

Welfare. system by
putting limits on
eligibility



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Welfare. Whether you collect it, or you pay for it (and for EVERY working American does one of the two), most citizens of our country are familiar with it. Yet as every second of the day passes, more and more of my money and yours is being allotted to this growing epidemic called welfare.

The Personal Responsibility Act, signed by the President, was a monumental change in welfare as we know, or used to know it. The welfare system is still in need of more strict and stringent policy reform, yet the Personal Responsibility Act was a prodigious step in the right direction. In the past few years, the federal governments and state governments have tried to change and improve the welfare system. The Clinton Administration campaigned to “end welfare as we know it.

” The Administration’s proposal limits AFDC benefits to two years, during which employment services would be provided to recipients. Nearly 20 welfare reform bills have been introduced in the 103rd Congress. Besides the above mentioned bill, three major proposals were offered by Republican members: The GOP Leadership Welfare bill, The Real Welfare Reform Act, and The Welfare and Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Act. Now the Republicans have pulled together a strong and controversial bill on welfare reform.

The Personal Responsibility Act is an attempt to overhaul the welfare system by putting limits on eligibility and reducing dependency on government. This bill addresses the increasing problem of illegitimacy, requires welfare recipients to work, and caps welfare spending. Current programs will be consolidated, time limits will be placed on benefits and savings are to go to

deficit reduction. The bill's main thrust is to give states greater control over the benefits programs, work programs, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments and requirements. Under the bill, the structure for AFDC payments will drastically change. Mothers under the age of 18 may no longer receive AFDC payments for children born out of wedlock and mothers who are ages 18, 19, and 20 can be prohibited by the states from receiving AFDC payments and housing benefits. Mothers must also establish paternity to as a condition for receiving AFDC payments, except in cases of rape and incest and if the state determines that efforts to establish paternity would result in physical danger to the mother.

The bill requires states to establish paternity in ninety percent of their cases. States are also encouraged to develop procedures in public hospitals and clinics to determine paternity and establish legal procedures that help pinpoint paternity in a reasonable time period. Also, in order to reduce the amount of time families are on welfare, states must begin moving welfare recipients into work programs if they have received welfare for two years. States are given the option to drop families from receiving AFDC benefits after they have received welfare for two years if at least one year has been spent in a work program.

States must drop families from the program after they have received a total of five years of AFDC benefits. The bill allows states to design their own work programs and determine who will be required to participate. Welfare recipients must work an average of 35 hours a week or enroll in work training programs.

By the year 2001, 1.5 million AFDC recipients will be required to work. The bill grants greater flexibility to states allowing them to design their own work programs and determine who participates in them and can choose to opt out of the current AFDC program by converting their share of AFDC payments into fixed annual block grants. The bill is also designed to diminish the number of teenage pregnancies and illegitimate births. It prohibits AFDC payments and housing benefits to mothers under age 18 who give birth to out-of-wedlock children. The state has the option of extending this prohibition to mothers ages 18, 19, and 20.

The savings generated from this provision to deny AFDC to minor mothers is returned to the states in the form of block grants to provide services to help these young mothers who have illegitimate children. The state will use the funds for programs to reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, to promote adoption, to establish and operate orphanages, to establish and operate residential group homes for unwed mothers, or for any purpose the state deems appropriate. None of the funds may be used for abortion services or abortion counseling. The bill also includes a number of other provisions to reduce illegitimacy. While AFDC is prohibited to mothers ages 17 and younger who have children out of wedlock, mothers age 18 who give birth to illegitimate children must live at home in order to receive aid. Mothers already receiving benefits will not receive an increase if additional children are born out of wedlock.

States are allowed to establish their own work training and education programs to help recipients move from the welfare program to paid employment as soon as possible. The training programs require recipients to work for an average of 35 hours a week or 30 hours a week plus

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five hours engages in jobsearch activities. One parent in a two parent family is required to work 32hours a week plus eight hours of job searching.

As long as states meet the participation requirements, the federalgovernment will not advise other parts of the program. States will design their own work programs and determine who will be required to participate in them. Part of the participation requirement is requiring a certain number of recipients to participate in the job program. Starting in 1996, 100, 000 AFDC recipients will be required to work; in 1997, 200, 000 recipients will be required; in 1998, 400, 000 will be required; in 1999 600, 000 recipients will be required; in 2000, 900, 000 will be required; and by 2001, 1. 5 million recipients will be required to work. Identified non-parents, usually men, who receive food stamp benefits are required to work eight hours a week for those benefits. The bill caps the spending growth of AFDC, SSI and numerous public housing programs, and the mandatory work program established under the bill.

The cap equals the amount spent the preceding year for these programs with an adjustment for inflation plus growth in poverty population. The entitlement status of these programs is ended. The bill also consolidates a number of nutrition programs into a block grant to states funded in the first year at 95 percent of the aggregate amount of the individual programs.

Programs consolidated into the block grant include food stamps, the supplemental feeding program, infants, children, and the school lunch and breakfast programs, among others. Under the block grant, states will distribute food assistance to economically disadvantaged individuals more freely. To further reduce welfare spending, welfare assistance is denied to

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non-citizens, except refugees over 75 years of age, those lawfully admitted to the U.

S., or those who have resided in the U. S. for at least five years.

Emergency medical assistance will continue to be provided to non-citizens. The bill allows states to create their own work programs and determine who participates in them. States can also opt out of the AFDC program and convert their AFDC payments into a fixed annual block grant and have the option to provide new residents AFDC benefits comparable to the level provided in the state in which they previously resided. To help combat illiteracy, states may reduce AFDC payments by up to \$75 per month to mothers under the age of 21 who have not completed high school or earned their high school "equivalency". Payments may also be reduced if a dependent child does not maintain minimum school attendance. State adoption agencies are encouraged, under the bill, to decrease the amount of time a child must wait to be adopted. Specifically, the bill prohibits states from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin when placing children for adoption. AFDC beneficiaries who the state identifies as addicted to drugs or alcohol must enroll in an addiction treatment program and participate in random drug testing in order to continue receiving welfare benefits.

The bill is estimated to result in a net savings of approximately \$40 billion over five years. The denial of welfare to non-citizens saves about \$22 billion, the cap on welfare spending saves about \$18 billion, the nutrition block grant saves about \$11 billion, and the requirement for paternity establishment

saves about \$2 billion. The costs included in the bill are \$9.9 billion for the work program and approximately \$2 billion for miscellaneous state options.

OK, personally, I don't see what the big fuss these whiny little democrats are making over this bill. "You shouldn't be so hard on unwed teenage mothers." Well, let's think about this one.

They're unwed, they're teenage, and they're mothers. Not a good combination. The majority of women on welfare had their first child as a teenager. Most of these births now occur outside of marriage and are unintended. Actually, I don't think that we're being hard enough. They're lucky to receive any benefits at all. If this were my bill, payments to unwed teens would end altogether.

It's ridiculous to have a fifteen year old pregnant and out of school sitting at home sucking up government dough. The government isn't punishing them. They've punished themselves. If anything the government is giving these kids an incentive to be more responsible. Welfare is a crutch. And people use it even after their broken leg has healed. And what about those who are not legitimately in this country? Thousands upon thousands of immigrants enter this country each year, because they know in America, they can receive benefits without even becoming a citizen.

This needs to end right now. American citizens hard at work each day should not have to waste their tax dollars on the illegal Perez family from just over the border who don't speak a word of English nor contribute any of their money to this country. Illegal immigrants under no circumstance should receive any money of any kind.

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They do not belong to this country nor do they contribute toward it. As I stated in Congress in Action, I work at Genovese. I make sixty-five dollars a week. I SHOULD be making eighty, but fifteen dollars of my money each week goes to the federal government to give to some illegal family or single mother. I pay for this family's clothing. I pay for this family's food.

I pay for this family's home. But of course, my fifteen dollars a week is not enough to pay for all of the family's expenses. So you, and your family have to pay more money each year so that some other family doesn't have to. I'm seventeen years old. I am going to an Ivy League university next year. I can't afford to spend fifteen dollars on some illegal family in Texas or some single irresponsible mother.

And do you know what the tragic part is? This "family" does not give a single dime back to the government. And for illegal immigrants, that same government which gives them millions of OUR dollars a year, doesn't even acknowledge that they exist. Somehow, THAT doesn't sound very fair to me. And in fear of their payments ending, a great number of legal immigrants have rushed to turn in their applications for U. S.

citizenship. At no time in history has the number of applicants for U. S. citizenship been so large. In Los Angeles County alone, it's quadrupled in just two years. "In '94 I think we were running about 75, 000 applications a year.

Last year, we ran about 175, 000, and we're looking at about 300, 000 this year," says Richard Rogers, who works in the Los Angeles branch of the Immigration and Naturalization service. Thanks to The Personal Responsibility

Act, hundreds of thousands more non-citizens are applying to officially be a member of our country, and in turn contribute towards it. Many crybaby liberals believe these “harsh” laws make non-citizens worry about their benefits. Good. If they don't give or do anything FOR our government, they SHOULD worry if the government decides not to give them anything. That worry is what pushes them to become a part of our nation, and be a REAL, tax paying American citizens.

Only until then can they at least expect some benefits. Limiting AFDC payment by \$75 to those who haven't completed high school or gained a high school equivalency seemed way liberal to me. High school drop-out is one of the big reasons for the enormous amount of money welfare consumes each year.

If you don't have at least a high school education, you will find it tough to land a job that will support yourself, let alone a family as well. School keeps kids off of the streets, and out of trouble with drugs, sex and pregnancies - things that will run them right out of school and right onto the welfare payroll. Democrats love making a big sob story out of welfare” victims.

” It makes me truly sick. Want to hear a sob story? Me hardly seeing my family for four years because I was too busy studying, and involving myself in the school and community, bettering other's lives, so that I may improve myself as a person, go on to a good school, and make a success of myself. And the federal government didn't give me a cent. They shouldn't have to.

So if I shouldn't get paid for doing more than what I am have to, or am supposed to do, why should some pregnant, crackhead, sixteen year old girl get paid every week for doing what she's NOT supposed to do? There's a sob story. And spare me the argument that drug addicts are victims deserving a safety net, or that at least their children are. That mentality, in psychological circles is called "enabling"-making it possible for chronically maladjusted people to indulge their self destructive behavior at the expense of themselves and others. What "enabling" actually does is help destroy the people you ought to be trying to aid.

It is irresponsible. Stop and think. You have people on welfare who are drug addicts. You give them cash. What do you think happens? They buy drugs. If there is any money left they MAY (1 in a million chance) use it as intended. If not, they fall back on their main means for scoring. This means stealing or selling their bodies to get more of a fix, or just to survive and make ends meet.

This is how it really is on the streets for those welfare recipients who are also drug addicts. So why not do them a favor and say you can't be a drug addict and a welfare recipient at the same time. Being an addict doesn't necessarily mean you are a complete idiot. A substantial percentage of them aren't happy about their addictions, but they need a big push to break their dependency cycle. The dumbest thing in the world is to give an addict cash. So why should our welfare system do that in the name of doing good? Why not make it universally clear that welfare benefits will only go to people who, among other things, can pass a drug test at the time of application, and at random periods thereafter? Why shouldn't welfare policy discourage drug

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addiction? God knows that we can't rely on the President, seeing as how the public has re-elected a man whose first presidency showed a doubling of teen drug use, as well as a leader who admitted to smoking pot and said he would do it again. Cutting off welfare to those with a drug addiction has nothing to do with individual liberties.

The individual is free to choose between continuing addiction or continuing welfare. And as for the time restraint.. why is it even 5 years that they can stay on AFDC? One is quite sufficient.

Do you know how long it took me to get my job at Genovese??? Five days, not five years! And I am not even out of high school. It pays above minimum wage, the full time benefits are excellent, there is not a single reason why welfare recipients could not hold a job such as that. Yet year after year we continue to find them at home waiting for Bob the mailman to deliver their welfare check. Pathetic. That is the only work to describe it. No, perhaps pathetic and sickening. And are we forgetting something? There exists something called the TENTH AMENDMENT!! Those powers not given to Congress, nor specifically enumerated, are reserved for the states and respectfully to the people.

The powers specifically enumerated to Congress are found in Article I Section 8 of the Constitution. The only facet of this Article that the most loose construction liberal mind MIGHT be able to construe as a reason for increasing welfare is that " The Congress shall have Power to...

. provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States."

Providing for the general welfare of America means ensure that it's citizen's

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lives are protected, not spend hundreds of billions of dollars on the welfare system. Welfare is not a responsibility of the federal government. It is one of the states, or respectively, the people.. The American voters sent a clear message on that November 8th of 1994.

They want to see a positive change in government. Many of these same voters are pointing a finger at welfare as a perfect example of big government at work wasting taxpayer money. Congress was able to push through to legislation that greatly enhances the fight against the welfare trap. Yet it is not the end of the war.

There are still several more battles to go until we may sign a peace treaty.