanding the EITC to fathers so that it is on par with their female counterparts is a step in the right direction. Recognizing the reasons they are abandoning their families and addressing these while holding them accountable is another. If we continue to neglect them, families will continue to disintegrate and they will not be able to be self-reliant.

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