FATHERHOOD AND WELFARE REFORM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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FATHERHOOD AND WELFARE REFORM

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1998

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:04 a.m., in room B–318, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. E. Clay Shaw, Jr. (Chairman of the Subcommittee), presiding.

[The advisory announcing the hearing follows:]

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 1998
No. HR–17

CONTACT: (202) 225–1025

Shaw Announces Hearing on Fatherhood and Welfare Reform

Congressman E. Clay Shaw, Jr., (R–FL), Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means, today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on fatherhood and welfare reform. The hearing will take place on Thursday, July 30, 1998, in room B–318 of the Rayburn House Office Building, beginning at 11:00 a.m.

In view of the limited time available to hear witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be taken from invited witnesses only. Witnesses will include fathers whose children are on welfare, individuals who have designed and conducted programs for low-income fathers, advocates for fathers, and researchers. Any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this hearing is to examine the social, economic, and legal difficulties faced by unmarried fathers of children on welfare. Numerous studies suggest that these fathers tend to have lower levels of education and income as well as elevated rates of unemployment and incarceration as compared with other fathers. These problems make it difficult for them to form two-parent families and to play a positive role in the rearing of their children. Studies also show that the consequence of father absence is that children, especially boys, are likely to develop the same problems that afflict their fathers, thus creating an intergenerational cycle of children being reared in female-headed families.

On March 3, 1998, Chairman Shaw, along with several other Members of the Subcommittee, introduced H.R. 3314, the "Fathers Count Act of 1998." The purpose of H.R. 3314 is to prevent this unfortunate cycle of children being reared in fatherless families by supporting projects that help fathers meet their responsibilities as marital husbands, parents, and providers. The bill is aimed at promoting marriage among parents, helping poor and low-income fathers establish positive relationships with their children and the children's mothers, promoting responsible parenting, and increasing family income. The legislation aims to accomplish these goals by providing a block grant to States to select and fund community-based projects conducted primarily by non-profit and faith-based organizations.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Shaw stated: "These young men face very difficult problems, and I want the American people and Members of the Subcommittee to understand how these problems interfere with their ability to become good husbands and good fathers. If we hope to reverse the negative cycle of fatherless families, we must begin by understanding the barriers faced by these fathers and by supporting community-based and faith-based programs that can help them overcome these barriers. Promoting marriage and two-parent families, and aggressively helping these men become responsible parents, is the next step in welfare reform."

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The hearing will focus on two primary issues. First, based on testimony from young fathers whose children are on welfare, the Subcommittee hopes to learn first-hand what barriers these fathers face in attempting to become better parents, to form two-parent families, and to secure good jobs. Second, the Subcommittee will hear about programs designed to help fathers overcome these barriers.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Any person or organization wishing to submit a written statement for the printed record of the hearing should submit six (6) single-spaced copies of their statement, along with an IBM compatible 3.5-inch diskette in WordPerfect 5.1 format, with their name, address, and hearing date noted on a label, by the *close of business*, Thursday, August 13, 1998, to A.L. Singleton, Chief of Staff, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, 1102 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. If those filing written statements wish to have their statements distributed to the press and interested public at the hearing, they may deliver 200 additional copies for this purpose to the Subcommittee on Human Resources office, room B–317, Rayburn House Office Building, at least one hour before the hearing begins.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

Each statement presented for printing to the Committee by a witness, any written statement or exhibit submitted for the printed record or any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any statement or exhibit not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All statements and any accompanying exhibits for printing must be submitted on an IBM compatible 3.5-inch diskette WordPerfect 5.1 format, typed in single space and may not exceed a total of 10 pages including attachments. Witnesses are advised that the Committee will rely on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.

2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

3. A witness appearing at a public hearing, or submitting a statement for the record of a public hearing, or submitting written comments in response to a published request for comments by the Committee, must include on his statement or submission a list of all clients, persons, or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears.

4. A supplemental sheet must accompany each statement listing the name, company, address, telephone and fax numbers where the witness or the designated representative may be reached. This supplemental sheet will not be included in the printed record.

The above restrictions and limitations apply only to material being submitted for printing. Statements and exhibits or supplementary material submitted solely for distribution to the Members, the press, and the public during the course of a public hearing may be submitted in other forms.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available on the World Wide Web at "http://www.house.gov/ways_means/".

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202–225–1721 or 202–226–3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Chairman SHAW. Good morning. I am very pleased after a very late night last night, after 1 a.m., to see that we have got this many of our Members here this morning. We will be getting more as they come in. I am also very pleased to see the interest in this most important subject that is shown by the visitors and the Members or the people that are going to be testifying this morning before us. I have been looking forward to this hearing now for several months because I have come to believe that fathers are an essential, crucial, irreplaceable part of both low-income families and of welfare reforms, and indeed of all families.

It would be impossible to exaggerate how much I respect the job that single mothers do today. I have even greater respect for them as a result of their very positive and constructive response to welfare reform. I have dedicated a great deal of work during my years in Congress to ensuring that low-income mothers who are employed get plenty of public support through the earned income tax credit, child care and medical assistance, Medicaid assistance, all of which have been expanded in recent years.

But my vision of America's social policy is not only that we figure out ways to help single mothers support their children. Because of my concern for the economic viability of the family and even more important, for the adequate development of children, I think we must move beyond simply helping mothers work. We must take the next step by doing everything we can do to increase the number of our Nation's children being raised in two-parent families.

For too long, American social policy has aided and abetted the creation of never-married female-headed families. As a result, our Nation is now afflicted by a large number of neighborhoods that have very few two-parent families—in some neighborhoods, fewer than 20 percent of the families with children have two parents living at home.

We have embarked on an experiment in civilization that poses the following question. Can children—especially boys—be raised by single mothers in neighborhoods where there are few adult male role models? The answer is this: In 1995, death by homicide by black teenage males was four times the rate for white teenage males, and more than twice as high as it was for black teenage males as recently as 1980. Similarly, the homicide rate for white boys nearly doubled over the same period. We must do something to increase marriage and two-parent families.

Now I am aware that there are many, including some of the most respected Members of my own party, who think that getting government involved in promoting marriage or promoting fatherhood is foolish. Perhaps so. But many of these same critics also believe that the old AFDC, Aid to Families With Dependent Children, Program, as well as our tax policy, have contributed to the growth of single-parent families. If government policy can contribute to creating single-parent families, it seems reasonable to me to conclude a government policy could also contribute to the demise of the single-parent family.

Furthermore, the approach I want to take is to give States money to support community-based and faith-based organizations to work with these fathers. We are not funding government pro-

grams. We are stimulating the growth of private sector and faith-based programs.

I admit that there is little evidence to indicate that we know how to mount effective programs that promote marriage. But that is why we are having this hearing today. First, I want to hear from the fathers themselves about how we can promote marriage and two-parent families. I'll tell you this—I have no doubt that the fathers who have so generously agreed to come talk with us today are willing to have lots of changes in their lives to help their children. I'll bet low-income fathers all over the country feel the same way.

So here is the key. Fathers want to help their children. We want to help fathers help their children. We can work this out. But let's begin with the understanding that the road we will take will be difficult. Now it's time to get moving.

[The opening statement follows:]

Opening Statement of Hon. E. Clay Shaw, Jr., a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida

I have been looking forward to this hearing for several months because I have come to believe that fathers are an essential, crucial, irreplaceable part of both low-income families and of welfare reform.

It would be impossible to exaggerate how much I respect the job single mothers do. I have even greater respect for them as a result of their very positive and constructive response to welfare reform. And I have dedicated a great deal of work during my years in Congress to ensuring that low-income mothers who are employed get plenty of public support through the earned income credit, child care, and medical assistance—all of which have been expanded in recent years.

But my vision of American social policy is not only that we figure out ways to help single mothers support their children. Because of my concern for the economic viability of the family, and even more important, for the adequate development of children, I think we must move beyond simply helping mothers work. We must take the next step by doing everything we can to increase the number of our nation's children being raised in two-parent families.

For too long, American social policy has aided and abetted the creation of never-married, female-headed families. As a result, our nation is now afflicted by a large number of neighborhoods that have very few two-parent families—in some neighborhoods fewer than 20 percent of the families with children have two parents.

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So here's the key. Fathers want to help their children. And we want to help fathers help their children. We can work this out. But let's begin with the understanding that the road will be long and difficult. Let's get moving.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. Levin, would you have an opening statement?

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I commend you for holding this hearing on helping fathers meet their parental obligations to their children. Like you, I believe we can do more to increase the employment and related opportunities of low-income fathers whose children are on welfare.

I also support efforts, very much so, to help promote stable two-parent families, recognizing at the same time that such a goal may not always be achievable. But that is only part of the equation. We should also help noncustodial fathers make a direct and immediate improvement in the lives of their welfare-dependent children. One of the best ways to achieve this would be to pass through at least a portion of the child support payments to families receiving public assistance.

Although one could argue that this money should be used to recoup government welfare costs as it does now, I believe a better case can be made for sending at least a portion of it to low-income families. Such a policy would not only immediately improve the standard of living for many children in poverty, but it would also make noncustodial fathers feel their efforts to find and keep a job has made a real difference in their children's lives. This sense of responsibility is surely something we want to foster, especially when it could lead to deeper emotional attachments between fathers and children.

Let me also say that as we discuss new ways, and I applaud you for exploring them, to help noncustodial fathers meet their obligations to their children, we should not forget that we already have several existing programs designed at least in part for that very purpose. Unfortunately, these same programs have been mentioned as targets for budget cuts. For example, the welfare-to-work grants, which the House Budget Committee targeted for elimination, are being utilized by many States to help noncustodial parents find and maintain employment.

In fact, my home State of Michigan has instituted a new program to help noncustodial parents move to self-sufficiency. Using the welfare-to-work grant moneys, the county friend-of-the-court offices and the Michigan Jobs Commission are teaming up to provide services such as unsubsidized employment, community services, work experience, subsidized private and public sector employment, on-the-job training, and postemployment programs to help noncustodial parents. This program provides an opportunity to ensure that all noncustodial parents have sufficient employment so that they can make their required child support payments and contribute to the upbringing of their kids.

I also understand that some of today's witnesses have developed programs to help fathers with funding from these welfare-to-work grants and I look forward to hearing more about these during their

testimony. What is clear is that innovative programs such as these would cease to exist if the welfare-to-work program is zeroed out.

Furthermore, the earned income tax credit, EITC, which could also be on the cuttingboard, increases the take-home pay of all low-income working parents. It is important to remember that non-custodial fathers who pay child support are considered tax filers without qualifying children for the purposes of EITC. This means that the Budget Committee Chairman's suggestion to eliminate EITC for so-called childless workers is clearly at odds with helping fathers support their children.

Finally, I want to mention an issue that impacts millions of fathers and mothers alike, the availability and affordability of child care. We have to recognize the intense pressure on low-income families for both parents to work, especially since a single minimum wage job leaves families well below the poverty line. If we are going to help families face the dual challenges of earning a living and raising a family, then we have to ensure that they have access to quality daycare. Unfortunately, no Subcommittee has yet to hold even a single hearing on the President's proposal to make child care safer, better, and more affordable for America's working families.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing the testimony of our witnesses today on helping parents support their children. Let me also say, Mr. Chairman, I think you would join me in this, that it seems appropriate during our discussion of fatherhood, to remember two devoted fathers who recently lost their lives defending the Nation's Capitol. By all accounts, Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson were dedicated parents. All of us could learn from their example. Perhaps we should join in a brief moment of silence to honor these two fallen Capitol policemen.

[The opening statement follows:]

Opening Statement of Hon. Sander Levin, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for holding this hearing on helping fathers meet their parental obligations to their children. Like you, I believe we can do more to increase the employment opportunities of low-income fathers whose children are on welfare. I also support efforts to help promote stable two-parent families, while at the same time recognizing such a goal is not always possible.

But that is only part of the equation. We should also help non-custodial fathers make a direct and immediate improvement in the lives of their welfare-dependent children. One of the best ways to achieve this would be to "pass-through" at least a portion of the child support payments to families receiving public assistance.

Although one could argue this money should be used to recoup government welfare cost (as it does now), I believe a better case can be made for sending it to low-income families. Such a policy would not only immediately improve the standard of living for many children in poverty, but it would also make non-custodial fathers feel their efforts to find and keep a job has made a real difference in their children's lives. This sense of responsibility is surely something we want to foster, especially when it could lead to deeper emotional attachments between fathers and children.

Let me also say that as we discuss new ways to help non-custodial fathers meet their obligations to their children, we should not forget that we already have a few existing programs designed, at least in part, for that very purpose. Unfortunately, these same programs have been mentioned as targets for budget cuts.

For example, the welfare-to-work grants, which the House Budget Committee targeted for elimination, are being utilized by many states to help non-custodial parents find and maintain employment. In fact, my home state of Michigan has instituted a new program to help non-custodial parents move to self-sufficiency. Using the welfare-to-work grant monies, county Friend of the Court Offices and the Michigan Jobs Commission are teaming up to provide services such as: unsubsidized em-

ployment, community services, work experience, subsidized private and public sector employment, on-the-job training and post-employment programs to help non-custodial parents.

This program provides an opportunity to ensure that all non-custodial parents have sufficient employment so that they can make their required child support payments and contribute to the upbringing of their children. I also understand that some of today's witnesses have developed programs to help fathers with funding from these welfare-to-work grants and I look forward to hearing more about them during their testimony.

What is clear is that innovative programs such as these would cease to exist if the welfare-to-work program is zeroed out.

Furthermore, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which could also be on the proverbial cutting board, increases the take home pay of all low-income working parents. It is important to remember that non-custodial fathers who pay child support are considered tax filers without qualifying children for the purposes of the EITC. This means Mr. Kaisich's suggestion to eliminate the EITC for so-called "childless workers" is clearly at odds with helping fathers support their children.

Finally, I want to mention an issue that impacts millions of fathers and mothers alike-the availability and affordability of child care. We have to recognize the intense economic pressure in low-income families for both parents to work, especially since a single minimum wage leaves families well below the poverty line. If we are going to help families face the dual challenges of earning a living and raising a family, then we have to ensure they have access to quality day care. Unfortunately, this subcommittee has yet to hold even a single hearing on President Clinton's proposal to make child care safer, better and more affordable for America's working families.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing the testimony of our witnesses today and helping parents support their children in the near future.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you, Mr. Levin. I think that would be both quite appropriate for us, just for one moment, to recall and appreciate what they stood for and what they did for all of us. So, we will have one moment.

Thank you. We will now call our first panel. We have Joseph T. Jones, Jr., who is the director of the Men's Services and Employment Initiatives at Baltimore Healthy Start Program; Paul Hope, a participant in the Baltimore Healthy Start Program; Anthony Edwards, a men's services counselor and graduate of another responsible fatherhood program. We have a substitute witness for our fourth member of this panel. The witness that is on the program is ill, but we have Mr. Downing and we have his son, which I am very pleased to say, came with him. We want both Downing and son to join us at the witness table.

I thank all of you. Those of you who have submitted a written statement, we have that statement for the record. Your full statement will be made a part of the record. We invite you to summarize as you see fit.

We will start with you, Mr. Jones.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH T. JONES, JR., DIRECTOR, MEN'S SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES, BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Mr. JONES. Good morning, Chairman Shaw and other Members of the Subcommittee. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting me to testify and for holding these hearings today that have potential major implications for the field of fatherhood.

I would also like to acknowledge some of my colleagues, mentors, and contributors to my development and to the field. First, I would like to thank a gentleman who is not here, Ed Pitt, who is with

the Fatherhood Project at the Families and Work Institute, and also a colleague of mine who is here, Charles Ballard, who for a long time has laid the path for a lot of us to do work, and has been an inspiration to many. Also Dr. Jeffrey Johnson and Ralph Smith, from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Mr. Johnson is with the NPCL. I cannot say the entire name the acronym stands for, but NPCL which is here in Washington, DC, and doing a lot of field development work.

Second, I would like to thank two people who have really done a lot to get us to the point where we are today. First would be Vice President Al Gore, who in 1994 held a family reunion conference where the theme was the role of men in children's lives. Many of us here today were at that conference, and subsequent to that formed a network called the National Practitioner's Network for Fathers and Families that is designed to provide the kind of resources to fledgling programs around the country who want to do this work, both Republican, both Democrat, Independent, and maybe some others.

The other significant movement, activity in this movement, happened a few months ago. Many of you here today were involved with that event. That was Wade Horn and the National Fatherhood Initiative's Fatherhood Summit. That probably is the single or high profile event that's gotten us to the point where fatherhood is a little bit more than just a little cute thing.

Last, I would like to acknowledge a key mentor of mine, someone who I affectionately tease sometimes as having a Ph.D. from MIT. That is Dr. Ronald Mincy from the Ford Foundation, who has dedicated his life and a large part of his portfolio at the Ford Foundation to the development of this field, particularly as it relates to inner-city low-income noncustodial parents and fatherhood. Without his support, I can't tell you where the field would be today.

I also would like to acknowledge the other members on the panel with me today, Victor Downing, Jr. I can tell you he is a little bit nervous, but he says he is prepared. His dad, Victor Downing, Sr., Paul Hope, and last, Anthony Edwards.

In 1993 the Department of Health and Human Services—excuse me, 1992, the Department of Health and Human Services awarded 15 cities across the country Healthy Start dollars to reduce infant mortality. In Baltimore, we chose to use a portion of those funds to create a fatherhood component that would work with the fathers of babies born to women enrolled in Healthy Start. In Baltimore, we have two target areas in our poorest communities where women go door to door recruiting pregnant women. The fathers in my program are the fathers of babies born to women who live in those poorest communities. Many of the moms, over 98 percent of them, are on welfare, formerly known as AFDC, now TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The fathers in the program, and I would like to give you a brief profile of the fathers in our program.

Currently, we have 200 fathers in the program. I have two programs, one in east Baltimore and one in west Baltimore, and 100 fathers in each. Currently, the average age of fathers in the program is 24 years. The average father dropped out of school prior to getting a high school diploma, around the ninth grade. At enrollment, 80 percent of the 200 fathers in the program are unem-

ployed. The majority of the fathers in the program have had little to no contact or any meaningful relationship with their own fathers. Second, there is a huge involvement with the criminal justice system. Most of the offenses are minor and most of them are drug related, usually possession.

But I think the problem goes a little deeper than that, Mr. Chairman. Some people look at these guys and say well, why shouldn't they do the right thing. But because of some of the chaotic lifestyles they lead, one particular aspect I want to highlight, and that's the fact that most of the men in the program don't have a government-issued ID. Now why is that important? Because once a person decides he wants to be involved in mainstream activity, that is usually your license to participate. It is your access to a bank account, it is your access to credit, it is your access to a lot of things.

What does that mean? That means that the men in the program, in order to get a driver's license have to have a birth certificate, a Social Security card, and two pieces of correspondence with their address on it before they can obtain the government-issued ID. Most of the men do not have possession of their birth certificate or their Social Security card, and must go to two different facilities to obtain those particular documents prior to getting an ID. That is one of the things that we require men to do at the onset at this point. Prior to now, we did not do that. We found ourselves spinning a tremendous amount of wheels when we tried to get a guy into employment.

Although this profile is discouraging, through advocacy, education, support, and a no-nonsense approach to providing services to the men, we have seen significant changes in attitudes and behavior.

I want to take a second to tell you about a little guy. This is a guy who was born to a mom and dad who were married, who were struggling to build their professional careers, and who lived in Baltimore's public housing projects. At about 11 years of age, at the child's 11th year of age, the mom and dad were having significant marital problems and decided to separate. Two years after their separation, at age 13, this little boy began to inject heroin and subsequently cocaine for approximately 17 years. It took 17 years of H–E–L–L before that person was able to get the kind of support where they could turn their life around and then take on these mainstream behaviors and participate in the kind of activities all of us either participate in and would like to see other people participate in.

Unfortunately, that little boy I am talking about was me. Fortunately, I was able to get the kind of support necessary to move forward and get additional education, and then commit my life's work to working with young men who happen to be fathers from America's poorest communities. I say that because I am not unlike these guys, or the other guys who are here from the program, I really want you to take an opportunity to ask these guys candid questions and me, because we will not turn our back on any question that you ask. We want to help move forward the Fathers Count Initiative and other legislation that would support the field.

Almost every man who enters the program says, "I need assistance with getting a job." I mentioned to you that 80 percent of the men in enrollment, and currently we have 200 again, are unemployed. We have integrated a grant we have received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that is dedicated to do lead abatement in the community, where we give awards to contractors to do the work, and then the property owners must rerent or sell the property to families that have children 6 years of age and under. We have carved out a portion of that grant to develop a job training program where fathers who go through all the hurdles we ask them to go through, obtain the ID, change of mindset, commit themselves to volunteering in the community, and then are able to get involved in this HUD-funded project.

Paul Hope, who you will hear from, is one of the graduates from that program, who is now gainfully employed with unsubsidized employment. Recently, we implemented the STRIVE jobs readiness program. This nationally recognized program was featured on the CBS news show "60 Minutes." It uses a no-nonsense tough love approach in preparing hard-to-employ residents from America's poorest communities for employment and placement into real jobs. One of the key elements in STRIVE is this commitment to follow graduates for 2 years following placement. Graduates maintain an 80-percent job retention rate during that period. Fathers from the program who are not referred to the HUD-funded project and display the kind of negative attitudes that would not allow them to get a job or keep a job are referred to STRIVE.

Finally, I would like to comment on the Fathers Count Initiative. As I understand it, the project is designed to achieve two goals. First, the projects must encourage marriage and better parenting by fathers. Second, the project must feature activities to help fathers obtain employment or increase their skills so that they can qualify for higher paying jobs. I believe that the program's goals of encouraging better parenting by fathers and the emphasis on employment activities to increase skills for access to higher paying jobs are widely supported.

The requirement that a potential grantee must encourage marriage is a very very sticky point for the fathers who fit the profile I described and who are represented here today. There is however, a possible solution, a common ground, if you will. That common ground I call the principles of marriage. Many of the communities where poor fathers reside, and I would like to go back to something you mentioned very early on, Mr. Chairman. If I can quote you correctly, you said single moms raising children where there are few adult male role models, is really a formula for disaster. I would submit to you that in many of the communities where poor fathers reside, there are very few households where the model of marriage exists, another formula for disaster.

Fatherhood programs could, for example, add an addendum to existing curricula. This is something that we plan to do in Baltimore with our curriculum, the Fathers' Journal, is add sessions on the principles of marriage in developing discussion groups around what marriage actually is. When you look at these guys when they first come in the door, they are not marriage material. If your daughter came home, and if my daughter came home and told me

she was going to marry a guy who was 24 years old, only had a ninth grade education, was unemployed, had a substance abuse problem, and had been involved in the criminal justice system, I would fall out. There are steps that we have to take, interim steps that we must take and that many of the fatherhood programs have employed to help a guy get from point A to point B to where he becomes a candidate for marriage.

I am so proud to be married and the father of three children, a 20-year-old son, a 17-year-old girl, and a 6-year-old little boy. Mr. Chairman, I am scared to death of the prospects of life for my 6 year old, not because of what I will be able to or not be able to provide, but because of the number of children around him who do not have fathers in the household. Every day when I go home and I pull up in my neighborhood, and I live in a poor community, children from households around my community run to my front. It has gotten to the point now where I have to go into the back, sneak in my own house because I have to get a few minutes break before I go out on the front with these little kids and my son.

Mr. Chairman, these men, when given an opportunity to move from point A, which is nowhere, to point Z, which is to be a candidate for marriage and employed, give an opportunity for other children in the community, especially their own children, to stand up and make America very proud.

In short, Healthy Start is a unique and wise investment, an excellent example of true partnership between public and private sector and urban America.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement follows:]

Statement of Joseph T. Jones, Jr., Director, Men's Services and Employment Initiatives, Baltimore City Healthy Start Program

Good morning, Representative Shaw, and other members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today. With me is Mr. Anthony Edwards, employed as an advocate with Men's Services of Baltimore City, and a graduate of a responsible fatherhood program. Also, Mr. Paul Hope, a Men's Services participant and a graduate of our employment initiative program, who is now gainfully employed and the father of two young children. And finally, Mr. Jimmy LaPraid who recently enrolled in the program, is an expectant father, and is helping to raise his girlfriend's two other children. All of whom you will hear from shortly.

In 1990, the Baltimore City Health Department implemented a locally funded infant mortality reduction program called The Baltimore Project. From 1990 to 1992, this initiative provided intensive outreach, home visiting, and case management services to pregnant women who resided in a poor West Baltimore community known as Sandtown-Winchester.

During this time period, I was an Addictions Specialist working with our substance abusing pregnant women. In this role I visited women in their homes to provide counseling and support to help them be more compliant with pre-natal and pediatric appointments and to abstain from using drugs. While conducting these home visits, I would often come into contact with the father-to-be or the significant male. My strategy for working with this couple was to focus my attention on the male to reach his comfort level so that he would be clear that my purpose for being in the house was to help his partner have a healthy baby. Upon gaining his confidence, almost always I was asked by the men if we provided services for fathers. Unfortunately, at that time we were unable to provide formal services to men due to limited resources.

As one of only two men on a staff of 22, I began to have philosophical conversations with my superiors and others about the importance of including fathers in our strategy to reduce infant mortality. Although people involved in these conversations agreed with this premise, there simply was no way to provide formal services to fathers.

In 1992, the Baltimore City Health Department, Office of Maternal and Infant Care, was awarded one of 15 federal Healthy Start grants. These dollars allowed us to greatly expand on the Baltimore Project model and to include services to fathers. The first year of the grant was spent in research, planning and program design. I was selected as the person responsible for the development of the new Men's Services Program.

On June 8, 1993, we began a pilot program targeted to 60 men who were the fathers of babies born to Healthy Start female clients. We established four goals during the pilot phase. They were as follows:

- Attendance at pre-natal appointments;
- Attendance at pediatric appointments;
- Attendance at fathers' curriculum groups;
- Attendance at a therapeutic support group.

The staff consisted of the Coordinator and two Men's Services Advocates. In July 1994, at the conclusion of the pilot phase, we expanded the program to include 100 men. We increased the staff to include two additional Men's Services Advocates.

In December 1995, the program further expanded to provide services to 100 additional fathers in East Baltimore. Each site has a Coordinator and four Men's Services Advocates, with a total enrollment as of July 22, 1997, exceeding 200 fathers. The Men's Services staff takes the highest risk dads and transforms them into nurturing parents through an intensive support and case management process.

Over the course of the last four years, a general profile has emerged of the fathers we have served:

- The average age is 24.2 years.
- The average father dropped out of school after the ninth grade.
- At enrollment, approximately 80% of the fathers report being unemployed or underemployed.
- The majority of the fathers have little or no relationship with their fathers.

Although this profile is discouraging, through advocacy, education, support, and a no-nonsense approach in providing services to the men, we have seen significant changes in attitudes and behavior. Examples of the types of changes that can occur are Anthony Edwards and Paul Hope.

Fathers like Anthony and Paul can be very difficult to engage. With our intensive outreach and home visiting efforts, we are able to meet these men in their own communities and convince them that we are a positive alternative to their often chaotic lifestyles on a voluntary basis. Men who enroll in the program are assigned an advocate, receive intensive case management services, parenting and life skills, peer support, and real jobs.

All fathers enrolled in the program, who meet our standards and show a commitment to their families, to their communities, and to themselves are eligible for our two employment programs.

We have integrated a lead abatement grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development into the Men's Services program and are able to guarantee employment in the construction field for those men who are committed to turning their lives around.

Recently, we implemented the STRIVE job readiness program. This nationally recognized program was featured on the CBS news show "60 Minutes." It uses a no-nonsense, tough love approach in preparing hard to employ residents from America's poorest communities for employment and placement into real jobs. One of the key elements in STRIVE is its commitment to follow graduates for two years following placement. Graduates maintain an 80% job retention rate during that period. Fathers from the program who are not referred to our HUD funded project are referred to STRIVE.

Finally, I would like to comment on the "Father's Count Initiative." As I understand it, the project is designed to achieve two goals. First, projects must encourage marriage and better parenting by fathers. Second, projects must feature activities that help fathers obtain employment or increase their skills so they can qualify for higher-paying jobs. I believe that the program's goals of encouraging better parenting by fathers, and the emphasis on employment activities to increase skills for access to higher paying jobs, are widely supported.

The requirement that a potential grantee must encourage marriage is a sticky point. Earlier, I gave a profile of fathers in my program that I have found to be similar to the profile of fathers enrolled in a number of responsible fatherhood programs around the country. As a practitioner, I can tell you that programs that work with low income non-custodial fathers and promote or encourage marriage without first working on the aforementioned barriers will lose credibility, with not only participants, but with the community at large. There is however, a possible solution. A common ground called "the principles of marriage." Many of the communities

where poor fathers reside have very few households where the model of marriage exists. Fatherhood programs could, for example, add an addendum to existing curricula that outlines the principles of marriage and hold discussion groups that would allow fathers an opportunity to be introduced to this institution. This is what the Men's Services program is in the process of doing. There are other activities that can be designed that could also address this issue.

For example, we have received funding from the Ford Foundation to develop a concept called "Team Parenting." This concept involves working with low income parents, even if they are not a couple, and helping them mediate their relationship so that the children maintain access to both parents.

We believe that this strategy will lay a foundation, not only for an effective parental relationship, but also for a relationship that has the potential for marriage.

Finally, a preliminary cost-benefit analysis of the Men's Services program has shown that the program has already paid for itself in reduced incarceration costs alone. Moreover, it has dramatically benefitted the young fathers and their families in East and West Baltimore in terms of expected future wages, given the program's emphasis on linking the male participants to livable wage employment.

We are currently involved in the Partnership for Fragile Families initiative, also funded by the Ford Foundation. This initiative encourages partnership between state and local child support agencies and community based fatherhood programs to encourage fathers to acknowledge paternity and to pay child support.

At the same time, the Office of Child Support Enforcement provides a funding stream that allows fatherhood programs to offer support, education, and training. As welfare reform continues to evolve, we believe that we should encourage our fathers to acknowledge their paternity and financially support their children, while at the same time helping child support officials understand that a "collections only" mind set is not the way to engage America's poorest fathers.

In short, Healthy Start is a unique and wise investment, an excellent example of a true partnership between the public and private sector and urban America.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you, Mr. Jones.

Mr. Hope, would you pull the microphone over to you? Put it right close to you. We now recognize you for a statement.

STATEMENT OF PAUL HOPE, PARTICIPANT, BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Mr. HOPE. My name is Paul Hope. I am 25 years old. I am the biological father of two children, but father of many. I don't really know where to begin. I am not really a big speaker, but I'll start from the beginning. A few years ago before I came into the group, I wouldn't be the type of person that you would want to meet. I can even say my first encounter with the group, I went to the group with a pistol because that's what I felt as though I needed to get by in the area where I lived in. So the group, Healthy Start, our fatherhood group is like a family. Where though you couldn't go to your friends or your family and talk about certain things, you can go there and talk about it.

Like I said, I wasn't a very pleasant person. I mean I very seldom smiled, joked, played, or anything. I took things for what they were here and now. I wasn't thinking about tomorrow or the next day. They wasn't here so I wasn't worrying about them. It was here and now. That was what I was worrying about.

Since I joined the program in 1993, I went through the LEAD Initiative Program. I graduated from it. My children and my kids' mom have never been on welfare, never. Even though we are not together, she still hasn't been on it. That is something that I feel as though that I got to do. It basically teaches you for where we live at, like in the city of Baltimore, we get this false sense of fa-

therhood. A father won't chump down from a fight or something like that. You know. But that is not true. There is nothing wrong with turning a cheek or humbling yourself. That is what the group basically showed me because of my problem. I had a quick temper. I would also overreact, then think about it. Now, I will think about it, think of my decisions, think about my consequences. If the consequence is not bad, then that is my decision.

The group took me, I then made a complete 360-degree turn. Before I came to the group, I knew I would either be dead or in prison doing life for some of the dumb stuff I had done. I have been stabbed, shot at, in a number of fights. The way I think now is not the same. It's not about here and now. I have got to go. I have plans. I know what I want to do. I like construction, home improvement. I am going to continue in that field. I am going to get more training until I will be the best in it. Not second best. I am going to be number one in it.

As far as my kids, my love for them never changed. I still love my kids, but also not just mine, this man's kids, this man's kids, and all the guys back there's kids. When we come into the group and we bring our kids, you really wouldn't know who the father is because the baby gets passed around or the young boy or young girl gets passed around so much. You would be like well, is that the father? No, is that the father? Until they make a statement of who the father is.

It's like this group means a lot to me personally. As far as written testimony, I don't have one. I am a testimony of it. Like I said, I knew if I didn't walk through the doors back in 1992 and 1993, I would be dead or incarcerated from growing up on the streets. Not too many people in business, corporate America are going to come to where I live at, Harlem and Fremont, and talk to me about getting my life together. First, back then I would look at you and think you are crazy, what are you doing down here. I am glad that Joe Jones and Kyle, Mannie, Eddie, and the other advocates of Healthy Start didn't give up on me. I hope that the Subcommittee will hear our testimonies and don't give up on them. You all may not see results tonight, tomorrow or whenever, but changes are happening. I can go through any area in Baltimore city and people know me through things that I did through Healthy Start, from the television. It's wild. I can use that and pivot off of it and talk to somebody else who might be going through a similar problem that I went through when I was younger and I handled it the wrong way. But look you pick up that gun, you are going to jail, or death, or that person will come back and get you.

This group means a whole bunch to me. I mean even if they do lose funding, we are going to still keep it going. It is going to go on with or without the funding from here, Congress, wherever. Even if we have got to have our groups in our backyards, we are still going to go on with our group. This is my family. I love them dearly. I am sure they feel the same way about me.

Thank you.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you.

Mr. Edwards.

STATEMENT OF ANTHONY EDWARDS, MEN'S SERVICES COUNSELOR, BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Mr. EDWARDS. Good morning. First of all I would like to say my name is Anthony Edwards. I am a 22-year-old men's service advocate, advocate counselor. I work for Joe Jones. I have a son that's 4 years old. But what I would like to give off or my testimony would be this morning, is the process on how I was able to receive an opportunity to be employed with Mr. Jones.

Back in 1994, due to my extravagant lifestyle, I made some negative choices and ended up in some negative places. My son is 4 years old. In months, that would be 48 months. I have been an active part of my son's life for 45 months and 2 weeks. The other 3 months and 2 weeks I was incarcerated, as I said earlier, due to some negative choices. However, upon my leaving my incarceration, I met up with a pastor in Baltimore City by the name of Eleanor M. Brian. I had just had my son. He was 3 months. I was carrying him around with me. His mother and I, we were discussing some immediate goals, some short-term goals, some long-term goals on how I can get back into society and be productive as a man coming from where I come from, as a black man coming from the inner city.

My pastor gave me a lead to the program entitled the Young Fathers Responsible Fathers Program, which is the brother to our Heathy Start's Men's Services Program in Baltimore City. I went through the program, and as Paul stated, because our process or our living conditions, a lot of times, we put on particular defense mechanisms, meaning that our attitude and our behavior kind of shies us away from things that we may need to do or steps that we may need to take to help us progress. However, because the program worked so intensely with me and gave me so much support, they were able to help me to adjust my attitude, to help me modify particular parts of my behavior to be a successful father.

However, upon my graduation, the challenge was me implementing particular parts of whatever I needed to do with me to make myself the best Anthony Edwards that I can possibly be. I would see Mr. Jones around the city at particular events discussing fatherhood. I would say, Wow man, if only I could have a chance to work with brothers who came from particular places like I have, then maybe I'd feel like I can give them something significant and sincere and genuine, because I know the struggles of growing up in the inner city, being a man in our community and dealing with a lot of issues that we may deal with.

I was given a call back in 1997 to work with Baltimore City Healthy Start Men's Services. Of course, I hopped upon the opportunity because it is not about whatever money I make, it is about helping save somebody's life or help somebody be productive who has come from where I have come from. Now what I want to say, as Paul stated, our program is very helpful. We stress for the guys to participate in events outside our groups. We give them 24 hours access to call us because we are there to support them. We are not there to look down our nose at them or to demean them. We stress for the guys to bring their kids to the group. As Paul said, we are all fathers. Our main goal in the program is to be the best men we

can be, the best fathers we can be, and the best assets and to be as productive to our communities as we can possibly be.

So with that, I would like to say that programs like these has helped to save my life and lives like Paul and some of the men who you see behind us. You can't ask for no more than that. In urban communities, programs like this are needed, because these programs give you hope, give you inspiration, give you the support that you need. We know we deal with the issues that pertain to us that we can identify and relate with.

I have been hearing the word marriage being thrown around this morning. We have had many our clients in our program who have had interest in marriage. However, they are still in the process to reach the point of marriage in dealing with your individual self and allow your mate to deal with herself as well as dealing with each other. So with programs like this, you are able to deal with those processes such as attitude adjustment, such as Dr. Dad, such as compare and compromise in particular situations so that you can be productive and/or as productive as you can possibly be in marriage. You know, we stress that. That is one of our goals.

However, but before we get to this particular goal, we have to deal with the self. We practice a saying in the Young Fathers Program and here at Healthy Start, the 10 most important two-letter words is, "If it is to be, it is up to me." Right? Well, I say that. I also say, "If it is to be, it is up to we." Because sometimes me needs support from we. That is what we are here to do at Healthy Start.

Thank you.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, one of the things that Anthony did not mention is he recently was promoted from an entry level position in the Men's Services Program to a men's services counselor. He also will be entering into his junior year of college at Coppin State as a psychology major this coming September.

Chairman SHAW. I guess that makes him marriage material. [Laughter.]

Mr. JONES. That's right.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. Downing, we will hear from you and then from young Mr. Downing.

STATEMENT OF VICTOR DOWNING, SR., PARTICIPANT, BALTIMORE CITY HEALTHY START PROGRAM; ACCOMPANIED BY VICTOR DOWNING, JR.

Mr. DOWNING, SR. OK. I am kind of nervous too.

Chairman SHAW. We are, too. Just take your time.

Mr. DOWNING, SR. I am going to start out. I also came up with a single parent. My father wasn't there for me. My mom raised nine of us. As I got older, I saw that she needed help with the bills and stuff like that, so I did what I had to do to bring in the money to help her out. That was to sell drugs. So, I was a drug dealer.

As time went on, I met his mom. Then he came in the picture. Then I was doing this to also take care of him because that is all I knew, was how to sell drugs. I never had a job before. I came up selling drugs. My brother taught me how to do that. We went on from there.

As we went on, we got into some drug wars, I mean fighting other drug dealers over territory, something that wasn't even ours.

His mom was pregnant with him. When I really should have been paying more attention to her, I was out there all the time trying to make money. As he came in the world, you know, he was here for a while and me and her weren't getting along any more, so we became separated. I stopped doing for my son and her because I was like if I can't have her, then I don't want to have nothing to do with him either. That is how I was. I was selfish like that.

She also was using drugs. We were both using drugs. I became my best customer. I was giving it to her. We were using them together. Sometimes when she didn't do what I wanted, I would not give it to her and things like that. As time went on and she became ill from using drugs, she had to have open heart surgery and things just weren't going well. My son was getting ready to go into a foster home, so I had to decide if I was going to let him go into a foster home or take responsibility and become a father, which I really wasn't ready to do.

As time went on, we went to court and things like that. I decided that I would go ahead and take care of him. I got him and I really wasn't ready yet to be a father, not just yet because I used to like to hang out and run the streets. I was scared that I was going to have to stop doing those things. So, I took him. He was 3 years old. My mom helped me raise him. She did. She helped me out a lot. She was always there for me, for me and him both. She made sure I did what I was supposed to have done, to look out for him. I was still selling drugs. I had also gotten my first job. I was working a job and also still using drugs. The job didn't last long on the fact of my using drugs. I could not work and use drugs too. One had to go, and I chose for the job to go.

I continued taking care of him. Time went on. My drug habit got worse. His mom was ill, but she hadn't gotten real ill just yet. She was out there. She would come and see him and stuff like that. She was there for him, but not really there. Neither one of us was really there. We was like, you know, it was the drugs first and then the child.

As time went on, I lived with my mom still. I had a friend that was in the Healthy Start Program. I seen what it was doing for him, so I asked him to help me get into the program. He introduced me to, I think he introduced me to—I forgot who he introduced me to. I got into the program. I asked them for some help. I told them I had a drug problem. I asked them for some help because they were trying to offer me a job. I told them I wasn't ready to work because I could not pass the drug test. They got me into the Turke House for 30 days. I stayed there for 30 days. I wanted to leave, but the only reason I wanted to leave is because I didn't want them to waste their money. I really wanted to go back out there and use.

I stayed there for 30 days and cleaned up for 30 days, came back out. I went down to Healthy Start. As a matter of fact, they came and picked me up from the Turke House. My niece kept my son for me. I came back out. I went down, talked to them. They congratulated me for staying for 30 days and gave me a certificate and everything. I was so in a hurry to get a job from them then after I cleaned myself up, which I wasn't really ready to work yet because I went back out there and used again.

I stayed out there for a while on the corners. They would come through and pick me up and take me to group meetings. I would duck them up when I saw a van coming and stuff like that. I would hide because I didn't want them to see me. But they never gave up on me. They would see me on the corner. They would come into drug areas and get out the van and pull me up off the corner and ask me when it was I was coming back, I don't have to hide from them, and ask me how my son was doing. I would tell them that he was doing all right. I would just tell them I would be down there and I would never go. They would keep coming.

One day, I decided to go back down there. I went back down there. I started taking my son to the meetings and stuff like that. They got to know him. He got to know them real good. I just decided that I was tired, tired of doing what I was doing. I wanted to become a father because all the guys in there were doing so good. There were some guys in there that had also used before and they had jobs and they had houses. They were doing good. They had their own places. I decided that I wanted to straighten up. I went back to them again and told them that I wanted some help. But they didn't trust me. They thought I was going to go back out there and do the same thing again. They kept telling me to wait and see what I was going to do.

As time went on, I went back out there again. I had got a job and I started stealing and cheating, doing whatever I can to get the drugs. I guess I hit my rock bottom because I got locked up. I was in central booking. When I went through central booking I couldn't go through that again. Central booking, I ain't wanting to go back over there again. I came out of central booking. Ever since I came out of central booking, I have been off of drugs. That's been for 7 months, going on 8. I got a job now. As a matter of fact, I have a job. I am working on another part-time job. I have my own apartment. It's well-furnished. I have a closer relationship with my son. That is my best friend there. I just have been doing great thanks to the program for not giving up on me.

I still go to the meetings when I can, when I have time off. They are always there for me. I also was going through something as far as relationship too. I brought that to the table. They listened. They gave me some feedback on it. I also have four other children. I am not with either one of their mothers, but I now pay child support, which I wasn't doing. I send them money every other week. Everything has been going great for me so far, as far as me staying clean.

Chairman SHAW. Let's hear from your son then.

Mr. Downing. Pull that microphone up and pull it down just a little. That's right.

How do you like having a real dad now?

Mr. JONES. He said he would rather you all to ask him questions.

Chairman SHAW. All right. I'll start out then. How have you seen your dad coming along as far as have you seen a real change in him?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. Describe how he was when you first can remember him back when you were a real small child. Did you see much of him then?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. No.

Chairman SHAW. Where was he, out on the streets all the time?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. And where are you living now? Are you living with your dad?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. My grandmother.

Chairman SHAW. You are living with your grandmother? But your dad gets over there and visits with you a lot?

Mr. DOWNING, SR. He is kind of nervous. We live together in our own apartment.

Mr. DOWNING, JR. When you were on the street, Dad.

Chairman SHAW. I am talking about now.

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes. I live with my father.

Chairman SHAW. Now you are together. Let's get that clear. You all want to get out in the hall and get your story straight? [Laughter.]

Chairman SHAW. I'm sorry. I didn't make myself clear.

But what is the difference? You don't remember back when they were thinking about foster care. You can't remember back that far, can you?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. No.

Chairman SHAW. But just thinking about that is probably pretty scary to you right now. Isn't it?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. That you could have been put in foster care and really not have known your dad?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. Are you in school now? What grade are you in?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Eighth now.

Chairman SHAW. Eighth grade?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. What do you want to become? What do you want to do?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Be a police officer.

Chairman SHAW. Be what?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Police officer.

Chairman SHAW. Very good. But you have got to finish school now and do that. You have got to go all the way through and use your dad as both a bad example and a good example, as to what you can do with yourself. Right?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. You have seen, I guess you have seen him go through the problems he has had with drugs, haven't you?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. And it's tough when you get into that stuff to get off of it, isn't it?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. But you have seen a real difference in him, haven't you?

Mr. DOWNING, JR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. That's great to see.

Before we go onto the rest of the panel, does anyone else have any questions for young Mr. Downing?

Mr. LEVIN. Maybe we'll give him a few moments. Why don't we talk to that big fellow next to him.

Why don't you describe the array of services. I don't think you really covered that. What is there, what kinds of services?

Mr. JONES. First of all, we have a recruitment team primarily made up of women who go door to door through a specific target area, through census tracts, knocking on doors every 6 weeks looking for pregnant women. Once they identify a pregnant woman, they attempt to enroll her in the program. Once she enrolls, she is assigned to a case management team that work with pregnant moms around the pregnancy, whether it's access to prenatal care, housing, nutrition. Whatever the issues are, they work with her to support her, to stabilize what may be an at-risk pregnancy.

Once they get her to reach her comfort level, they do an internal referral to my program that basically hopefully we get an address, hopefully a phone number, maybe just a hangout. With that referral, my staff goes out and looks for these guys. I kind of say we have a bailbondsman mentality, but we go out to support guys. In America, I don't care what color you are, what economic background you come from, nobody has ever really gone out to reach, outreach to men. This is a real phenomenon for America. But that is one of the approaches we employ.

Once we can engage him, we try to get him to come to the group, see his peers around him, to get him to be comfortable. Then finally when he enrolls, we do an assessment. Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health is the evaluator for Baltimore City Healthy Start. In conjunction with them, the policy staff and myself and Hopkins developed an assessment. It's about 25 pages, 26 pages that looks at family formation and in terms of the number of kids this guy has, by how many different women, his educational background, criminal justice involvement. We actually put on there whether or not he has a government-issued ID or not, some of his attitudes and behaviors around sexually transmitted diseases and family planning.

From that, a plan is developed, what we call one man's plan. The guy sits down with his advocate and a case coordinator. They develop a plan with some preset goals and also some goals that he says he needs to achieve to be the best man, the best father he can be. Those goals and that plan are reviewed monthly by the case coordinator and the advocate. When the goals are reached, they are taken off. New goals are put on. If he doesn't reach a goal, we come up with new strategies to help him reach that goal. We have now redesigned the program so that that plan and his involvement in the program will have a 1-year cap on it.

Mr. LEVIN. Let me ask you, and thanks from all of us for your being here. These are stirring accounts. What kinds of services, just quickly, and my colleagues may have further questions. For the gentlemen here, for the children perhaps, as well as for the mothers. What is the array of services?

Mr. JONES. Case management is probably the heart and soul of the services provided. That would entail dealing with crisis situations.

Mr. LEVIN. How many would each, if I might interject, how many people would each caseworker be working with?

Mr. JONES. The way that the program is staffed, I have a program at east Baltimore, west Baltimore, each program has a case coordinator or a case manager, if you will. Under that case coordinator, there are four positions called men's services advocates. Two of them have just been changed to men's services counselor. You have a case coordinator, you have two men's services counselors, and two entry level positions we call men's services advocates. The entry level positions, and there are four because we have the two programs, are reserved for fathers who go through the program who display an ability to do some volunteer work in the community, can get a reference from somebody, and can command respect and give respect to their peers. When those positions are available and a guy is ready, we try to hire a client from the program to do that. That would be the staff.

Mr. LEVIN. Is there job training, for example? Just go quickly through what is available through your agency, through your entity. Is there job services?

Mr. JONES. Job services. I would like to put something before job services. We have GED onsite. Also adult basic education and pre-GED so if a guy doesn't or a mom doesn't have a high school education, which is the basic foundation of what a person has got to have in this country, they are referred to the GED Program.

Mr. LEVIN. GED, so right on the site there.

Mr. JONES. Onsite. Correct.

Mr. LEVIN. And then there are job training facilities or——

Mr. JONES. Right. We have a grant from HUD to do lead abatement. Prior to now actually, we gave contracts to home improvement contractors who then were required to hire the fathers from the program to do the work. This was subsidized job training for up to 1 year.

Mr. LEVIN. The funds come from?

Mr. JONES. HUD, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. LEVIN. And are there health and psychological services available?

Mr. JONES. Those kind of services are referred. We don't do any clinical services onsite.

Mr. LEVIN. But you refer them to entities within the community?

Mr. JONES. Yes.

Mr. LEVIN. And who pays for those?

Mr. JONES. Most of the people in the program are on welfare. However, for the men, who most of them do not have healthcare, so we use community resources. There is a community clinic that will take men into the clinic at no cost and will do as much as they can. If they are acute issues, then they will refer them to the appropriate healthcare facility that has to take indigent patients.

Mr. LEVIN. And psychological services, are they available?

Mr. JONES. Psychological services, while they may be available, is a very difficult issue to deal with in the inner-city communities that we live and work in. Mental health has a very negative stigma. When you start talking about psychological and psychiatric issues, it takes very intensive, very individual and private work to get somebody to acknowledge that they need to see somebody re-

garding psychological and psychiatric services. We do do it, but it is on a very intimate basis.

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. Camp.

Mr. CAMP. I want to thank you, Mr. Jones. I apologize for coming in a little late. I have read your statement. I want to thank you for coming here. I want to thank all of you for the honesty and courage really and for speaking from the heart. What I have heard has been very very meaningful.

I did want to ask just a couple of questions. I realize this is a federally funded program. Are there any restrictions that you are seeing that is making it difficult for you to operate the Healthy Start Program?

Mr. JONES. Yes. The biggest restriction is that there are no dedicated dollars for my program. We just decided in Baltimore to use some of the dollars that were earmarked for the infant mortality program, primarily for the services to pregnant women, to develop this pilot program called men's services. My program in the entirety is currently on the cuttingblock. Our budget last year was $5 million. Healthy Start has put a cap on our program this year, where we will only receive up to $2.5 million. In essence, it will decimate the Men's Services Program.

Mr. CAMP. Nationwide, how many Healthy Start Programs of this kind are there? Do you know?

Mr. JONES. In 1992 the Department of Health and Human Services funded 15 Healthy Start Programs around the country. The next year they added seven projects that were called Special Projects. In the last several years, they have expanded to approximately 50-something communities around the country. They may even do further expansion. However, the further expansion is with reduced dollars that again, will decimate the Men's Services Program.

Mr. CAMP. Thank you. Again, I just want to thank all of you for coming. It is not an easy thing to do. I think it is very helpful what you have done. I admire what you have done. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. McCrery.

Mr. MCCRERY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank all of you for coming and joining us today and offering your testimony.

Mr. Jones, how many men are in your program?

Mr. JONES. There are 200, 100 in west Baltimore and 100 in east Baltimore.

Mr. MCCRERY. And are there other programs similar to yours in the Baltimore area?

Mr. JONES. There's a couple of small programs that aren't well resourced. The other program, brother or sister program, if you will, is the Young Fathers Responsible Fathers Program which is a State-funded initiative by the Glendening administration that has really been strongly supported by Alvin Collins, who is the secretary of the Department of Human Resources at the State level. They have a program that is in Baltimore City. It is the program that Anthony Edwards graduated from. They also have I think five programs in other jurisdictions around the State.

Mr. MCCRERY. How many men are in the State-supported program?

Mr. JONES. I'm not real sure of their numbers.

Mr. MCCRERY. Do you work with the State program? Is there any relationship?

Mr. JONES. Yes. We are currently involved in the project called Partners for Fragile Families. That is an initiative funded by the Ford Foundation. What it will do, it will allow the Young Fathers Responsible Fathers Program and the Healthy Start Men's Services Program to work in conjunction. This is a situation I would not have been in about 1½ to 2 years ago, to partner with the State Child Support Administration. The grant actually goes to the child support.

The two basic points about this initiative, it requires that community-based fatherhood programs help Child Support establish paternity among men who happen to be fathers who have never established paternity, but who don't have arrearages, because the guys who have arrearages, it's kind of hard to manage that situation at this point in time. But this new entry for community-based programs and State Child Support, is to help Child Support meet its Federal mandate to increase incrementally paternity over several years until 1991. But also for Child Support to create a funding stream so that community-based programs can provide services to fathers, including education and training.

Mr. MCCRERY. Do you happen to know how the Glendening administration finances its State program?

Mr. JONES. I think they use discretionary dollars.

Mr. MCCRERY. Do you know if any of those dollars come from their block grant for TANF?

Mr. JONES. No. I am not sure of the mechanism of their funding stream.

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Hope, why did you join this program? What compelled you? What made you want this program? I know now you are sold on it and you like it and it's a swell place to be.

Mr. HOPE. I guess when I got stabbed in 1991 in a street fight, and like a light clicked, I can't go on living like this, you know. Then I found out my kid's mother was pregnant. I really can't go on like this. What really got me hooked is when I came to the group and I was carrying a firearm. Joe Jones, I don't know if he saw it or I don't know how, he asked me about it. I told him, yes, I have one. He took it from me. He was like, you'll get it back at the end of the group. I am sitting in the group and I am listening to everybody. When are the police going to come through the door. He never came. At the end of the group, he gave it back. He said he was going to get me to the point where I can come to group or walk the streets without having a firearm on me.

Now, I don't carry a firearm. As a matter of fact, I don't have a firearm no more. I don't worry about problems as much as I used to. There is no problem that I can't talk out, talk my way out of it. I don't have to ball my fingers up and make a fist no more.

Mr. MCCRERY. How did you hear about this program?

Mr. HOPE. One day me and my kid's mother was walking down the street. A lady named Ms. Bush, she used to work there, and she asked was she pregnant. She said yes. At the time, it was

called the Baltimore Project. She enrolled. Then after she enrolled, I met up with Joe Jones. I asked him whether you all got a fatherhood group. At the time it wasn't there yet. During the course of the time of her going, of my kid's mother going to her group, I would go and sit in and I would listen. Sometimes I would participate in the group.

Then Joe came to me and told me that they got the group started up now, the fatherhood group. I stayed with that. I went there. I just had a problem out in the street and I went there and I listened and I talked. It was all good from there, all up hill.

Mr. McCRERY. Thank you. Mr. Jones, does your program have a marriage education component? Do you talk about marriage? Do you promote marriage in your group?

Mr. JONES. We do not necessarily promote marriage. In my prepared testimony, I talked about where we are today. We are about to add an addendum to our curriculum. We have a document called Father's Journal, that I can leave with you, Mr. Chair. We are going to add an addendum to that that will outline the principles of marriage.

We have had a few men in the program who have actually gone through our jobs program, one of which I tried to have here today, his employer wouldn't let him off, but who has gotten married as a result of going from point A to point Z. But the principles of marriage were missing from the community. There are just not enough models out there for men to look at, these guys to look at and say that's what a husband should do. We need to start incorporating those in there as opposed to encouraging marriage at a point right now where they have got so many other things to deal with. Most of them don't even have a fixed address, and you want to talk about encouraging marriage. I think it is somewhere along the continuum of the curriculum. We will place the principles of marriage in that document and hold discussion groups around it.

Mr. McCRERY. Thank you. If you get married, you will find that your fixed address will be a lot more fixed. [Laughter.]

Mr. JONES. I am married, and my address is more fixed than I ever thought it would be.

Mr. McCRERY. There you go.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. Coyne.

Mr. COYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Jones, were you with the Healthy Start Program when it was only a program that helped provide a healthy start for newborns?

Mr. JONES. Yes. Paul Hope mentioned the Baltimore Project, which was the predecessor to Healthy Start. It was a locally funded program by the Abel Foundation. It was still a small infant mortality reduction program. I worked with pregnant women who were substance abusers at that time and did a lot of home visits. Working with women, I often encountered the men who were the significant others or the fathers of the babies. They always said, "Can you help me?" Over time, I went back to my superiors and convinced them that once we got the Healthy Start dollars, could we please include fathers in our strategies to help us reduce infant mortality.

I was selected to develop that program and have been there since its inception.

Mr. COYNE. So, it's not that money was taken from the Healthy Start for newborns and deferred to this program. You are doing both.

Mr. JONES. Correct.

Mr. COYNE. The Fathers Count Initiative that we are talking about here today, the legislation, requires that 75 percent of that money would go to nongovernmental entities. Do you have any concerns about that?

Mr. JONES. No. We are actually a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation set up under the administration of the Baltimore City Health Department with the blessings of Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke.

Mr. COYNE. What percentage of your current budget is governmentally sponsored?

Mr. JONES. One hundred percent.

Mr. COYNE. One hundred percent.

Mr. JONES. Except for some special initiatives that we have been funded for by the Ford Foundation. I mentioned the Partners for Fragile Families. The other example of where we could go with this whole idea of marriage is this concept called TEAM parenting. What TEAM parenting will be designed to do is to work with young couples who may be in real fragile relationships who don't know how to mediate and negotiate their relationships, and try to stabilize those relationships so that even if they choose not to be together, the children will always have access to both parents.

Some of the literature suggests that when you work with families that way, an outcome in the end is the selection of marriage as an institution.

Mr. COYNE. Thank you.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. Collins.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Jones, what did you say your overall budget figure is? How much money does your budget consist of in 1 year?

Mr. JONES. Are you talking about Healthy Start overall or the Men's Services Program?

Mr. COLLINS. You have two different programs?

Mr. JONES. Well the Men's Services Program is a component of Baltimore City Healthy Start.

Mr. COLLINS. What is your overall budget?

Mr. JONES. Last year, our last fiscal year, $5 million.

Mr. COLLINS. And you said that is being reduced to $2.5 million?

Mr. JONES. Right. We can get up to $2.5 million this year.

Mr. COLLINS. That is for both programs?

Mr. JONES. That is for all. Everything that we did last year with $5 million, we will only be getting up to $2.5 to do that same thing. I don't have to tell you what that means in terms of a reduction in the services.

Mr. COLLINS. Yes. How much of that $5 million now, the $2.5, is for the fatherhood program?

Mr. JONES. It's approximately $450,000, comes out a little, I think a little less than $2,000 per man for 1 year. If you look at what it takes to incarcerate somebody annually, it is a drop in the bucket when you talk about being able to work with them outside of the prison system and prevent them from ever getting there.

Some of our early cost benefit analysis suggests that we can reduce incarceration costs. We can also increase child support pay-

ments. We can also help the Census Bureau get an accurate census count. When you get men out into the mainstream and into employment now with new hire requirements, with Social Security numbers and names must be sent to the State to cross reference, you then can get a more true assessment of who is actually in-households as opposed to the rough guesstimate we usually get with most inner-city communities, particularly when women are on welfare and have their boyfriend, maybe their brother and their cousins are in the house and will not tell anyone that they exist.

Mr. COLLINS. Will you reduce the fatherhood program in proportion to the reduction in your funding?

Mr. JONES. We had a budget meeting last week. My program is one of the programs on the cuttingblock.

Mr. COLLINS. It will not?

Mr. JONES. It was on the cuttingblock.

Mr. COLLINS. OK. Do you have any religious activities in your program?

Mr. JONES. You know when you talk about religion, I am going to ask the guys when we close this panel, to join me in a brief ritual that we do that takes about 10 seconds. We recently began to take guys to church on Sundays. I was really caught in between this Federal church and state stuff. I just decided to heck with it, whatever happens, happens. The church that we attended is co-pastored. The mom is actually the pastor. Her son has now taken over the realm. Here is a guy who has a master's in theology who grew up on the streets of Baltimore, is a recovering addict, and uses every tool and technique of the street to reach and meet guys like these guys where they are. That has been our entry into religion, if you will.

But I would like to twist it a little bit more and talk about spirituality because that is a void that is just clearly missing from a lot of the lives of the men we provide services to. They want to do better, man. When you see a guy 18 years old and you see his eyes have no sparkle, and he is a father and he is responsible for transferring whatever he has to that child, and he has nothing to transfer, and he has no hope, and he is exposed to guns and drugs, poor housing, poor education, I think it is practical, the behavior we see displayed on television as it relates to inner-city America because that is how they have been trained. They haven't been trained in Coppin State, Morehouse State, Harvard. They have been trained on the streets. That is how they should respond if that is the only training they have been exposed to.

Mr. COLLINS. That type of training very seldom has anything to do with a Supreme Being or God.

Mr. JONES. That's right.

Mr. COLLINS. You mentioned child support, does your program actually suspend child support obligations while a father is engaged in your program?

Mr. JONES. No. Prior to about 1 year ago, I know Dr. Johnson is here. This guy over here, his shop is here in Washington. You should visit NPCL, believe me. This guy took me home one night and convinced me. It took about 3 hours. I wanted him to leave. He had taken me home and we were sitting in front of my house and he is talking about the potential of the benefit to children if

community-based fatherhood programs entered into a relationship with child support, not as an adversarial and not as a collections-based activity, but in a supportive way. Yes, we need to look at acknowledging paternity and men being responsible financially and emotionally for their children. But also the potential for child support to create a funding stream so the fatherhood programs can operate so that we would get away from deadbeat dads. Nigel Van I believe is here. Nigel will tell you they are not deadbeats, they are dead broke.

Mr. COLLINS. Yes. That's often the reason they don't pay their child support.

You mentioned the fact that you said to heck with the church and state relationship that is often looked upon by the Federal agencies, the Federal Government. Have you presented this program to the churches throughout your community for possible funding so that you would never have that question of separation of State by having Federal dollars involved in your program?

Mr. JONES. I think they would embrace it, but I do believe they need a lot of technical assistance to get there. To run fatherhood programs where there are standards that can be evaluated, the field is not there. I mean you have got to be real clear about putting dollars out there and the standards that programs, whether they are faith based or community based, what standards they adhere to.

I am proud to be a part of the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families that is funded by the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles Mott Foundation, and one other foundation that escapes me right now. But I am on two committees. One of the committees is the standards committee, along with another guy named Jerry Hamilton from Racine, Wisconsin. The two of us right now are working on developing standards for the field that will be the standards that programs will have to adhere to to be a part of the National Practitioners Network. I am sure a lot of public and private funders will look at that as a gauge on whether or not a program should be funded and whether or not it is effective.

Mr. COLLINS. But if your program includes Federal dollars, there is always that question of separation of State.

Mr. JONES. There is always that question. But let me tell you something. When it gets down to doing the work, you ain't got time to worry about a lot of regulations, man, because you are talking about guys who are coming whose kids are at risk. Yes, you have to be mindful of it.

Mr. COLLINS. That's true, but we have an unfortunate situation where oftentimes some of the people who run the agencies step in and say they have a difference of opinion and your dollars are cut-off.

Mr. JONES. Correct.

Mr. COLLINS. I hope you will maintain that train of thought that you need to have some type of religious activities, attending church. I would hope that you would confront the churches in your community about support, either support monetarily or support in changing the attitude and opinions of a lot of those who are in-

volved in Federal agencies who do not have and share the same opinion that you have.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. JONES. Thank you.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. English.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Chairman, I have no questions. I just want to congratulate these men for having the courage to come in and bring us up to speed on why this fatherhood program is an enormous opportunity for Congress.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you. I will be very brief in my question because the House goes in at 1 o'clock. I don't want to get stuck with a bunch of votes here and keep people waiting beyond the time, and we have a very good panel following this one.

But I want to ask Mr. Edwards, Mr. Hope, and Mr. Downing, were all of you from single-parent homes? Did you have a father living at home? Mr. Edwards, did you have a father living at home?

Mr. EDWARDS. I was raised in a single-parent home. Considering my biological parents, yes, my mother raised me. I had very little to no contact with my biological father. However, I had a stepfather involved. He showed me particular things that I needed to do. He didn't live with me, however, he was my mother's mate. He tried to show me particular things, particular behaviors and the attitude that I needed to be successful in modern society.

However, because of not having that in-house, in-home training day to day, not having that particular discipline which he was not able to do because he was not my biological father, I still made negative choices which gave me negative consequences.

Chairman SHAW. I love that expression, negative choices and negative consequences. You are what, in psychology?

Mr. EDWARDS. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. I figured that. [Laughter.]

I like that.

Mr. Hope.

Mr. HOPE. No. My father wasn't actually in the household, but I had access to him.

Chairman SHAW. Did he spend any time with you?

Mr. HOPE. Yes and no. It was like first of all, I love my father dearly despite all his decisions or whatever he's done. He is still my father. I have got the utmost respect for him. Things that I learned from him weren't actually the same things I learned in the group. I learned what I could learn from him and I used it to the best of my ability to use it. Even though sometimes it may not have been right by some people, it got me by for the short period of time when I was living that way. Now I have got the right tools I need to go on further so——

Chairman SHAW. He wasn't exactly the best role model.

Mr. HOPE. Right. But on the same note, maybe I just took what I did learn from him and the negative stuff that I learned, and I used it in a positive. He wasn't the best role model but he was my father and I respect him dearly.

Chairman SHAW. Mr. Downing, you have already told us that you were what, one of nine kids or six kids and your mother raised you

all. You didn't have a father at home. Did you have any contact with your dad?

Mr. DOWNING, SR. Yes. As a matter of fact, he lives right around the corner from my mom. We don't really talk, but we see each other. I have brought him to one of the meetings when we were having a meeting. They were telling me that I should go and approach him and ask him why we don't talk as much as we should. I just haven't had the courage to do it.

Chairman SHAW. That's interesting. You have got to be very concerned about the role model that you are for your son here that's next to you at this point.

Mr. DOWNING, SR. Yes.

Chairman SHAW. I was very taken by the slogan. Mr. Edwards, I think you said it and I think it is probably something that all of you, if it is going to be, it's up to me. I can't think of anything—everybody has got an excuse it seems, and it seems that facing reality if it's going to be, it's got to be me I think is a wonderful thing.

I would like to underscore one thing that Mr. Jones said that I think that this panel and this hearing should certainly take notice of because it's something I learned just a few months ago. I think my staff heard it from you. That is a question of these guys come in, they don't have a Social Security card, they don't have a birth certificate, they have no ID, government ID at all unless they just bought something off the street. That is amazing when you really think about it, that the first thing you have got to do is get them a Social Security card and put them on that track. It is amazing that the people out there and that so many of the people you deal with—what percentage of the people you deal with come in with no identification?

Mr. JONES. Man, it's anywhere from 60 to 80 percent. I haven't looked at the numbers.

Chairman SHAW. Most of them.

Mr. JONES. But most of them.

Chairman SHAW. It probably means they have never worked. Never had a real job, a legal job.

Mr. JONES. It's not just that they haven't had a real job. In some cases they have. But you know, when you get incarcerated, you have papers with you. They take the papers from you. By the time you get released, you can't get the papers back. You live someplace 1 week and you put your stuff there. The family may move. Your papers are thrown someplace else. It is just chaotic. It is not just the fact that they never had it. Often times they have had it, they just are not in possession of it now. They have to go back and get it again. But there is that population that has never had it as well.

Chairman SHAW. Well, we have got a big job ahead of us.

Mr. JONES. Yes, sir. With your help, we will continue.

Chairman SHAW. That all of you on this panel are on the right track of getting things done.

You said you had something you wanted to end with.

Mr. JONES. Yes. Serenity prayer, guys?

Grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, prepare to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SHAW. Very good. Thank you. Thank all of you. We appreciate your being here.

Our next panel, many are very familiar faces and people we have worked with on the past on this and other matters. Wade Horn. Dr. Wade Horn is president of the National Fatherhood Initiative in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Charles Ballard, founder and chief executive officer of the National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization here in Washington, DC. Dr. Ronald Mincy is a senior program officer of the Ford Foundation. Dr. Wendell Primus, who we have known for many years as a staffperson on this Subcommittee, now with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, DC. And Gordon Berlin, who is a senior vice president of Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation of New York, New York.

Again, we have your full statement which will be made a part of the record. We would invite you to proceed as you see fit and summarize if you would. We are going to try to conclude this hearing before 1, as we do expect votes approximately at that time.

Dr. Horn.

STATEMENT OF WADE F. HORN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

Mr. HORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to be here today. I am here representing the National Fatherhood Initiative and to testify in strong support of the Fathers Count Act of 1998 for four reasons. First, by supporting skill-building programs for fathers, the bill sends a clear message that fathers do matter, and not just financially. Second, by including as one of its purposes the promotion of marriage, it contains a strong message that marriage is the most effective pathway to responsible fatherhood. Third, by including $2 billion in block grant funding, it will help to nurture and support the growth of community-based fatherhood programs all across America. Fourth, by helping low-income men become and stay employed, it enhances not only their own life prospects, but also their viability as responsible fathers and as marital partners.

There are of course some who have objections to this bill. Chief among them is the fact that the bill explicitly promotes marriage. government, in the view of these critics, has no business promoting personal values. Instead, they insist that government policy should be neutral when it comes to things like marriage. This argument might be persuasive if not for the fact that for the past 30 or 40 years, government policy rather than being neutral to marriage has actually punished marriage. For example, when two-earner couples head for the altar instead of cohabiting, their taxes actually go up, in some cases, costing families with modest incomes $5,000 or more annually. Things are even worse for low-income couples.

This would not be so bad if marriage didn't matter, but it does, and not just a little. Marriage matters a lot. Children fare better if they are raised in married intact two-parent households. Men and women when they are married are happier, healthier, and wealthier than their unmarried counterparts. The best indicator of violent crime in a community is not race, it's not ethnicity, it's not income, it is the prevalence of marriage. Given that marriage is good for children, good for adults, and good for communities, why

on Earth should public policy shy away from encouraging more of it?

By emphasizing the need to increase the number of children living with married fathers, I don't mean to imply that divorced or unwed fathers should be tossed overboard. Children need their fathers. The fact that their fathers don't live in the same household does not lessen that need. But in working with divorced and never-married fathers, we should not shy away from the ideal of married fatherhood. To do otherwise sends an ambiguous message to the next generation of fathers. For their future children's sake, we need to be clear that men should wait until they are married before fathering children. Once married, they should do everything they can to ensure their marriage stays strong and vital.

A related objection comes from libertarians. They say that government ought not to be in the business of social engineering. But the truth is that in many low-income communities today, fatherhood and marriage have disappeared, and not just recently, but for many generations. How on Earth does a young man who is growing up in a fourth generation fatherless household in a community where there are no married fathers to look to, how on Earth do we expect dismantling government alone is going to teach that man how to be a good, responsible man, a responsible father, and a loving husband? The answer is it ain't going to happen.

What about the fatherless children? Do we just shrug our shoulders and say gee, you should have picked a better father when you were born? The fatherless children need and deserve our support as well. Dismantling government alone is not going to fix that.

Given the clear connection between fatherlessness and such social ills as poverty, crime, educational failure and substance abuse, we simply cannot afford social indifference on this issue. Government cannot solve all of our Nation's ills. But what it can do it must do. I am not suggesting that any piece of legislation, and certainly not this one, is going to magically transform America from a fatherless Nation into one full of real fathers and good husbands. Nor do I believe that this legislation is perfect. In particular, I think there are ways to strengthen the requirement that marriage be set as an ideal, not just for some programs supported by this block grant, but for all programs supported by it.

The Fathers Count Act of 1998 is the start. And start we must, because if we do not, we will continue to see our Nation slide into fatherlessness, and we will be a nation forever in decline. The good news is we are starting to see for the first time in over 30 years a leveling off of the number of children growing up in fatherless households. I believe that with concerted effort, we can actually reverse the trend of fatherlessness, not just stem the tide, but reverse it in the next 5 years. But doing so will require that we take a firm stand, not only on supporting the importance of responsible fatherhood, but marriage as the most likely pathway to a lifetime father for a child.

Effective public policy means encouraging more skilled fathering, more work, and more marriages. The Fathers Count Act of 1998 does all three, which is why it has my wholehearted endorsement. Thank you.

[The prepared statement follows:]

Statement of Wade F. Horn, President, National Fatherhood Initiative

My name is Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. I am a child psychologist and President of the National Fatherhood Initiative, an organization whose mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with an involved, responsible and loving father. Formerly, I served as Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and was a presidential appointee to the National Commission on Children. I also served as a member of the National Commission on Childhood Disability and on the U.S. Advisory Board on Welfare Indicators. I appreciate this invitation to testify on promising approaches to promoting fatherhood, including the Fathers Count Act of 1998 (H.R. 3314) recently introduced by members of this Subcommittee.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FATHERLESSNESS

The family is the primary institution through which we protect and nurture our children, and upon which free societies depend for establishing social order and promoting individual liberty and fulfillment. However, over the past several decades the United States has been experiencing a dramatic decline in the institution of marriage and reliance on two-parent families to raise children. Even more precisely, what we have been experiencing has been a decline of fatherhood. When marriages fail, or when children are born out of wedlock, it is almost always fathers who are absent. The absence of fathers has, in turn, severely increased the life risks faced by their children.

Almost 75 percent of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn eleven-years-old, compared to only 20 percent of children in two-parent families.[1] Children who grow up absent their fathers are also more likely to fail at school or to drop out,[2] experience behavioral or emotional problems requiring psychiatric treatment,[3] engage in early sexual activity,[4] and develop drug and alcohol problems.[5]

Children growing up with absent fathers are especially likely to experience violence. They are three times more likely to commit suicide as adolescents[6] and to be victims of child abuse or neglect.[7] Violent criminals are also overwhelmingly males who grew up without fathers, including up to 60 percent of rapists,[8] 75 percent of adolescents charged with murder,[9] and 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions.[10]

In light of these data, noted developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner has concluded:

> "Controlling for factors such as low income, children growing up in [father absent] households are at a greater risk for experiencing a variety of behavioral and educational problems, including extremes of hyperactivity and withdrawal; lack of attentiveness in the classroom; difficulty in deferring gratification; impaired academic achievement; school misbehavior; ab-

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[1] National Commission on Children, "Just the Facts: A Summary of Recent Information on America's Children and Their Families," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).

[2] Debra Dawson, "Family Structure and Children's Well-Being: Data from the 1988 National Health Survey," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 53 (1991); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, "Survey of Child Health," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).

[3] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, "National Health Interview Survey," (Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988).

[4] Irwin Garfinkel and Sara McLanahan, *Single Mothers and Their Children* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 1986); Susan Newcomer and J. Richard Udry, "Parental Marital Status Effects on Adolescent Sexual Behavior," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (May 1987): 235–240.

[5] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, "Survey on Child Health," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).

[6] Patricia L. McCall and Kenneth C. Land, "Trends in White Male Adolescent Young-Adults and Elderly Suicide: Are There Common Underlying Structural Factors?" *Social Science Research* 23 (1994): 57–81; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, "Survey on Child Health," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).

[7] Catherine M. Malkin and Michael E. Lamb, "Child Maltreatment: A Test of Sociobiological Theory," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 25 (1994): 121–130.

[8] Nicholas Davidson, "Life Without Father," *Policy Review* (1990).

[9] Dewey Cornell, et al., "Characteristics of Adolescents Charged with Homicide," *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 5 (1987): 11–23.

[10] M. Eileen Matlock, et al., "Family Correlates of Social Skills Deficits in Incarcerated and Nonincarcerated Adolescents," *Adolescence* 29 (1994): 119–130.

senteeism; dropping out; involvement in socially alienated peer groups, and the so-called 'teenage syndrome' of behaviors that tend to hang together—smoking, drinking, early and frequent sexual experience, and in the more extreme cases, drugs, suicide, vandalism, violence, and criminal acts."[11]

THE HISTORIC ROLE OF THE FATHER IN PUBLIC POLICY

Since the 1950's, the fathers' role in public policy has been mostly about paternity establishment and child support enforcement. This is not, of course, without merit. Any man who fathers a child ought to be held financially responsible for that child. But as important as paternity establishment and child support enforcement may be, they are by themselves unlikely to substantially improve the well-being of children for several reasons.

First, paternity establishment does not equal child support. In fact, only one in four single women with children living below the poverty line receive any child support from the non-custodial father.[12] Some unwed fathers, especially in low-income communities, may lack the financial resources to provide economically for their children. For these men, establishing paternity may not translate into economic support for the child.

But a lack of earnings does not seem to be the only explanation for the low rate of child support. Although studies show a substantial range of income, the average child on AFDC has a father who earns an annual income of approximately $15,000, indicating some ability to pay child support.[13] Thus, even when unwed fathers can afford to pay, many don't—this despite spending over $3 billion dollars annually on child support enforcement efforts. Although precise data are not available, reasons frequently cited for lack of payment by non-resident fathers who could afford to pay child support include parental conflict, paternal substance abuse, re-marriage, and simple disinterest in the welfare of the child or mother.

Second, even if paternity establishment led to a child support award, the average level of child support (about $3000 per year[14]) is unlikely to move large numbers of children out of poverty. Some may move out of poverty marginally. But moving from poverty to near poverty is not associated with significant improvements in child outcomes,[15] absent changes in family structure or workforce attachment.

Third, an exclusive emphasis on child support enforcement may only drive these men farther away from their children. As word circulates within low-income communities that cooperating with paternity establishment but failing to comply with child support orders may result in imprisonment or revocation of one's driver's license, many may simply choose to become less involved with their children. Thus, the unintended consequence of such policies is to decrease, not increase, the number of children growing up with fathers, proving once again that no good policy goes unpunished.

Finally, a narrow focus on child support enforcement ignores the many non-economic contributions that fathers make to the well-being of their children. While the provision of economic support is certainly important, it is neither the only nor the most important role that fathers play. Emphasizing fatherhood in largely economic terms has helped to contribute to its demise. After all, if a father is little more than a paycheck to his children, he can easily be replaced by a welfare payment. If we want fathers to be more than just money machines, we will need a public policy that supports their work as nurturers, disciplinarians, mentors, moral instructors and skill coaches, and not just as economic providers.

If paternity establishment and child support enforcement by themselves are not the answer, then what is?

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[11] Urie Bronfenbrenner, "What do Families do?" *Family Affairs* (Winter/Spring 1991): 1–6.

[12] Ways and Means Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, *1996 Green Book.* Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 580.

[13] E. Clay Shaw, Nancy L. Johnson, and Fred Grandy, *Moving Ahead: How Americans Can Reduce Poverty Through Work.* U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, June, 1992, Table 7 (p. 26).

[14] Ways and Means Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, *1996 Green Book.* Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 578.

[15] See, for example, Kristen A. Moore, Donna Ruane Morrison, Martha Zaslow and Dana A. Glei, *Ebbing and Flowing, Learning and Growing: Family Economic Resources and Children's Development.* Paper presented at the Workshop on Welfare and Child Development sponsored by the Board of Children and Families of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Family and Child Well-Being Network.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PRO-FATHER PUBLIC POLICY

First, our culture needs to send a more compelling message to men as to the critical role they play in the lives of their children. Currently, fathers are generally seen as "nice to have around" and as a source of economic support, but are not understood as contributing much that is particularly unique or irreplaceable to the well-being of their children. To counter this rather limited view of the importance of fathers, public policy must communicate the critical role fathers play—as nurturers, as disciplinarians, as teachers, and as role models—in the healthy development of their children. One way to do this is through the funding of public education campaigns.

Over the past several years, the National Fatherhood Initiative has developed and implemented a series of public education campaigns designed to highlight the importance of fathers to the well-being of children, families and communities. Working in conjunction with the Ad Council, we developed and distributed a national public service announcement (PSA) campaign to raise awareness that fathers make unique and irreplaceable contributions to the lives of their children, and that collectively we need to do more to encourage and support men to be good and responsible fathers. To date, this PSA campaign has garnered in excess of $100 million in donated broadcasting time.

We have also developed, in partnership with Radio America, a series of radio PSAs. These fatherhood PSAs feature a mix of celebrities and experts to remind fathers how important it is for them to spend time with their children. Among those who appear in this series are General Colin Powell (Ret.), Vice President Al Gore, former HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, U.S. Senators Dan Coats and Bill Bradley, U.S. Representatives J.C. Watts and Steve Largent, and Penn State football coach Joe Paterno. We have also developed a state-wide public education campaign promoting responsible fatherhood in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.

For those who may believe that PSA campaigns do not have much of an effect, an independent evaluation of the public education campaign we developed for the state of Virginia suggests otherwise. This evaluation, conducted by researchers at the University of Virginia, found (1) nearly 1 of every 3 adult Virginians could recall having seen the PSAs; (2) 40,000 fathers reported they were spending more time with their children as a result of seeing the ads; (3) and 100,000 non-fathers reported reaching out to support or encourage a father in their community.

Second, a pro-father public policy must also be a pro-marriage policy. All available evidence suggests that the most effective pathway to involved, committed and responsible fatherhood is marriage. Research consistently documents that unmarried fathers, whether through divorce or out-of-wedlock fathering, tend over time to become disconnected, both financially and psychologically, from their children. Forty percent of children in father absent homes have not seen their father in at least a year. Of the remaining 60 percent, only one in five sleeps even one night per month in the father's home. Overall, only one in six sees their father an average of once or more per week.[16] More than half of all children who don't live with their fathers have never even been in their father's home.[17]

Unwed fathers are particularly unlikely to stay connected to their children over time. Whereas 57 percent of unwed fathers are visiting their child at least once per week during the first two years of their child's life, by the time their child reaches 7½ years of age, that percentage drops to less than 25 percent.[18] Indeed, approximately 75 percent of men who are not living with their children at the time of their birth never subsequently live with them.[19]

Even when unwed fathers are cohabitating with the mother at the time of their child's birth, they are very unlikely to stay involved in their children's lives over the long term. Although a quarter of non-marital births occur to cohabitating couples, only four out of ten cohabitating unwed fathers ever go on to marry the mother of their children, and those that do are more likely to eventually divorce than men

[16] Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Christine Winquist Nord, "Parenting Apart: Patterns of Child Rearing After Marital Disruption," *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* (November 1985): 896.

[17] Frank Furstenberg and Andrew Cherlin, *Divided Families: What Happens to Children When Parents Part* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[18] Robert Lerman and Theodora Ooms, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple, 1993): 45.

[19] Ibid.

who father children within marriage.[20] Remarriage, or, in cases of an unwed father, marriage to someone other than the child's mother, makes it especially unlikely that a non-custodial father will remain in contact with his children.[21]

The inescapable conclusion is this: if we want to increase the proportion of children growing up with involved and committed fathers, we will have to increase the number of children living with their *married* fathers. Unmarried men, and especially unwed fathers, are simply unlikely to stay in contact with their children over the long term.

By emphasizing the need to increase the number of children living with married dads, I do not mean to imply that divorced or unwed fathers should be tossed overboard. Children need their fathers. The fact that their father does not reside in the same household does not lessen that need. But in working with divorced and never-married fathers, we should not shy away from the ideal of married fatherhood. To do otherwise sends an ambiguous message to the next generation of fathers. For their future children's sakes, we need to be clearer that men should wait until they are married before fathering children, and once married, they should do everything they can to ensure their marriage stays strong and vital.

One way to strengthen marriage, especially within low-income communities, is to expand participation in welfare-to-work employment programs to include the broader population of low-income males—not only as a means to increase their own life prospects, but also as a means to increase their marriageability. Research has found that the availability of a suitable potential husband, primarily defined as being employed and not in jail or prison, had a greater effect on marriage and nonmarital fertility than did AFDC benefit levels.[22] This literature indicates clearly that if men are employed, they are better potential marital partners.

In expanding employment services to low-income males, government should be careful not to condition receipt of services upon having fathered a child out-of-wedlock. To do so may only serve to introduce perverse incentives for men to father children out-of-wedlock, in much the same way that AFDC provided perverse incentives for women to bear children out-of-wedlock. The cultural and public policy message must be this: we stand ready to assist low-income males who play by the rules and wait to have children until after they are married.

Third, public policy needs to do more to support the growing number of community-based organizations interested in implementing local fatherhood programs. At the founding of the National Fatherhood Initiative just three years ago, we could barely find a hundred community-based fatherhood programs. Today, that number has swelled to well over two thousand. Nearly everywhere one turns in every part of the country, there seems to be a new interest in implementing fatherhood outreach, support, and skill building programs.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the fatherhood field is still quite fragile. Again and again, we hear from practitioners of the need to build greater capacity within the emerging fatherhood movement. Building capacity requires additional resources. Additional resources means money.

While many private foundations today talk a good talk about the need to reach out to and support fathers, far too few actually provide any resources to do so. Public funding for fatherhood promotion, support and skill building programs is practically non-existent. Consequently, most fatherhood programs today exist on shoestring budgets. Some on no budgets at all. Without additional resources, the nascent fatherhood movement is likely to fail.

In addition, we need more and better evaluations of existing fatherhood programs. The truth is we don't know what works best and for whom. While there are many promising approaches, no approach has yet been proven, using generally accepted scientific evaluation methods, to yield its intended effects, especially in the long-term. Whatever government decides to do in terms of fatherhood promotion, it must also commit to providing adequate resources to determine the effectiveness of those efforts.

Fourth, while supporting fathers, we can not forget the importance of supporting children growing up in father absent households. The fact is that nearly 4 out of

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[20] Moore, Kristin A., "Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States." In: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing," DHHS Pub. no. (PHS) 95–1257, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995): vii.

[21] Linda S. Stephens, "Will Johnny See Daddy This Week?" *Journal of Family Issues* 17 (1996): 466–494.

[22] William J. Darity, Jr., and Samuel L. Myers, "Family Structure and the Marginalization of Black Men: Policy Implications." In M. Belinda Tucker and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, eds. *The Decline in Marriage Among African-Americans.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1995, pp. 263–321; see also Randall Stokes and Albert Chevan, "Female-Headed Families: Social and Economic Context of Racial Differences," *Journal of Urban Affairs,* 18, 1996, pp. 245–268.

every 10 children in America today—nearly 24 million overall—are growing up in a home in which their father does not live. In working with fathers, we can not forget the importance of reaching out to the fatherless. Although providing a fatherless child with an adult male mentor is not the same thing as providing a real live, in-the-home, love-the-mother, father, it can be very helpful in teaching fatherless boys what it means to be a responsible man, and in teaching fatherless daughters what to demand from men in their lives.

THE FATHERS COUNT ACT OF 1998

Given these recommendations for a pro-father public policy, the Fathers Count Act of 1998 is the right legislation at the right time for the following three reasons: First, by supporting skill building programs for fathers, it sends a clear message that fathers do matter, and not just financially. Second, by including as one of its purposes the promotion of marriage, it contains a strong message that marriage is the most effective pathway to responsible fatherhood. Third, by including $2 billion dollars in block grant funding, it will help nurture and support the growth of the fatherhood field.

There are, of course, objections to the bill. First, there are some who dislike the fact that the legislation explicitly promotes marriage. Government, these critics maintain, has no business promoting personal "values." Instead, they insist, government policy ought to be neutral when it comes to marriage.

This argument might be persuasive if not for the fact that for the past thirty years government policy, rather than being neutral, has actually punished marriage. For example, when two-earner couples head for the altar instead of cohabiting, their taxes actually go up, in some cases costing families with modest incomes $5000 or more.

Things are even worse for low-income couples. In fact, should a single mother on welfare choose to marry a low-wage earner and, in doing so, give her children a real live in-the-home dad instead of a child support check, her benefits are frequently reduced, if not eliminated. According to calculations by Eugene Steuerle of the Urban Institute, when a man working full-time at a minimum wage job marries a mother on welfare with two children, the new family's combined earnings plus benefits would be $3,862 less than if the couple did not marry and the woman stayed on welfare.[23] Hardly an incentive to get married.

This wouldn't be so bad if marriage didn't matter. But it does. And not just a little. It matters a lot. Children fare much better when raised in a married, intact, two-parent household. In addition, research indicates that both married men and married women are happier, healthier, and wealthier than their unmarried counterparts. Furthermore, the best indicator of the violent crime rate in a community is not race, ethnicity or even income, but the prevalence of marriage. Given that marriage is good for children, adults and society, public policy should not shy away from encouraging more of it.

A second objection comes from those who say we can not afford any new spending. I agree. But this isn't new spending. Funding for the fatherhood block grant would come from cutting other federal spending. Some options could conceivably cut *more* money than new spending promoting responsible fatherhood. If so, passage of the Fathers Count block grant would actually save money, especially in the long run when teenage pregnancy, crime, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and child poverty are reduced as a result of the return of the fathers.

A final objection is that government ought not to be in the business of social engineering. But the truth is that in many low-income communities, fatherhood and marriage have virtually disappeared. And not just recently; but for many generations.

How in the world does a young male growing up in a fourth generation fatherless household and in a community largely without dads of the married variety, come to understand what responsible fatherhood and marriage are all about? How does simply dismantling government teach these young men the skills to be good, involved and committed dads? And what of the children of these fathers? Do we just sit back and say, "Gee, you should have chosen your pop better."

Given the clear connection between fatherlessness and such social ills as poverty, crime, educational failure, and substance abuse, we can not afford social indifference on this issue. Government can not solve all of our nation's ills, but what it can do

[23] Gene Steuerle, "Removing Marriage Penalties: Is This a Preventative Strategy?" Presentation at The American Enterprise Institute conference on "America's Disconnected Youth: Toward a Preventative Strategy." Washington, D.C., May 16, 1996.

it must. This legislation would make a significant step toward reducing the three decade long slide into fatherlessness and social decay.

I want to be clear. I'm not suggesting that merely passing a piece of legislation is going to magically transform our increasingly fatherless nation into a nation of real fathers and good husbands. Nor do I believe the Fathers Count Act of 1998 is perfect legislation. I would, for example, prefer to see marriage as the over-riding goal of all fatherhood programs working with fathers supported through the block grant, including those working with low-income fathers.

But the Fathers Count Act of 1998 is a start. And start we must, for until we solve this crisis of fatherlessness we will be a nation in decline.

CONCLUSION

There exists today no greater single threat to the long-term well-being of children, our communities or our nation, than the increasing number of children being raised without a committed, responsible and loving father. Our nation is known for its optimism and fondness for reforms of many sorts that promise to make society safer, stronger, and richer. Yet, all social reforms we have attempted in the past, or may attempt in the future, will likely pale in comparison to the good that would come if we could turn back the tide of fatherlessness. This tide will not be turned easily, and certainly not by changes in public policy alone. But public policy can have a significant effect upon how potential parents view marriage and parental responsibilities.

As government at all levels proceeds with reforms in this area, it should keep in mind both the importance of fathers to the well-being of children and the fact that marriage is the most effective route to increasing the number of children growing up with an involved, committed, and loving father. As in the past, states will be tempted to conclude that promoting responsible fatherhood is mostly about child support enforcement. But child support enforcement alone is insufficient to ensure that every child grows up with a legally, morally, and socially responsible father.

The good news is that we are starting to see, for the first time in over thirty years, a leveling off of the number of children growing up in father absent homes. I believe that with concerted effort we can actually reverse the trend toward fatherlessness within the next five years. Not simply stop the rise in fatherlessness, but reverse it. Doing so will require that we stand firm on the issue of marriage, for marriage is the most likely—not perfect, but certainly the most likely—pathway to a lifetime father.

Simply put: children need their fathers, and men need marriage to be good fathers. Effective public policy means encouraging more skilled fathering, more work, and more marriages. The Fathers Count Act of 1998 does all three.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this testimony in support of this important legislation, and would be pleased to answer any questions you might have concerning my testimony.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you, Dr. Horn.

Mr. Ballard.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES A. BALLARD, FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION

Mr. BALLARD. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great privilege to be here today. I want to encourage you, Mr. Chairman, to stick to this bill. I remember 22 years ago when I started my work with fathers, there were many nay sayers who said it wouldn't work. I look around the country and this Subcommittee today, which is an example I think of what can happen when you stick to it.

On what Dr. Horn has said, I agree with it, all of that, and had some of that in my speech. Of course the panel before us was a demonstration of that. I would like to kind of cut to the chase and go right to the heart of the matter. Most of the emphasis that we're looking at for fatherhood is placed upon the urban central commu-

nity in which people are leaving the community in large numbers, leaving behind disconnected, uneducated, poor families.

Just a note, my program alone cannot effectively address the issues. This year in this country 250,000 African-Americans are going to die prematurely. That is a city the size of Birmingham, Alabama. Mostly fathers, mostly mothers. We learned about 1 month ago that for the age group 25 to 45, AIDS is the number one killer. I heard you indicate homicide among young men. All these are lifestyle diseases, lifestyle deaths of which government cannot effectively address those because they are moral issues, they are spiritual issues that only the community and individuals can address effectively.

I was amazed to discover that out of the prison institutions, 51.5 percent of those men are of African descent. We represent only 10 percent or less of the population. We are overpopulating that area. We must be concerned not only about the fathers being involved, but we are discovering men coming out of prison with AIDS. They are passing it onto their girlfriends and to their wives. That institution that is one for corrections is really breeding more diseases than ever before.

I think about the issues of marriage in which I believe without this institution, no matter what we put forth, is not going to work. I remember reading that in 1890 in this community we are talking about, we had the highest rate of marriage of all groups, which means that during slavery they had three things. A sense of God-consciousness, a sense of family, and a sense of community. Those were lost I believe with integration, when people began to move out of the community to seek for better land and leaving behind young women, uneducated and unskilled.

How do we address this? Well the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood, which I direct and have done for the last 16 years as founder, believe that, and we have expanded from Cleveland, Ohio, into now into six different States, California, Tennessee, Wisconsin. In fact, in Tennessee, Governor Sundquist funds the program almost entirely. We just received a $4.5 million grant from Labor, to help fathers find jobs. We are seeing great success in that area. In fact, Chuck Hobbs, who is with the American Institute for Full Employment, and we are in partnership with that program. We just finished our training in Alabama, are training 12 new couples to go out and do our work. That is what we do.

We take married couples who have small children in many cases, who love each other, who believe in God and family and community, and who really hold the community as a very high value. They move into those communities. They actually live there, buy homes, lease houses, for the major purpose of portraying marriage and family as the preferred relationship for children. I believe this bill is right on target. We also believe that men who have good jobs become better fathers and better supporters.

I just want to categorically say to you you are right on target with this bill. There are programs like mine, like the one Joe Jones directs, that need your support. If we get that kind of support through this bill, we will not only reach fathers, but turn their hearts to their children and increase marriages in our community.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHARLES A. BALLARD, FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM BOTH PLEASED AND HONORED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS YOU THIS MORNING ON AN ISSUE TO WHICH I HAVE DEVOTED ALL OF MY ADULT LIFE—THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF FATHERS INTO THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN, THEIR FAMILIES, AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. MY NAME IS CHARLES A. BALLARD AND I AM CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE THE FOUNDER OF WHAT IS BEING CALLED THE *"MODERN-DAY FATHERHOOD MOVEMENT IN AMERICA."* I AM ALSO THE FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION, A NATIONAL, PRIVATE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT HAS FOR SIXTEEN YEARS SPEARHEADED THE EFFORT TO BRING TO THE FOREFRONT THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF FATHERHOOD IN THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE FAMILY, AND IN THE REVITALIZATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE IS SIMPLE—CHANGING FATHERS, CHANGING FAMILIES, WHICH CHANGES COMMUNITIES. MEN WHO BECOME RESPONSIBLE, NURTURING FATHERS AND HUSBANDS TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES, THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN, THE LIVES OF THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE HEALTH OF THEIR COMMUNITIES. ENDURING CHANGE STARTS IN A PERSON?S HEART SO THE INSTITUTE SEEKS TO TURN THE HEARTS OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN, AND THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS. RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, WE AT THE INSTITUTE DEAL WITH THE INTERNAL INDIVIDUAL, HELPING HIM TO IDENTIFY ROOT CAUSES ? AND TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF HIS POSSIBILITIES. WE *LIVE IN* THE COMMUNITY; WE *REACH OUT* TO THE COMMUNITY; AND WE *BREAK THROUGH* THE BARRIERS THAT HAVE CRIPPLED THE COMMUNITY. IN SHORT, WE ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION THAT BRINGS ABOUT COMMUNITY RESTORATION.

RECENTLY, THE INSTITUTE WAS ONE OF 49 ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO RUN A NATIONAL WELFARE-TO-WORK DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IN SIX CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THIS PROGRAM WILL PLACE OVER 500 NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS AND MOTHERS INTO OUR NATIONAL WORKFORCE. THESE WORKING CITIZENS WILL NOW BE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PUBLIC REVENUE BASE THAT FORMERLY SUBSIDIZED AND SUPPORTED THEM. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS OVER 500 FAMILIES THAT WILL BE CHANGING THE FACE OF THEIR HOMES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

THE CURRENT DEMAND FOR THE INSTITUTE'S SERVICES FAR EXCEEDS ITS CAPACITY. OVER 60 CITIES, STATES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ASKED FOR THE INSTITUTE'S ASSISTANCE IN DESIGNING RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS. OTHER WELFARE-TO-WORK GRANTEES HAVE ALREADY REQUESTED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INSTITUTE OUT OF RECOGNITION OF THE SUCCESS OF ITS APPROACH WHICH STATES *"THE MOST POWERFUL JOB CREATION PROGRAM EVER IS TO REINSTILL IN THE FATHER THE LOVE FOR HIS CHILD."*

THE INSTITUTE'S APPROACH HAS BEEN STUDIED OVER THE YEARS TO ASSESS ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND OUTCOMES. IN FACT, TWO INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY RESEARCH EVALUATIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED THAT ILLUSTRATE THE IMPACT OF THE INSTITUTE'S RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD APPROACH. IN 1992, RESEARCHERS AT CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY IN CLEVELAND, OHIO EVALUATED THE INSTITUTE'S PROGRAM AND FOUND THE FOLLOWING:

- 97% OF INTERVIEWED FATHERS SPENT MORE TIME WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND ARE PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT;
- 96% EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILDREN'S MOTHER;
- 70% OF FATHERS COMPLETED THEIR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION; AND
- 62% ARE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME, AND 11% ARE EMPLOYED PART-TIME.

THIS YEAR, THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK RELEASED AN EVALUATION OF THE INSTITUTE'S WORK WITH NON-

CUSTODIAL FATHERS IN GOVERNOR SUNDQUIST'S *FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAM*. THE REPORT DOCUMENTED THAT THREE-FOURTHS OF THE MEN PARTICIPATING IN THE INSTITUTE'S NASHVILLE PROGRAM—ACTUALLY 77.3%—ARE FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING THEIR CHILDREN, EITHER VOLUNTARILY OR DUE TO COURT ORDER. THE REPORT WENT ON TO NOTE, AND I QUOTE, *"MANY CHANGES IN FAMILIES WHO HAVE WORKED WITH THE INSTITUTE WERE REPORTED BY FOCUS-GROUP AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS. SOME NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS THAT STOPPED INCLUDED DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE AND ACTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE...FATHERS REPORTED BECOMING INVOLVED WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND SPEAKING AND SPENDING MORE TIME WITH THEIR FAMILIES, WHEN BEFORE THEY HAD NOT."*

WHEN I BEGAN THIS WORK MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO IN CLEVELAND, THE PROBLEMS FACING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES HAD A SIMILAR FACE TO THAT OF TODAY—DRUG USE AND ABUSE; HIGH RATES OF HOMICIDE AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY; JUVENILE DELINQUENCY; LACK OF ADEQUATE CHILD CARE; INADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND RESOURCES; OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS AND TEENAGE PREGNANCIES. BUT THE FACE OF OUR URBAN COMMUNITIES TODAY HAVE MORE DEEPLY ETCHED LINES OF ANGUISH AND PAIN THAN EVER BEFORE. IN THE HEIGHT OF OUR NATION'S ECONOMIC RESURGENCE, OUR INNER CITIES ARE PLAGUED WITH:

- INCREASING RATES OF ADULT MALE INCARCERATION—51.5% OF AMERICA'S ADULT MALE PRISON POPULATION IS AFRICAN AMERICAN—AND MANY ARE FATHERS—YET, AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES MAKE UP LESS THAN 8% OF OUR COUNTRY'S TOTAL POPULATION;
- ACCELERATED RATES OF JUVENILE MALE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTIC SYSTEM—65% OF YOUNG, AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES, MANY OF THEM TEENAGE FATHERS, ARE INVOLVED IN AMERICA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM;
- RECORD NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM—68% OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO AGE 18 ARE INVOLVED IN AMERICA'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM.

MORE SOBERING IS THE RELENTLESS ASSAULT ON THE LIVES OF OUR INNER-CITY RESIDENTS WHO ARE DYING IN RECORD NUMBERS:

- AIDS IS THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE 25 TO 44 AGE GROUP, WHICH ARE THE PRIME AGES FOR PARENTING;
- HOMICIDE IS THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN THE 15 TO 25 AGE GROUP;
- SUICIDE IS THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN IN THE 9 TO 15 AGE GROUP—A 114% INCREASE NATIONWIDE SINCE 1980!!; AND
- DEATHS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES DUE TO CANCER, CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, TUBERCULOSIS, AND HYPERTENSION ARE INCREASING FOR ALL AGE GROUPS IN AMERICA.

CLEARLY, WE HAVE A MORAL IMPERATIVE TO ACT DECISIVELY TO SAVE FAMILIES AND THE SOUL OF THIS GREAT NATION. AS RESIDENTS OF THE INNER-CITY SUFFER THIS UNRELENTING ASSAULT ON THEIR SAFETY, THEIR HEALTH, THEIR HOMES, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEIR FAMILIES, THEY FIND LITTLE SOLACE IN WHAT HAS HISTORICALLY UNDERGIRDED IMPOVERISHED AND SEGREGATED COMMUNITIES—THE PRESENCE OF STRONG, UNIFIED AND NURTURING FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS. THESE CORNERSTONES OF AMERICA'S CENTRAL-CITY COMMUNITIES ARE FLEEING TO THE SUBURBS, LEAVING IN THEIR WAKE THOSE WHO ARE LEAST ABLE TO HOLD OFF THE DECAY AND ENCROACHING DESTRUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY.

THERE IS AN UNPRECEDENTED FLIGHT FROM THE INNER CITY BY MIDDLE-CLASS AFRICAN AMERICANS—AND BY IMMIGRANTS—WHO, HERETOFORE, NOT ONLY HAVE BEEN THE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA'S INNER-CITY COMMUNITIES, BUT ALSO ITS NUCLEUS. WITHOUT THE NUCLEUS, AN ORGANISM, OR THIS CASE, A COMMUNITY, DIES. THIS IS PRECISELY WHY THE INSTITUTE HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF IN THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY. OUR TECHNOLOGY REBUILDS THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITIES. WE BRING STRONG, UNIFIED AND NURTURING FAMILIES INTO THE COMMUNITY TO LIVE AND WORK AND MODEL LOVING AND SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS. WE BRING HUSBANDS AND WIVES WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TRANSCENDED LIVES CHARACTERIZED BY HOPE-

LESSNESS AND HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS—SMOKING, DRINKING, DRUG USE, VIOLENCE, ABUSE—BACK INTO THE CENTRAL CITY TO SERVE AS BEACONS TO LIGHT THE PATHWAY TO PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION AND COMMUNITY RESTORATION. DAY-IN AND DAY-OUT, WE WORK TO RESTORE THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY—ITS FAMILIES.

THIS COMMITTEE HAS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN SHAPING THE RECENT REFORMS THAT ALLOWED THE STATES TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFICACY OF A WORK FIRST APPROACH TO WELFARE. FOR THE MILLIONS OF AMERICAN CHILDREN WHO REMAIN IN FATHERLESS HOMES, OR WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF NEGLECT, FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE, I SUBMIT TO THIS COMMITTEE THAT WORK FIRST MUST BE COUPLED WITH WHAT TENNESSEE GOVERNOR SUNDQUIST HAS APTLY CALLED *"FAMILIES FIRST."*

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE FATHERS COUNT BLOCK GRANT WOULD PROVIDE A MUCH NEEDED BOOST TO RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD ACTIVITIES ACROSS THIS NATION, BY ALLOWING THE STATES TO DEMONSTRATE THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AS A LOGICAL NEXT STEP IN THE WELFARE REFORM PROCESS. AS YOU KNOW, FOR DECADES FEDERAL WELFARE POLICIES, AS WELL AS PUBLIC HOUSING, CREATED INCENTIVES FOR FAMILY BREAK-UP AND DISINTEGRATION, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPIRAL OF WELFARE DEPENDENCY AND URBAN VIOLENCE. JUST AS THE FAMILY IS THE NUCLEUS OF A COMMUNITY, A FATHER IS THE NUCLEUS OF A FAMILY. IT SEEMS ONLY FITTING, THEN, THAT THE FATHERS COUNT BLOCK GRANT WOULD USHER IN THE NEW ERA OF FEDERAL POLICIES THAT FOSTER FAMILY RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION.

THERE ARE THOSE ON THE EXTREME RIGHT AND LEFT WHO ARE NAYSAYERS ON THIS ISSUE. I HOPE THIS COMMITTEE WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO RISE TO THE OCCASION AS DID SENATOR MOYNIHAN THREE DECADES AGO WHEN HE DELIVERED HIS PROPHETIC STATEMENTS ON THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY, AND THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY IN PARTICULAR.

ON THE FAR RIGHT, WE HAVE HEARD IT SAID THAT THIS BILL COULD POSITION THE GOVERNMENT TO PLAY A DIRECT ROLE IN FAMILY DEVELOPMENT—NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. THIS BILL DEVOLVES DIRECT ASSISTANCE NOT THROUGH GOVERNMENT, BUT THROUGH THE GRASSROOTS, FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY-BASED FAMILY REUNIFICATION EFFORTS THAT ARE SWEEPING AMERICA. THIS BILL HAS THE POTENTIAL TO REVERSE DECADES OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT SEPARATED LOW-INCOME MEN AND WOMEN—AND MEN AND THEIR CHILDREN—THROUGH POWERFUL DISINCENTIVES.

I HOPE THIS COMMITTEE WILL RESIST ANY EFFORTS TO REGULATE, AND PROSCRIBE, FATHERHOOD ORGANIZATION RULES BY FEDERAL AGENCIES THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE SPIRIT AND THE INTENT OF THIS LEGISLATION. SUCH RULES, UNLESS CAREFULLY CRAFTED TO EMBRACE THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF THIS BILL, MAY HAVE AN UNINTENDED BACKLASH THAT COULD HAMPER THE ABILITY OF SUCCESSFUL FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE TO INVOKE THE STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGY THAT HAVE ACHIEVED SO MUCH SUCCESS FOR SO MANY FATHERS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES. OF COURSE, FEDERAL OVERSIGHT AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AS A BASIS OF FUTURE SUPPORT WOULD BE A PART OF THE PROGRAM, BUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVALUATIVE TOOLS AND POLICY REGULATIONS SHOULD BE A COOPERATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE FATHERHOOD ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

ON THE FAR LEFT, WE FIND OTHERS WHO FEEL THE ROLE OF NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS SHOULD BE RELEGATED TO THAT OF AN ATM MACHINE; THAT THE FATHER'S EXCLUSIVE ROLE IS AN ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ONE. WE CATEGORICALLY REJECT THAT VIEW, FOR AS MY WIFE FRANCES HAS OFTEN STATED, *"IF YOU ASK A CHILD WHAT HE WANTS, THE FIRST CONSIDERATION THAT COMES TO MIND WOULD NOT BE A FINANCIAL ONE. HE WOULD SAY, 'I WANT A DAD WHO CARES ABOUT ME—WHO IS TENDER, LOVING AND KIND, WHO SHOWS UP WHEN I NEED HIM. A DAD WHO LOVES AND RESPECTS MY MOM, AND WHO LOVES ME. A DAD WHOM I COUNT ON.'"*

THE INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION BELIEVES THAT TO RESTORE THE FABRIC AND FIBER OF

AMERICAN COMMUNITIES, WE MUST REVIVE THE NUCLEUS OF THE FAMILY—THE FATHER. WE MUST SUPPORT HIS PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION AND ENCOURAGE THE PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY. WE MUST ENSURE THAT FATHERS HAVE MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITIES TO BE THE BEST FATHERS THEY CAN BE, AND TO PROVIDE THE BEST QUALITY OF LIFE THEY ARE ABLE FOR THEIR FAMILIES. ONLY THEN WILL AMERICA EXPERIENCE THE RESURGENCE OF SAFE, STRONG, VIABLE AND CONTRIBUTING COMMUNITIES WITHOUT REGARD TO GEOGRAPHICS, ECONOMICS OR ETHNICITIES.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE, FOR AFFIRMING YOUR COMMITMENT TO THIS PRINCIPLE IN THE FATHERS COUNT LEGISLATION.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you, Mr. Ballard.

Dr. Mincy.

STATEMENT OF RONALD B. MINCY, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, FORD FOUNDATION

Mr. MINCY. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on the work that you are doing and on the Fatherhood Counts bill.

My first comment is to genuinely thank you for addressing an issue that is long neglected in U.S. social welfare policy. Like the effort that you began in the 1996 welfare reform bill, this bill could bolster efforts of hundreds of practitioners all over the United States who, to my knowledge, are the only ones who are paying attention to your goal of encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, at least in low-income communities.

A common theme among these practitioners is the notion of restoring the hearts of fathers to their children. This is a phrase taken from Malachi, which also speaks to the need to heal and bring wholeness to communities. In a very fundamental way, that is what the work of Joe Jones and his colleagues from around the United States is doing.

I want to make four brief comments. First of all, the panel that you heard from this morning is a representation of a very large cohort of young men throughout the United States who are not able to support their own children, let alone to successfully float a marriage proposal. If you could turn quickly to the tables at the end of my testimony, I want to emphasize that this cohort is very large. It consists of about 3 million men, 2 million of whom are not paying—have incomes so low that they are not paying their child support.

Second, these men look very much like women who are having difficulty escaping from welfare. About one-quarter of the men who should be paying child support are not able to do so. If you just turn quickly through the tables, you will also see that most women who are poor and who do not receive child support are women——

Chairman SHAW. Help us out on what chart you are looking at. We're just kind of flipping through it trying to figure out where you are.

Mr. MINCY. I'm sorry. I am turning to this huge circle.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you.

Mr. MINCY. Beginning there and moving quickly. Again, about a quarter of men who are not paying child support have incomes that would qualify them for food stamps. To the next table, I am trying to draw some relationships between those men and women who are poor and do not receive child support. About 86 percent of them do not receive child support because they don't have an order which is indicative that they are not married.

Skipping to the next table and onto the next, these men and women are basically about half of them are young, under 30 years old. Quickly to the next table, about half of them, men who do not pay and women who do not receive, have less than a high school diploma which puts them out of the mainstream of the U.S. economy. Onto the next page, if you sum up the number of Latinos and African-Americans, 60 percent of them are minorities. Minorities are a very small portion of the U.S. population as a whole.

What we see here is essentially a marriage market in which young men and young women who are poorly prepared for the mainstream are having children out of wedlock. As you were focusing earlier this week on the discovery that minorities are having a harder time moving off the welfare rolls, I think it is going to be the case that in order to change welfare as we know it and be successful at that, we are going to have to help both the young men and young women in these communities who are having children and are not capable of supporting them, let alone qualifying for a marriage partner.

I just want to close my comments by saying a few other things. First of all, a major barrier to family formation among low-income couples with children is child support in the way in which it is traditionally enforced. First of all, there is no provision any more in the Federal statute for the pass through. When the father makes the child support payment to the State, he is unable to say to his partner that I am making a contribution to my children.

Second, the process of child support as it's traditionally enforced encourages very high arrearages at the beginning of the person's child support career. The child support can be established retroactively to the birth of the child. The Bradley amendment prohibits the forgiveness of arrearages even if disability, incarceration, or long-term unemployment are the reasons that the man is unable to pay his child support. States can order fathers to pay child support based upon their hypothetical ability to earn with no reference to their present employment and their present capacity.

Finally, there is no provision in child support to help a man bond and attach to his child, much like the young men that you saw. In fact, in order to do visitation in this arena, a person has to have the capacity to have an attorney. That is something that is beyond his financial capability.

Quickly, I think the Fatherhood Counts bill will make it very difficult for the programs and this field to rise to the challenge of helping fathers support their children. The goal of marriage is clearly beyond their reach. Something toward which the field is moving, but for you to attach this as a lead criterion associated with funding under this program, would really damage the ability of many of the programs that are making real progress to create

an infrastructure to support fatherhood in low-income communities.

Finally, it is important to move things closer to the State and local level. However, we have a field that is very young, that has no place in our infrastructure for supporting low-income children and families. I think there needs to be some more provision in the bill to enable the field to build the capacity that it needs to understand what is doing better, to disseminate best practices, and to network it around the country so that they establish standards and become better at what they are doing.

I thank you for your indulgence and absolutely for the work that you are doing.

[The prepared statement follows:]

Statement of Ronald B. Mincy, Senior Program Officer, Human Development and Reproductive Health, Ford Foundation

Chairman Shaw and members of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for this opportunity to comment on the your efforts to promote fatherhood and in particular on the Fatherhood Counts bill. My first comment is to express my sincere gratitude for the courage and wisdom you have displayed in addressing a long-neglected area in U.S. social and family policy. If you are successful in passing a bill that will provide support for programs that promote fatherhood, it will be helpful to the fatherhood field in general. However, the same bill can be critical to the success of the effort you began with the 1996 welfare reform law. This effort has energized hundreds of practitioners all over the United States, who have been working with low-income fathers over the last two decades, with little support or attention from the federal government.

My testimony is based on what I have learned while: 1) growing up in a poor community without a father, among many similarly situated young people; 2) becoming a supportive and loving husband to my wife of over 20 years and father to my two, now-adult, sons; 3) working as a researcher and policy analyst to understand how father absence and other family and community problems limit the potential of young people growing up in poor communities, including several years at the Urban Institute; 4) leading the Non-custodial Parents' Issue Group in the Clinton Administration's Welfare Reform Task Force; and 5) working as a member of a dynamic team of researchers, policy analysts, program administrators, and policy makers involved in the Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative, which I have managed for the almost 5 years at the Ford Foundation. However, I speak for myself, and none of my positions or conclusions necessarily reflects positions or policies of the Ford Foundation or its trustees.

In the next five minutes I will cover the following four brief points.

1. The three men you met earlier represent part of a large cohort of young, low-income, non-custodial fathers who are working hard to become full contributors to the financial, emotional, spiritual, and developmental well-being of their children, against substantial obstacles.

2. One of their most important obstacles is the traditional child support enforcement system, which thwarts the efforts of these fathers to provide for their children and to repair relationships with their child(ren)'s mothers. If this system does not change it will defeat efforts to achieve the goal, which the Congress set out in the 1996 welfare reform law, to encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families, at least in poor, minority communities.

3. The Fatherhood Counts bill, as currently framed, may also pose obstacles to these fathers and the programs that serve them because it may discourage and diminish the important intermediate steps between doing nothing for these young fathers and encouraging them to marry.

4. To promote fatherhood in the communities where these fathers and their families live, the Fatherhood Counts bill must do more than support individual fatherhood programs. The bill must also help to institutionalize the public-private relationships between these programs and public agencies that are part of the general framework we use to support low-income children and families.

RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD GOALS: RESTORATION AND RECLAMATION

In low-income communities, the primary goals of community-based responsible fatherhood programs are to restore, reclaim, and make whole the fathers and families

on which society has given up.[1] For example, practitioners in this field often quote a phrase about "restoring the hearts of fathers to their children." Many of you know that this phrase comes from the Bible, "And he shall restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Malachi 4:6, New American Standard Version). These are the last words of the Old Testament, but the chapter is alive with language and images of reclamation and restoration, as in an earlier verse that speaks of a "Sun of Righteousness" arising with healing in its wings. The work of Joe Jones and his colleagues throughout the country is fundamentally about healing, redeeming, and restoring fathers to their communities and to society, by first restoring these fathers to their children and their children's mothers.

UNDERGROUND FATHERS AND FRAGILE FAMILIES

The young fathers you met this morning are part of a large cohort of low-income, non-custodial fathers who would be unable to provide for their children or to attract a marriage partner, without the assistance of community-based responsible fatherhood programs.[2] My colleague, Elaine Sorenson at the Urban Institute reports that there are three million non-custodial fathers with incomes low enough to qualify for food stamps.[3] One million of these fathers pay child support, a burden so great that it can drive their family incomes 130 percent below the poverty line. The other two million do not pay child support for their four million children.[4] Together, the low-income, non-custodial fathers who do not pay child support represent about ¼ of all non-custodial fathers (See Figure 1.)[5] These fathers look very much like the women on welfare who do not receive child support (see Figure 2.). They are young, unmarried, poorly educated, and disproportionately minorities, who had their first children before completing high school or acquiring much work experience (see also Figures 3–6). These are also the characteristics of long-term welfare recipients whose exit from welfare is limited because these characteristics make them poor prospects for work or marriage.

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[1] Anne Gavanas, "Making Fathers into Role Models: The "Fatherhood Responsibility Movement" and African American Masculinities," paper in progress, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm, Sweden, 1998

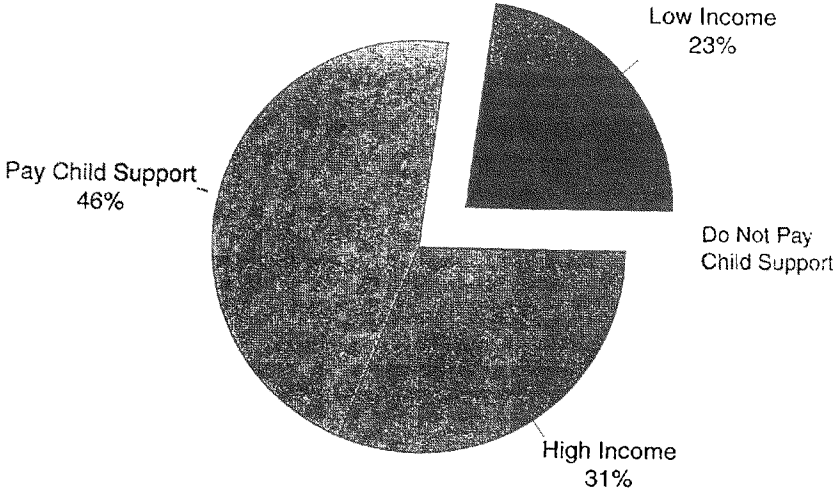
[2] Ronald B. Mincy and Elaine Sorenson, "Deadbeats and Turnips in Child Support Reform," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 17 (Winter 1998).

[3] Elaine Sorenson, *Where Should Public Policy Go From Here,* (The National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership, 1998)

[4] Sorenson, Ibid.

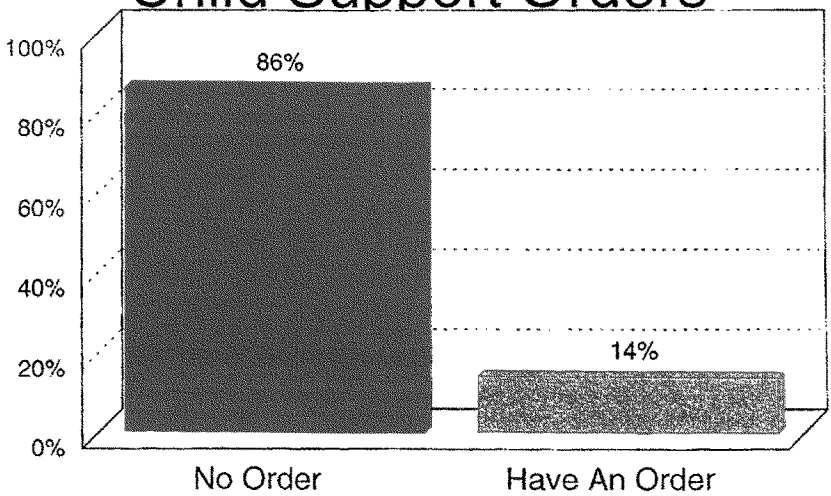
[5] Mincy and Sorenson.

Noncustodial Fathers

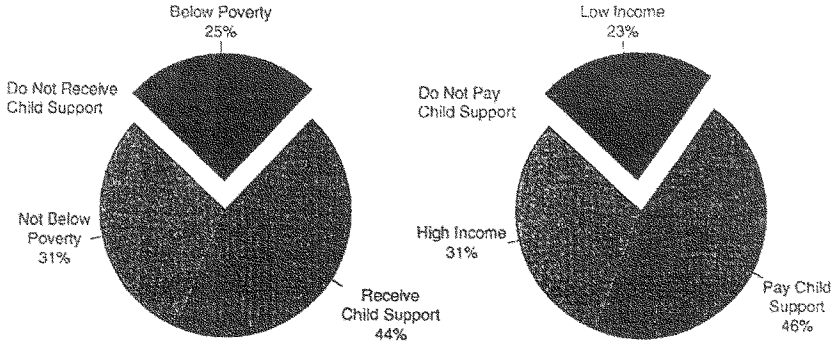


Source: 1990 Survey of Income and Program Participation

Non-Receiving Poor Mothers: Child Support Orders

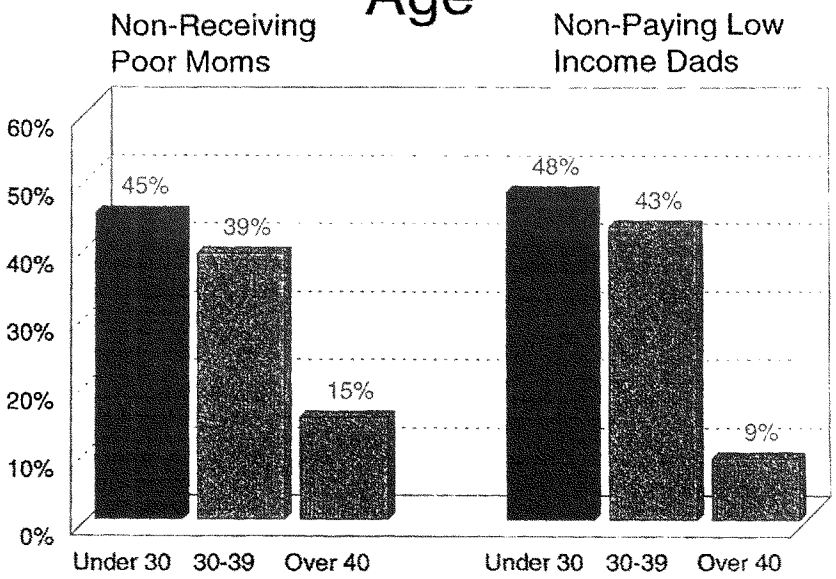


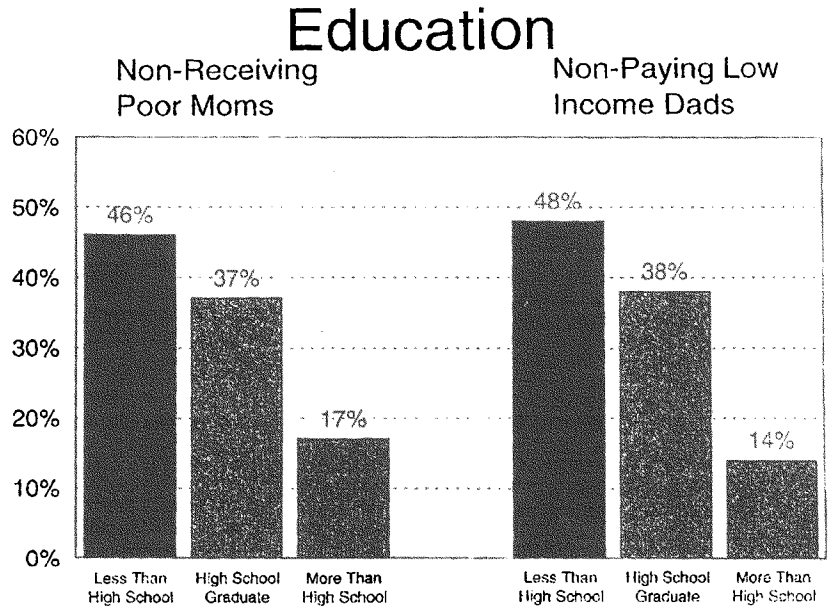
Comparison of Mothers and Fathers

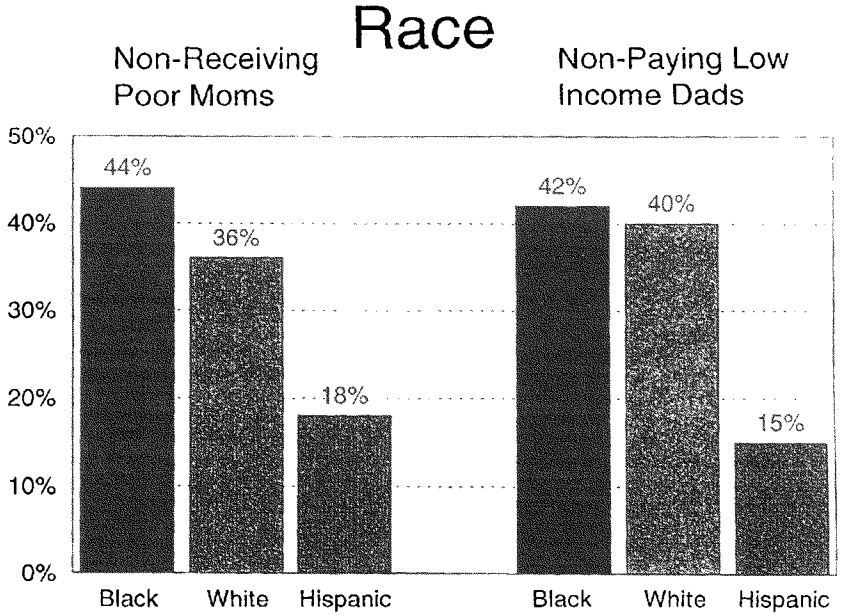


Moms Dads

Age







These data are evidence of what sociologists call assortative mating, which it is key to the success of your efforts to promote self-sufficiency and key to the success of your efforts to promote fatherhood. This week, the New York Times reported that members of Congress were surprised to learn that minorities are leaving the welfare rolls at a slower pace than non-minorities. Custodial mothers who began receiving welfare with the same characteristics as the young, non-custodial fathers represented in these figures are having more difficulty leaving the welfare roles. Even

in tight labor markets, employers are reluctant to hire men and women with this profile. Like it or not, I believe that the Congress is going to have to adapt the national welfare reform effort to help these women acquire the skills they need to find jobs.

In a similar way, promoting responsible fatherhood will require multiple strategies, tailored to the barriers that impede family formation and maintenance in different groups. I believe that the current draft of the Fatherhood Counts bill does not proceed from an understanding of the barriers to the formation and maintenance of two-parent families in low-income, minority communities. Unless the bill adopts a more flexible approach, so that communities can overcome different barriers, it will not achieve the kind of success that this subcommittee's efforts so richly deserve.

In most communities, father absence is the result of a divorce or separation of a mature couple. Their relationship began, was formalized in marriage, matured, and then expired, after at least one of the spouses decided that they had had enough. The role of public policy in such cases is to ensure that the non-custodial parent, usually the father, provides adequately for the child(ren). This will ensure that the mother and child(ren) avoid poverty, which often results when the father withdraws his, usually, higher income, after the divorce or separation. Then, to ensure that conflict between the parents does not cause undue emotional stress for the child, public policy may also require that the parents participate in some sort of mediation process. Often, with this kind of help, the mother can get back on her feet, find her way back into the labor market and into the community. In many cases she remarries and returns to a middle class lifestyle. After a period of hurt, insecurity, and confusion, the child(ren) adjust to their parents' separation and to their new family form. In short, the process of family formation has run its full course. The role of public policy is to help families to bring their union to an amicable end and then to recover.

This is not the situation we find among the low-skilled, unmarried, long-term welfare recipients and the equally disadvantaged fathers of their children. Many of these young women and men have their first children before they are mature enough to manage a committed relationship and before they understand the full implications of unmarried, unprotected sex and child bearing. Because rates of morbidity, mortality, unemployment, underemployment, and incarceration of young men are extremely high in their communities, there is little evidence of successful marriage for young people to emulate. Finally, in part because of the sixty-year old legacy of welfare, there is no cultural imperative to marry after a child is conceived out-of-wedlock. Instead, a system of cash, housing, medical, job search, and child care benefits replaces men as guardians and breadwinners for children and families.

Despite these significant obstacles, the fathers you met today desperately want to be involved in the lives of their children and to reconcile their relationships with their partners. All around the country, practitioners like Joe Jones have rallied around these fathers. They help them and their partners to recast the end of innocence as the beginning of a process of family formation. While most observers see the unwed birth as a problem, these parents, like most parents, want to see their child(ren) as new beginnings.

Armed with this hope, the practitioners help low-income, unwed parents learn that both the mother and father are critical to their child(ren)'s well-being and that their personal feelings toward one another must be subordinated to the needs of their child(ren). Thus, building a cooperative relationship between the parents, which we call team parenting, is key to child well-being. As they focus on their child(ren)'s needs, fathers learn how to subordinate their own needs to the needs of others who depend on them. This helps them learn how to find and keep a job, based on their current skills. It also helps them manage their earnings, so that they can contribute to their child(ren)'s financial needs. Finally, it helps them to manage their time, so that they can seek and pursue opportunities to improve their skills and increase their earnings. In the process of developing team parenting skills, young fathers and mothers acquire hope, maturity, and ability to forgive their partners' failures and shortcomings. These are the keys they need to sustain a marriage and a family. They may even heal, build, or rekindle their personal relationships and decide to marry one another. But first they must focus their joint attention on the needs of their children.[6]

There is good news and bad news in recognizing that it will require different strategies to promote fatherhood in different communities. The good news is that

[6] Ronald B. Mincy and Hillard Pouncy, "There Must Be Fifty Ways to Start a Family: Social Policy and the Fragile Families of Low-Income, Noncustodial Fathers," paper prepared for the conference Fatherhood Movement: A Call to Action, Minneapolis, October 1996.

the possibility of continued family formation still exists in communities where marriage is rare, unwed births are common, and young men and women are poorly prepared to enter the mainstream. The bad news is that the longer we delay the interventions needed to help them, the longer are the odds that both the father and the mother will be able to nurture and provide for their children.[7] The parents and children are vulnerable, their relationships are immature, and the process of family formation through which they are going is precarious. For these reasons, I call such parents and their children, fragile families.

Unfortunately, this potential for family formation is invisible to most Americans. As a result, we structure income and family supports for these fragile families as if they have the same needs and barriers as middle-aged, middle income, divorced men and women. It is not surprising that these supports create obstacles for these families.

WHY TRADITIONAL CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT IMPEDES FRAGILE FAMILY FORMATION

Some of the most important obstacles arise in the traditional child support enforcement system. This system is designed to deal with non-custodial parents for whom the family formation process is complete, because their marriages have ended in divorce or separation.[8] It works well because questions of paternity establishment are moot for these fathers and they have the resources to pay child support, though not willingness to do so. However, traditional child support enforcement is often an impediment to the process of family formation in fragile families, because, in several ways, it discourages the involvement of low-income, non-custodial fathers in the lives of their children (Sorenson and Turner, passim):[9]

1. Until the 1996 welfare law, the system allowed the state to keep all but $50 of the father's child support payment to offset welfare costs. Under the new law, most states keep the entire child support payment, passing none of it along to custodial mothers and their children.
2. Most states allow child support orders to be established retroactively to the birth of a child, even when no action to establish paternity is taken until long after the unwed birth.
3. The Bradley Amendment prohibits the courts from forgiving or reducing child support arrears, even when disability, incarceration, or long periods of unemployment prevented fathers from keeping their child support payments current.
4. States can order non-custodial fathers to pay child support based on their potential earning ability even when they do not have a job at the time the order is established.
5. Child support guidelines tend to be regressive, requiring low-income, non-custodial fathers to pay a larger share of their income toward child support than higher-income fathers.
6. Except for the financial obligation, the child support system has little to say about non-custodial fathers' involvement in their children's lives.
7. The child support enforcement system does not provide a way for low-income, non-custodial fathers to establish or enforce their rights to visitation their children.

In 1996, forty percent of Hispanic children and nearly seventy 70 of black children were born out of wedlock. Hispanic and black men are over-represented among the low-skilled men whose wages and employment prospect have declined the most, despite a booming economy. Given the barriers to family formation, which child support poses for low-skilled men and their families, I have long wondered how Congress expected to achieve the fourth goal of the welfare reform law. I have waited for an opportunity to ask members of Congress: How would you encourage young disadvantaged men and women in these communities to form and maintain two-parent families? In the interim, I have worked, along with grantees of the Ford Foundation's Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative, to build capacity in the field of community-based responsible fatherhood programs. These programs show low-income, unwed fathers:

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[7] Mary Achatz and Crystal A. MacAllum, "Young Unwed Fathers: Report from the Field," Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia 1994.

[8] Ronald B. Mincy and Hillard Pouncy, "Paternalism, Child Support Enforcement, and Fragile Families," in *The New Paternalism,* ed. Lawrence M. Mead (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

[9] Elaine Sorenson and Mark Turner. "Barriers in Child Support Policy That Discourage Non-custodial Fathers' Involvement in the Lives of Their Children: A Literature Review," paper prepared for the System Barriers Roundtable, sponsored by the National Center on Fathers and Families, Philadelphia, PA, May 29, 1996.

1. how to manage the pain they feel because they have not had relationships with their own fathers and because they have broken their vows to be responsible for their own child(ren);
2. how to promote their child(ren)'s development;
3. how to manage their sexuality;
4. how to conduct a job search and acquire job-related skills;
5. how to deal with child support enforcement; and
6. how to heal and strengthen their relationships with the mothers of their children.

In the past two decades, Congress has worked to strengthen the provisions of welfare laws that require and enable recipients to become self sufficient. Enabling provisions include various forms of transitional assistance such as health care, child care, and transportation assistance for custodial mothers who leave the welfare roles for work. Low-income, non-custodial fathers of children in fragile families need similar transitional arrangements and on-ramp services, to help them find jobs and adjust to the child support enforcement system. However, there is no place in our system of supports for low-income children and families to develop the kinds of services that community-based responsible fatherhood programs provide.

SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS THAT STRENGTHEN FRAGILE FAMILIES.

Failure to perceive the potential for family formation has led mainstream Americans to structure a system of income supports that pose obstacles to family formation among low-income, unwed parents and their children. In a similar way, the Fatherhood Counts bill threatens to structure supports for fatherhood that will create additional obstacles. These obstacles will occur because the draft bill treats programs that promote marriage more favorably than programs that first focus the attention of fathers (and mothers) on their child(ren) and the steps parents must take to promote their child(ren)'s well-being. To avoid these obstacles the Fatherhood Counts bill should acknowledge and support fathers, like those who you have met today, who despite having an out-of wedlock birth, are working to strengthen their fragile families. Specifically, the bill should place on an equal footing programs that explicitly promote marriage and comprehensive programs that, without explicitly promoting marriage:

a. promote an understanding of childhood development;
b. teach parenting skills;
c. help participants manage their sexuality;
d. supply assistance in finding and keeping a job;
e. offer participants advice on their obligations and rights in regard to the child support enforcement and visitation; and
f. encourage participants to become team parents.

Few community-based responsible programs operating in low-income communities promote marriage as an explicit goal. However, these programs prepare fathers to meet the needs of children, who are passive recipients of anything a parent has to offer. They also help young fathers (and mothers) to develop the relationship skills they need to sustain a long-term team parenting relationship, and if desired, a marriage. However, a partner is not a passive recipient of a marriage proposal. A father may support his child(ren) financially. He may persuade his former partner that he can be trusted to care for the child(ren)'s physical, emotional, spiritual, and developmental needs.

Despite these achievements, the local culture, economy, and environment surrounding low-income communities provides few supports for marriage. As a result, even a responsible father may be unable to persuade the mother of his child to accept his marriage proposal. Moreover, after having an opportunity to mature and acquire new skills, either parent may decide that they are not ideally matched with the person with whom they conceived a child, during their younger, more careless, years. Practitioners, who have worked with parents in low-income communities know this, and therefore, have made child-well-being and fatherhood development, not marriage, the primary goals of their services. These programs should not be penalized for understanding the needs of their clients.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD FIELD

Finally, the current version of the Fatherhood Counts bill requires the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to make grants to the states for fatherhood projects run by private organizations. It provides just $20 million for the administration and evaluation of individual efforts funded by this block grant program. This strategy will encourage autonomy and innovation at the state level, but

states have little incentive to build networks and capacity in a field that operates across the country. This network and capacity building is important so that the field may develop standards for its own members, disseminate best practice, and educate the public about the value of the services it provides. Moreover, the block-grant approach leaves the field of community based responsible fatherhood with little infrastructure at the federal level, where the rest of the nation's family support policies are developed and maintained. As a result, the field will be unable to integrate fatherhood development into the national framework for supporting low-income children and families. Because the national framework features strong institutional advocates for low-income mothers and children, it is imperative that fatherhood have a voice at the national level.

The field of responsible fatherhood is more than twenty years old, but because public and private support has been small and episodic, no program in the country has been rigorously evaluated for its effects on child well-being and family formation. Such an evaluation would be premature, because the field is still learning how to define and measure its impact on these important outcomes. Thus, Fatherhood Counts should begin to provide the resources needed to help institutionalize the field. Practitioners, like Joe Jones should know who in the Department of Health and Human Services will continue to be responsible for fatherhood development services. Currently, I believe that responsibility should be housed somewhere in the Administration for Children and Families. I also believe that such an office should have a close working relationship with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, which, under the leadership of Commissioner David Grey Ross, has been our greatest ally in removing the barriers that traditional child support enforcement poses to fragile families. It has taken sixty years to build the income security and family support systems that in many ways undermine now the role of fathers in the lives of low-income children and families. These systems are well integrated at federal, state and local levels. It will take more than a brief, block-grant program to restructure these systems, so that they can help restore fathers to their children and families.

Nevertheless, these two small flaws in the current draft of the bill do not diminish the enormous potential of your efforts to promote fatherhood in this country. Along with other participants in the Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative, I look forward to working with you to achieve our mutual goals. I also look forward to your questions and the opportunity to exchange ideas during the dialogue that follows these comments. Thank you again for your efforts in this critical area.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you, Dr. Mincy.

Dr. Primus, welcome back.

STATEMENT OF WENDELL PRIMUS, DIRECTOR OF INCOME SECURITY, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Mr. PRIMUS. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the subject of promising approaches to promote fatherhood. I would like to congratulate you on calling attention to the importance of fathers and the need to assist noncustodial parents in meeting their parental obligations. The center supports the thrust of this hearing and the goals that it seeks to attain. We support the intent of H.R. 3314, but we have two serious concerns with the bill as currently drafted.

First, the resources in the bill need to be more narrowly focused on those noncustodial parents represented by the first panel that testified here today. Second, we believe the bill should also include a set of policies that would ensure that when noncustodial parents pay child support, their children's financial circumstances actually improve. Even if H.R. 3314 can spend no more than $2 billion, I suggest that the Subcommittee consider reallocating a portion of the bill's limited funds for this purpose.

Just as welfare reform during the early nineties transformed welfare offices from disbursement offices to a focus on placing

mothers in the work force, child support offices must continue to enforce the collection of child support, but also assist fathers to move into the work force, to help them be better fathers and have more interaction with their children. In that way, assist noncustodial fathers in being better parents, both financially and emotionally, and then I think the promotion of marriage will come automatically.

Child support offices cannot be expected to provide all of these services on their own, and probably should not. But they must be encouraged to develop strategies and linkages to the services of other agencies. Much of this vision can be implemented at the local level without any changes in Federal law. The center's support for the bill is contingent upon the bill being paid for. Any financing for the bill must not reduce any other means-tested program.

I am convinced that the most promising strategy to assist disadvantaged fathers in becoming better parents is one that combines the following. Fatherhood programs that provide mediation, parenting, and peer support services and a broad array of employment services, plus maybe actual employment in some cases to overcome the disadvantages of substance abuse, that are tailored to the particular needs and strengths of the individual father, these fathers are diverse, and enforced through the tools of the child support enforcement program, and reinforced by a set of strong economic incentives that assure that when child support is actually paid it increases child well-being. H.R. 3314 provides needed funding for the first two sets of services, but not for the last. All of these ingredients must be present, I believe, for the strategy to work.

I would like to describe one concrete addition to the bill that I would urge you to consider. In this era of no unfunded mandates and devolution, I recognize that States cannot just be ordered to pass through a certain amount of child support. I would urge you to legislate the following offer to States. They do not have to turn over their child support collections to the Federal Government if they pass through a significant portion of the child support collected on behalf of noncustodial parents. The States would be given the simple choice, pay the family or pay the Federal Government. This would cost both the Federal and State governments, but would greatly benefit low-income families, and also change the dynamics of the relationship between custodial and noncustodial parents.

For example, as you see on the chart, in Florida where there is no pass through of child support under current law, the tax rate on extremely low-income families is 100 percent. In most contexts both liberals and especially conservatives rebel against 100 percent tax rates. As you can also see, a noncustodial father in Florida should be paying a very large proportion of his earnings in child support, leaving him with very little income.

I went back and double checked these numbers this morning because I could not quite believe them myself. Maybe in the real world they don't happen. But at least on paper and reading all of the fine print, this father here represented in that sixth line, when he is earning only $7,500, the mother has child care expenses, he is expected to pay 44 percent of his earnings in child support, leav-

ing him with an income level that is only 38 percent of the poverty line, while providing the custodial family with no additional income. Is it realistic to expect low-income fathers to pay these child support orders when their children do not even benefit from them? The chart also shows that the resulting increases in the custodial family's income if child support is completely disregarded increases by from 6 to 20 percentage points.

Another way this could be accomplished is by subsidizing child support payments. As you know, the Tax Code contains a number of provisions that benefit families, such as personal exemptions, child tax credits, and EITC. These provisions, however, only benefit families with earnings. Because some custodial families have little or no earnings, they are unable to take full advantage. These unused credits could be tallied and used to subsidize and incentivize the child support that should be paid by the noncustodial parents. For example, $2,000 of unused child tax benefits from the custodial mother could be providing additional payment of $1 for every $1 that the noncustodial parent pays.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would note that there are several programs already in existence that would support the goals of H.R. 3314. Specifically, the welfare-to-work legislation you passed last year, title 20, the EITC for childless workers and TANF, could all be used to currently promote these goals. Accordingly, cuts to these programs for the purposes of offsetting the cost of this bill or any other legislation severely undermines the goals you have set forth for this bill.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to commend you for displaying leadership in resisting reductions to the TANF block grant. I know the efforts you have made. Moneys from that block grant can be used to support the goals of the block grant proposed here. I therefore urge you to continue fighting cuts in the TANF block grant and to continue calling attention to the importance of fathers and the need to assist noncustodial parents as well as custodial parents in meeting their parental obligations.

[The prepared statement and attachment follow:]

Statement of Wendell Primus, Director of Income Security, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee on Human Resources:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the subject of "promising approaches to promote fatherhood" and specifically the proposed "Fathers Count Act of 1998" (H.R. 3314). As the Director of Income Security at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities—a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy organization that conducts research and analysis on a variety of issues affecting low- and moderate-income families—I would like to congratulate you on calling attention to the importance of fathers and the need to assist noncustodial parents in meeting their parental obligations.

The Center supports the thrust of this hearing and the goals that it seeks to attain—"helping poor and low-income fathers establish positive relationships with their children and the children's mothers, promoting responsible parenting and increasing family income"—and the message it sends that government policy should acknowledge the importance of fathers assuming legal, financial, child-rearing and emotional responsibility for their children. We support H.R. 3314 to the extent that it supports these goals. However, I have two serious concerns with the bill as currently drafted that are critical to address if the bill is to achieve the goals laid out in this hearing.

First, the income and demographic targeting requirements of the bill do not target the resources provided narrowly enough on those non-custodial parents who could most benefit—and whose children could most benefit—from participating in training and parenting programs. As currently drafted, H.R. 3314 requires states to use 80

percent of the monies provided on parenting, employment, and marriage-promotion programs for fathers (including both custodial and non-custodial fathers) whose earnings are below average male earnings—roughly $30,000 per year. Instead, limited resources should be targeted on non-custodial parents with far lower incomes. These non-custodial parents (most of whom will be fathers) are among those most likely to benefit from employment-related services and whose children are most likely to benefit from increased child support payments.

Second, the bill should also include a set of policies that would ensure that when low-income non-custodial parents meet their obligations and pay child support, their children's financial circumstances improve. In many states currently, if a non-custodial parent pays child support and his children receive TANF-funded assistance, the child is *"made no better off"* than if the father did not meet his obligation to pay support. This substantially reduces a father's incentive pay support—a father may not think paying child support is important if his children are no better off—and leaves children deeper in poverty than if a substantial portion of child support payments were passed-through directly to families and disregarded when determining eligibility for cash assistance. In addition to including provisions that would address these issues, tax policies that reward non-custodial parents who pay their child support should also be considered. These provisions would cost money. Even if H.R. 3314 can spend no more than $2 billion, I suggest that the Committee consider allocating a portion of the bill's limited for these purposes.

Our current welfare system is inherently sexist—we expect women to assume all of the parental roles of breadwinner, caretaker, and nurturer, while the men in these low-income families have no required responsibilities except to pay child support if they are able. The intention of welfare reform was to move the custodial parent into the workforce and up the job ladder. But, there is little federal commitment to provide employment-related services to noncustodial fathers. Public policies should provide both economic opportunity and responsibility to both parents.

Research shows that statistically, children reared in single-parent families are at greater risk of adverse outcomes than those reared in two-parent families.[1] While some studies have demonstrated that fathers have a notable positive effect on their children's well-being, others have revealed that fathers are peripheral to certain measures of child and adolescent well-being.[2] New research, however, focused on the qualitative dimensions of fathering, finds that father involvement does have a positive effect on some social-psychological outcomes for adolescents.[3] In response to the growing problem of children being raised in single-parent female-headed households, fatherhood programs have sprung up around the country to encourage noncustodial parents to be involved in the lives of their children through job development and training, assistance with child support enforcement offices, mediation, teaching parenting skills and promoting a stronger attachment to their children.

In addition, many of these children will spend some of their childhood years in poverty. Many poor children in single-parent families will be able to escape from poverty—or avoid being pushed still deeper into poverty—only if they can benefit from a combination of wages earned by their mother, earnings from their father paid in the form of child support, and government assistance in the form of earned income tax credits, child care subsidies, food stamps and health insurance. As mothers earn income or as fathers pay child support, governmental assistance must not be reduced dollar for dollar.

Child support is also a critical part of welfare reform—as welfare reform encourages families to rely on earnings and eventually moves them off of public assistance, income from the child support system will become an increasingly more important mechanism for providing income to children in single-parent, low-income families. In order for this to happen, however, the culture of the child support office must change. Just as welfare reform during the early 1990s aimed to transform the cul-

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[1] See Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur. *Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps.*rvard University Press, 1994.

[2] See Frank Furstenberg, Jr. "Intergenerational Transmission of Fathering Roles in At-Risk Families." Paper presented at the NICHD Family and Child Well-Being Network's Conference on Father Involvement, October 1996 and Alan J. Hawkins and David J. Eggebeen. "Are Fathers Fungible?: Patterns of Coresident Adult Men in Maritally Disrupted Families and Young Children's Well-Being" in *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56: 963–972.

[3] See Marcy Carlson. "How Does Family Structure Matter?: Father Involvement and the Behavior of Young Adolescents." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Chicago, April 1998; Marc A. Zimmerman, Deborah A. Salem and Kenneth I. Maton. "Family Structure and Psychosocial Correlates among Urban African-American Adolescent Males" in *Child Development* 66: 1590–1613 and Kathleen Mullen Harris, Frank F. Furstenberg and Jeremy K. Marmer. "Paternal Involvement with Adolescents in Intact Families: The Influence of Fathers Over the Life Course" in *Demography* 35(2): 201–216.

ture of welfare offices from disbursement offices to agencies which focus on placing mothers in the workforce, child support offices must continue to vigorously enforce collection of obligations while working with other agencies that help noncustodial fathers be better parents—both financially and emotionally.

I have spent a great deal of time traveling around the country working with child support agencies, welfare offices, fatherhood groups, employers and employment and training service providers to attempt to get these organizations to work together to provide fathers with a comprehensive group of services which will help them be better parents by enabling them to assume legal, financial, child-rearing and emotional responsibility for their children. Child support offices cannot be expected to provide all of these services on their own and probably should not, but must be encouraged to develop strategies and linkages to the services/jobs of these other agencies/organizations to encourage these fathers to be better parents, rather than just collect their check and end the relationship there. I have spoken at numerous conferences and written several papers that develop in much more detail the vision I summarize below. Much of this vision can be implemented at the local level without changes in Federal law. H.R. 3314 should help accomplish this vision by providing funding for the services and programs these men need to help them become better fathers, thereby improving their children's well-being and increasing paid child support.

This proposed bill will spend $1.9 billion over 5 years and the financing offsets for the bill have not yet been identified. The Center's support for the bill is contingent upon the bill being paid for—in other words, we stand firmly behind the pay-as-you-go rules—and any financing mechanism for the bill must not reduce any other means-tested program.

INCREASING CHILD WELL-BEING AND PAID CHILD SUPPORT

Our efforts should be focused in three areas in order to realize these goals:

- Provision of services to noncustodial fathers that will make them more employable or capable of earning higher wages, such as job readiness activities, job retention services, on-the-job training, trial employment and by creating jobs for those who are the hardest to serve, thereby increasing their earnings and child support paid;
- Provision of services to noncustodial fathers that will enable them to build stronger relationships with their children, such as programs to help instill better parenting skills, mediation, and peer support services, thereby encouraging them to assume not only financial responsibility for their children, but also legal, child-rearing and emotional responsibility; and
- Increasing the effectiveness of paid child support by passing-through and disregarding substantial amounts of paid child support and subsidizing those child support payments, thereby allowing paid child support to actually improve the well-being of their children and encouraging them to want to support their children financially.

I am convinced that the most promising strategy to assist disadvantaged fathers in becoming better parents and to improve the well-being of their children is one which combines the following: a broad array of employment services (plus actual employment in some cases) and fatherhood programs that are tailored to the particular needs and strengths of the individual father; strong enforcement of child support obligations through the enforcement aspects of the child support enforcement program; and strong economic incentives for noncustodial fathers to pay child support through policies that ensure that child support paid increases children's economic well-being. H.R. 3314 could provide the needed funding for the first two sets of services, but not for the last, although the last is equally as important. Local communities should be encouraged to test a variety of ways of implementing this broad approach.

Increasing Earnings of Noncustodial Fathers and Child Support Paid

First, we should provide services to noncustodial fathers that help increase their earnings in order to make them able to support their children financially. H.R. 3314 should be used to fund such programs, including workforce development programs, programs that help fathers overcome the barriers they face to becoming employed, such as on-the-job training and trial employment, job readiness activities, publicly funded jobs, and job retention services.

The new welfare law makes important strides in the child support enforcement arena, strengthening the tools for collecting child support from noncustodial fathers who have income. However, it does little to help jobless noncustodial fathers enter the labor force, and consequently, little to increase child support collections from noncustodial fathers who lack earnings from which to make these payments. This

is problematic given that the economic circumstances of young men, particularly those with limited skills and education credentials, have been decaying at an alarming rate over the past two decades. The inflation-adjusted average annual earnings of 25- to 29-year-old men without a high school diploma fell by 35 percent between 1973 and 1991.

This suggests that the payoff from tighter enforcement may be constrained by the inability of some noncustodial fathers to pay.

The problem is that low-income, noncustodial fathers face significant barriers to employment, many of which are the same as the employment barriers faced by poor, custodial mothers. These barriers include a range of problems that make them unattractive to employers or make it difficult to find available jobs, such as: low levels of educational attainment; criminal records and other legal problems; a lack of transportation; substance abuse problems; the disappearance of low wage, blue-collar, industrial jobs; an erosion in real wages in the low-wage sector; changing skill requirements; the declining value of a high school diploma; the relocation of manufacturing jobs from the central cities to the suburbs and discrimination. All of these barriers prevent fathers from obtaining jobs and being able to pay child support.

Fathers are also discouraged from paying child support by the child support system itself, as many noncustodial parents deem the system to be fundamentally unfair.[4] This is particularly true for low-income noncustodial parents who frequently are presented with support obligations that far exceed their ability to pay or are not adjusted appropriately when their earnings decrease. As a result, many of these noncustodial parents do not make the required child support payments and accumulate a debt in the amount of owed child support; are charged with paying retroactive support and Medicaid childbirth costs (plus interest and court costs) dating back to the time the child first received AFDC or TANF and in some states dating back to the child's birth or default on their orders and as a result incur fines, have their wages withheld, or have liens placed on their property.

The existence of this child support debt—which can be substantial—can be daunting to noncustodial parents in low-wage jobs. Because the noncustodial parents may feel they never will be able to pay off their child support fully even if they are working, these arrearages may actually deter them from seeking stable employment or making child support payments, encourage them to move into the underground economy, or cause them to completely sever ties with the family. All of these are adverse outcomes from a societal viewpoint.

Funds from H.R. 3314 should be used to help fathers overcome these obstacles to paying child support—those created by poor labor market opportunities and those created by the child support system itself—by providing them with services that will make them more employable or capable of earning higher wages or by creating jobs for those who are the hardest to serve.

Building Stronger Relationships Between Noncustodial Fathers and Their Children

Second, while welfare reform will cause poor children to become financially more dependent on the earnings of both parents to keep them out of poverty, children in most families—regardless of welfare reform—also benefit from emotional support from both of their parents. However, many noncustodial fathers face considerable barriers to becoming involved in the lives of their children. In many instances, they themselves lacked a role model for good parenting skills. Also, without a pay check, some males feel that they do not deserve to see their children. The concept of "father" is tied closely to being a breadwinner and the lack of employment often becomes a significant barrier. Child support rules also affect father involvement. From the male's perspective the child support system is only interested in his role as breadwinner, not his role as parent. There are many strong tools enforcing the payment of monies through child support but little or no effort is expended in enforcing access and visitation rights.

Services should therefore be provided to fathers which will help them to build stronger relationships with their children and overcome these barriers to their parental involvement. Again, monies from H.R. 3314 should be used to fund such programs, including programs to help instill better parenting skills, mediation, and peer support services. It should be noted, however, that in some families domestic violence makes positive interaction between the noncustodial parent and children

[4] See *Matching Opportunities to Obligations: Lessons for Child Support Reform from the Parents' Fair Share Pilot Phase,* Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, April 1994, pp.74–5 and *Working with Low-Income Cases: Lessons for the Child Support Enforcement System from Parents' Fair Share,* Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, May 1998, pp. 12–3.

impossible and not in the best interest of the children and the mother. As policies are put in place to increase noncustodial fathers' involvement with their children, care must be taken to ensure the safety of children and their mothers.

Increasing the Effectiveness of Paid Child Support

While H.R. 3314 does not provide funding for such purposes, it is also important to enact policies that increase the effectiveness of paid child support. Substantial pass-throughs/disregards[5] of child support and subsidization of those payments to help eliminate the high tax rates on child support—or rather, increase the small or nonexistent amount of paid child support that actually benefits low-income children—would help attain the goals of the legislation and would perfectly complement the programs that will be funded by the bill.

Noncustodial parents are often reluctant to pay—and sometimes go to great lengths not to pay—their child support orders because they do not feel that the payments are actually benefitting their children. Disregarding substantial amounts of child support paid and subsidizing those child support payments would help ensure that the child support that is paid actually helps improve the children's well-being and thereby encourages noncustodial fathers to want to pay child support.

I would like to describe one concrete addition to the bill that I would urge you to consider—passing through a substantial portion of paid child support. Prior to the mid-1980s, all child support collected on behalf of welfare-receiving families was retained by the government as reimbursement for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments to the family.[6] This was a contributing factor to the reluctance of noncustodial parents to pay child support. To help address this problem, the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 changed the provisions governing distribution of child support to families receiving AFDC by "passing-through" up to $50 of child support collected by the Child Support Enforcement Office to the AFDC family.

However, the 1996 welfare law repealed this pass-through requirement. Under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant rules, states are free to continue the pass-through, completely eliminate it, or expand it. Regardless of what pass-through policy they adopt, states must send to the federal government a fixed share of the total amount of support collected on behalf of children receiving assistance from TANF-funded programs. Sixteen states have chosen to continue the pass-through, 33 states have completely eliminated it, and 2 states have expanded the pass-through.[7] In two states—Wisconsin and Connecticut—the entire amount of child support paid is passed through.

Increasing pass-throughs/disregards would not only improve children's financial well-being, but would also provide an incentive to the noncustodial father to pay child support. I would therefore urge you to consider a substantial disregard of child support (of 50 percent, 75 percent or even more), as it would greatly complement the legislation. In this era of no unfunded mandates and devolution, I recognize that states cannot just be ordered to pass through a certain amount of child support. I would urge that you legislate the following offer to states: they do not have to turn over their child support collections to the Federal government if they pass through a significant portion of the child support collected to the custodial families. I would also apply the disregard to monies collected through the child support enforcement system, including changes in the IRS refund distribution rules that would make the distribution "family friendly."[8] The states would be given the simple choice: pay the family or pay the Feds. This would cost both the federal and state governments, but would greatly benefit low-income families and also change the dynamic between custodial and noncustodial parents because custodial parents would have a more vested interest in whether or not the noncustodial parent pays child support.

The money passed through to the custodial families would significantly improve the well-being of the children. For example, in Florida, where there is no pass-

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[5] Throughout this testimony, a child support pass-through and disregard are intended to mean the same thing. In other words, I am advocating that a substantial portion of the child support paid should be passed through to the mother, but without affecting the level of TANF benefits—it is disregarded from income when calculating the benefit level.

[6] With one minor exception: in approximately 11 states with "fill the gap" policies, not all of the child support collected was retained.

[7] Paula Roberts. *State Action Re $50 Pass-through and Disregard.* Center for Law and Social Policy, January 1998.

[8] The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) established "family friendly" payment distribution rules, whereby child support paid by the noncustodial parent would first go to pay child support debt to the custodial family and the remainder would go towards repaying debt to the state last. However, these rules do not apply to child support debt collected through the IRS. I am proposing that these family friendly rules be extended to include child support payments collected through the IRS.

through of child support under current law, the tax rate on child support for extremely low-income families is 100 percent. In most contexts—both liberals and especially conservatives—rebel against 100 percent tax rates. Even custodial families that are receiving little or no TANF assistance benefit very little from the child support that is paid. The attached chart shows that the effective tax rates on the child support paid to these families (the scenarios on the bottom half of the chart) are well over 50 percent.

Meanwhile, the noncustodial father in Florida is paying a very large portion of his earnings in child support, leaving him with very little income. For example, when he is earning only $7,500 he is expected to pay 44.4 percent of his earnings in child support, leaving him with an income level that is only 37.5 percent of the poverty line, while providing the custodial family with no additional income. Is it realistic to expect low-income fathers to pay these child support orders when their children do not even benefit from them?

However, with a complete pass-through of child support the custodial family would receive 70 percent of the child support that is paid by the noncustodial father,[9] reducing the tax rate on child support from 100 percent in many cases, to only 30 percent.[10] This increase in the portion of the child support that actually reaches the children improves their well-being by increasing their income. The attached table shows the resulting increases in the custodial family's income if child support is completely disregarded. As a percentage of poverty, the custodial family's income increases between 6 and 20 percentage points if all child support is passed through to them. Passing through child support would especially help custodial mothers with very little or no earnings.

Another way to accomplish this is by subsidizing child support payments. The tax code contains a number of provisions that benefit children in low-income families, such as personal exemptions, child tax credits and the EITC. These provisions, however, generally only benefit low-income families that have at least *some* earnings. Because many custodial parents have little or no income, they are unable to take full advantage of these tax provisions. Meanwhile, it is possible that noncustodial parents have income that is low enough to qualify for these provisions yet high enough that they are able to gain some benefit from the credits and exemptions. However, they are not eligible to receive these credits and exemptions, because their children do not live with them. Children whose parents do not live together are therefore deprived of the benefits of the tax code provisions that were specifically established to assist them because they cannot take advantage of both parents' incomes. These "unused" credits could be tallied and used to subsidize and incentivize the child support that is paid by the noncustodial parent. For example, $2,000 of "unused" child tax benefits from the custodial mother from the past year could provide an additional payment of one dollar to the custodial family for each dollar the noncustodial father paid in child support (assuming his order was also $2,000) in the current year.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING H.R. 3314

There are several concerns I have about some aspects of the bill and several areas where I believe the bill can be improved. My major concern is that the bill is not targeted to the low-income noncustodial fathers who are most in need of these services. I know that you do not want to require a complicated means-test, but the needs of very low-income noncustodial fathers are so great that the bill should include much clearer targeting requirements. The only income targeting in the bill requires at least 80 percent of the funds to go to services and programs for noncustodial fathers with annual incomes below the state average income of male earners. This income level could fall between $25,000 and $35,000.[11] This means that a majority of the funds could go to serve middle-class, rather than the low-income fathers or fathers with children on welfare who really need the services. The Chairman has stated that the proposed legislation and today's hearing seek to help low-income fathers and fathers of children on welfare. I would therefore urge you to target the bulk of this block grant to disadvantaged and low-income noncustodial fathers below 200 percent of poverty.

Second, I would argue that block granted programs are better administered when local or state governments are required by a matching rate to invest their own

[9] With one exception—in the last case, the effective tax rate increases to 44.7 percent because at this specific level of earnings, the custodial family becomes ineligible for food stamps.

[10] The 30 percent tax rate is due entirely to the treatment of paid child support in the calculation of food stamp benefits.

[11] *Economic Report of the President*, February 1998, Table B–33.

money in the programs, just as was done in the Welfare-to-Work block grant to the states. The block grant in the Fathers Count Act does not involve any matching rate, but rather gives the states a lump sum of money for them to spend. I would recommend changing the structure of the block grant to require states also to invest their own money in the fatherhood programs funded by the bill.

Third, I am concerned about the bill's silence on domestic violence. There are certainly cases where it may not be in the child's best interest to have interaction with his/her father or where such interaction needs to be supervised or monitored. While the bill provides funds that could be used for domestic violence and abuse counseling for fathers, the bill is completely silent on this issue in the preparation of state plans. I would urge that states be required in the submission of state plans to take domestic violence into account in the delivery of these program services.

Fourth, I agree that marriage is an important institution. However, government law and regulation cannot make happy, loving, stable families. As much as I would like that result 100 percent of the time, in the real world, it is not a reality. In those cases where the marriage has failed or where the children were born out-of-wedlock, the children still need both economic and emotional support from both of their parents, whether married or not.

Finally, I would recommend a slower phase-in of the funds and an increase in the funds in the later years of the block grant. Often when states are presented with such a large amount of money in the first year, it goes unspent because states are not given enough planning time. Instead, I would suggest redistributing the funding levels in the following way: $50,000,000 for FY 2000; $200,000,000 for FY 2001; $450,000,000 for FY 2002; $600,000,000 for FY 2003; and $600,000,000 for FY 2004.

OTHER "PROMISING APPROACHES TO PROMOTE FATHERHOOD"

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would note that there are several programs already in existence which support the goals of "helping poor and low-income fathers establish positive relationships with their children and the children's mothers, promoting responsible parenting and increasing family income." Specifically, Welfare-to-Work, Title XX, the EITC for childless workers and TANF currently promote these goals of the Fathers Count Act. Accordingly, cuts to these programs for the purposes of offsetting the cost of this bill or any other legislation severely undermine the goals you have set forth.

Fourteen states currently have competitive Welfare-to-Work grants that target noncustodial parents and 15 states currently have formula grants that target noncustodial parents. Michigan is spending almost all of its Welfare-to-Work dollars on this population. These grants are seed money for the vision that I have laid out today and for the goals that you, Mr. Chairman, have set for low-income fathers.

Since the time when you originally introduced the Fathers Count Act, the Congress has taken a big step backwards in achieving the goals you have laid out in the bill. Almost all of the goals of the Fathers Count Act could have been served under Title XX, but since the introduction of H.R. 3314, Title XX was cut in the highway bill by some $2.7 billion over the time frame of H.R. 3314. As much as I support H.R. 3314, we must recognize that cuts like those to Title XX are moving us away from the goals of the Fathers Count Act and further cuts will significantly undermine the ability of states to achieve these goals.

Meanwhile, the EITC for childless workers helps to provide some tax relief for a portion of the noncustodial fathers that the Fathers Count Act is trying to help. These workers receive little aid from other government assistance programs and pay an unusually high percentage of their small incomes in federal taxes.[12] Eliminating the EITC for childless workers would substantially increase the federal tax burdens for these fathers, making it even more difficult for them to pay a portion of their small earnings in child support.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I commend you for displaying leadership in resisting reductions to the TANF block grant. Again, monies from that block grant are being used and can be used to support the goals of the Fathers Count block grant proposed here. I therefore urge you to continue fighting cuts in the TANF block grant and to continue calling attention to the importance of fathers and the need to assist noncustodial parents—as well as custodial parents—in meeting their parental obligations.

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[12] Robert Greenstein and Isaac Shapiro. *The Consequences of Eliminating the EITC for Childless Workers.* Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 9, 1998.

Disregarding Child Support Significantly Increases the Income of Custodial Families in the State of Florida

Earnings		Child Support Order as Percent of Noncustodial Parent's Earnings	Effective Tax Rate on Child Support		Income as a Percentage of Poverty		
					Custodial Family		Noncustodial Parent
Custodial Family	Noncustodial Parent		Current Law	Proposal	Current Law	Proposal	Current Law and Proposal
0	10,000	17.8	100.0*	30.0	56.0	65.5	
2,500	7,500	26.7	100.0*	30.0	71.7	82.5	53.4
5,000	5,000	33.2	100.0*	30.0	87.5	96.3	32.4
0	15,000	30.7	85.2	30.0	61.2	80.7	87.1
3,750	11,250	37.1	91.0	30.0	82.5	101.9	59.9
7,500	7,500	44.4	100.0*	30.0	101.6	119.4	37.5
0	20,000	29.5	73.2	30.0	68.1	87.6	115.0
5,000	15,000	35.5	77.9	30.0	96.5	115.9	78.7
10,000	10,000	39.8	69.3	30.0	122.1	134.1	51.4
0	25,000	28.5	65.7	30.0	74.7	94.2	143.5
5,000	20,000	33.2	68.3	30.0	103.6	123.0	106.1
10,000	15,000	36.2	58.8	44.7	129.9	135.8	77.2

Note: Calculations use 1998 Florida child support and TANF parameters and federal tax and food stamp parameters, but assume the $500 child tax credit is fully phased in (even though this will not be the case until 1999) for a family with two children and assume that the full child support order is paid. The poverty threshold for the custodial family is the threshold for a family of 3, or $13,086 in 1998 and the poverty threshold for the noncustodial parent is the poverty threshold for one person, or $8,359 in 1998. The proposal is a complete pass-through of paid child support to the custodial family and a complete disregard of paid child support for the purpose of calculating TANF benefits.

* These families receive TANF under current law.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you. I hope your praise doesn't get me in trouble.

Dr. Berlin.

STATEMENT OF GORDON L. BERLIN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, MANPOWER DEMONSTRATION RESEARCH CORPORATION, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Mr. BERLIN. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on promising approaches to promote fatherhood. My remarks today about the needs of fathers are drawn from MDRC's experience in developing and evaluating the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration Project, arguably the most comprehensive research and demonstration project in existence that involves unemployed noncustodial fathers.

Authorized by the Family Support Act of 1988 and operating in seven States, Parents' Fair Share's underlying assumption is that when fathers are supported and playing an active role in their children's lives, and when fathers have gainful employment, they are more likely to pay child support on a consistent basis. Delivered by a partnership of local child support, fatherhood, and employment training organizations, the program offers employment and training to help fathers find and hold jobs, peer discussion classes to support and foster responsible parenting, and dispute resolution services to resolve conflicts that might arise with the custodial parent. In addition, child support systems agreed to suspend or lower orders while fathers participated in the program.

I am going to draw upon two forthcoming reports on this project that will be released in the next month or so to answer or address

three issues. Who are these fathers, what have we learned about what works in terms of services that might help them gain employment, be better fathers and pay child support, and what policy issues should the next generation of programs for low-income fathers consider?

Who are the fathers in this program? They are a significantly disadvantaged group. Most of them live at or near the edge of poverty with little access to employment or public assistance programs. About half do not have a high school diploma or GED. In terms of employment, about half of them work at low-wage jobs intermittently while the other half have been unemployed for long periods of time.

As you know, as a result of changes in the labor market over the last 20 years or so, employment prospects for poorly educated men have deteriorated precipitously through no fault of their own. Without regular work, this group of fathers seldom feel adequate as parents. While most saw their children frequently and tried to be involved in their lives, without income, they often had difficulty. Not surprisingly, without jobs, they seldom paid what they owed in child support. Many face staggering debts. Twenty percent of the sample owed some $8,000 in child support payments, in part because those arrears continue to build even when fathers are unemployed.

Despite their involvement with their children, we found that the PFS fathers they often lacked basic understanding of how to be a parent. What was age-appropriate behavior, what forms of discipline were appropriate, what kinds of activities to engage in with their children.

What have we learned about the effectiveness of the services this program offered? The first lesson was that parenting instruction and support was successfully provided through a group peer support model where a facilitator met regularly with groups of fathers to discuss parenting issues. It was feasible to operate this program component. The fathers came. They participated at significant levels. You have heard from the previous panel testimonials about what these kinds of opportunities to engage fathers can mean to them.

The second lesson, getting fathers more and better jobs than they could have gotten on their own, proved very difficult. We have a lot more work to do in that area. We did get fathers jobs, but we often found we were getting them the same kinds of jobs they got previously. Two of the sites were more promising. We have a long way to go in the followup period. We are hoping that some trends will emerge there that will give us some additional lessons about effective employment and training strategies.

The third lesson: despite the absence of employment and earnings impacts during the early followup period covered in our forthcoming reports, the package of PFS services did lead to increases in child support payments. The program had a payoff beyond the help it gave fathers in making them better parents.

Four policy recommendations emerge from these lessons and this experience. First, there is a tremendous need for services to help low-income fathers learn about and be supported in the active roles they already play as fathers. It is feasible to deliver these services.

Fathers will participate. Our observations of the program in action suggests that the services make a difference in fathers' knowledge about and their approach to parenting.

Second, making these programs effective requires a lot of collaborative work by a range of agencies with different goals: child support systems, fatherhood programs, and employment and training agencies. It also takes resources; the funding proposed in H.R. 3314 is critical to the success of these programs. Its links to TANF and welfare-to-work programs are wise.

Third, more work is needed to develop employment and training services that would increase low-income fathers' employment and earnings. Los Angeles and Memphis emphasize skill building activities in conjunction with work. Some related approaches that we might try include developing new ways to combine work and skill-building activities and to provide job retention services to help low-income men hold onto the jobs when they get them. But it is also true that about a third of the fathers who participated in this seven-State effort had little or no recent work history. For these fathers, transitional community work experience jobs are needed to help them build credible work histories.

Fourth and last, in the final analysis, our society still defines the father's role as provider. But poor men, even when they work can seldom meet the 30 percent or more of gross pay demanded of them by the child support system. When they do meet those demands, they are often left poor themselves. Unlike middle-class fathers who often end up better off financially after a divorce, poor fathers often end up worse off. As a result, they often feel the system is stacked against them. If their children are on AFDC or now TANF, they don't get credit for having paid child support because the payments go to offset their welfare payments. Child support systems need to be more responsive to the changing ability of fathers to pay. The orders need to be rationalized and standardized to reduce the likelihood that fathers who do try to pay still end up with huge debts.

In addition, to address the impoverishment that results when fathers do pay child support, we should give some thought to how we might take advantage of the EITC, possibly by allowing noncustodial parents who pay what they owe in child support to claim any unused portion of the earned income tax credit.

In conclusion, fathers do count. Services really can make a difference. They can enhance involvement with their children, and it can result in increased child support payments. Thank you.

[The prepared statement follows:]

Statement of Gordon L. Berlin, Senior Vice President, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York, New York

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on promising approaches to promote responsible fatherhood. My name is Gordon Berlin. I am a senior vice president at the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC). MDRC is a non-profit, non-partisan social policy research organization created in the mid-1970s to examine programs designed to address some of the nation's most pressing social problems. We learned about the needs of fathers from our experience in developing and evaluating the Parents' Fair Share Program (PFS), a program for low-income noncustodial fathers of children growing up in single-parent households.

Authorized by the Family Support Act of 1988, Parent's Fair Share, gave us an opportunity to test the value of employment and training services for unemployed

fathers who were not paying child support for their children who were receiving AFDC benefits. PFS is supported by an unusual consortium of public and private funders. In exchange for father's current and future cooperation with the child support system, a partnership of local organizations offered services designed to help fathers: (1) find more stable and better-paying jobs; (2) assume an important and responsible parental role; and (3) pay child support on a consistent basis. PFS's underlying assumption is straightforward: when fathers are supported in playing an active role in their children's lives, and when fathers have gainful employment, they are more likely to pay child support on a consistent basis.

Parent's Fair Share provided a mix of services: employment and training to help fathers find and hold jobs; peer discussion classes to support and foster responsible parenting; and dispute resolution services to resolve conflicts that might arise with the custodial parent. To provide an incentive for fathers to participate in the program, local child support systems agreed to temporarily lower or suspend the child support payment obligation. The idea was that once a man found a job, his child support order would be restored to an appropriate level. In essence, the demonstration tried to strike a bargain with low income fathers: if they cooperated with the child support system, they would get help in finding a job to meet their obligations. The program began in 1992 with a pilot phase to refine the model and test its operational feasibility, and then became fully operational in seven sites during the demonstration phase that followed in 1994. (Dayton, OH; Grand Rapids, MI; Jacksonville, FL; Los Angeles, CA; Memphis, TN; Springfield, MA; and Trenton, NJ.)

The research on PFS will not only measure whether the program was effective or not, it will also capture information about the men and their families. There were over 5,500 men in the demonstration. For most of the sample, we are collecting quarterly administrative records data that reflects employment patterns and child support collections. In addition, we are learning about the relationships between the fathers and their children (500 men will be asked detailed survey questions) and we are learning about the mothers of the father's children (2,400 mothers are being interviewed to obtain an independent view of changes in fathers' roles). In addition, we conducted an in-depth ethnographic study of 50 fathers over a two-year period. During this time, the interviewer had several conversations with each father to create comprehensive life histories.

Over the next few months, MDRC will be releasing two reports: the first—*Surviving is Not Enough: Low-Income Noncustodial Parents' Perspective on the Ability of the Parents Fair Share Program to Change their Lives*—relies on the life history interviews to tell the fathers' personal stories. The second report—*Parents' Fair Share: Implementation and Initial Impacts*—tells two stories: first, it tells the "implementation story" by describing the program, explaining how it operated, and identifying these program approaches that worked best. Second, it tells the "early impact" story which explains if the program made a net difference in the low-income men's employment and child support payments (i.e., if more men had higher earnings and more men paid their child support payments than would have done so without the program). These impacts are considered "early" because they rely solely on administrative records; they do not include any of the survey data (which is still being processed); they cover only a part of the full PFS study group; they provide only a year and a half follow-up information; and they do not cover several key goals of the program (most importantly, helping fathers become more effective and responsible parents).

My testimony today draws on these forthcoming reports to address three issues: 1) Who are these fathers?; 2) What have we learned about the role of services in helping them gain employment, be better fathers, and pay child support?; and 3) What policy issues should the next generation of programs for low-income fathers consider? While PFS is arguably the most intensive and comprehensive research effort ever undertaken about low-income fathers, keep in mind that the men in this study are not representative of all low-income men. The children of the fathers in this study have received welfare benefits, and the fathers have already established paternity and have fallen behind in their child support payments. This is a group that is seldom included in our national surveys, and the policy community, as a whole, knows little about them. For policy making purposes, information about this group of parents should be used in conjunction with other information about low-income fathers who are included in national surveys.

WHO ARE THE PFS FATHERS?

The fathers in PFS are diverse in terms of race, age, living arrangements, and employment experience. They are also a significantly disadvantaged group; most of them have lived at or near the edge of poverty with little access to public assistance

or employment programs. Approximately 80 percent of the overall study group are African American or Hispanic, but there is great variation across the seven sites; for example, a fifth of eligibles in Springfield, MA and Grand Rapids, MI are white. Nearly two-thirds of the sample have never been married, and nearly 70 percent had been arrested on a charge unrelated to child support problems after they had turned 16 years of age (a non-juvenile offense). Many of the men rely on family and friends to make ends meet or for a place to stay. Even though the men's average age is 30 years, more than 60 percent live with a relative, usually their parents (45 percent).

In terms of employment history, it is possible to loosely divide the PFS population into two distinct groups: one that had a recent history of employment (about 47 percent reported being employed at some point in the three months prior to entering the program), and another group that was characterized by repeated spells of unemployment (43 percent earned $500 or less in the nine months prior to entering the program; half of the sample had not held any job in the three months prior to entering the program).

Even though the first group had a history of employment, it was a history of being in relatively low wage jobs. This group wanted help finding higher-paying jobs. In contrast, the second group had tenuous connections to the mainstream labor market and their recent employment histories consisted of lengthy spells of unemployment and frequent changes from one low-wage job to the next. This group needed help finding stable jobs.

While the employment goals of PFS were straightforward (the program aimed to get fathers employed in better and more stable jobs than they had been able to obtain on their own), the program and the fathers faced several challenges in meeting these goals. The challenges included "supply-side" issues like high arrest rates and low education levels and "demand-side" challenges like the shrinking labor market demand for low-skilled men, especially those living in inner-city areas.

On the supply-side, nearly 70 percent of the men reported being arrested and, not surprisingly, those with criminal records had more difficulty with getting hired. Nearly half the study group did not have a high school diploma or GED, and only 2 percent had taken any college courses. The vast majority (more than four in five) had no involvement with an education or training program in the last year. Not surprisingly, their overall employment rate is low too: 47 percent were employed during the three months prior to the program —compared to an 87 percent employment rate for all men and a 78 percent rate for Black men between the ages of 20 and 54 (March, 1995.)

On the demand-side, changes in the labor market exacerbated these barriers. Employment prospects for less educated men have deteriorated over the last 25 years. Depending on the inflation adjustment measure used, between 1973 and 1996, real weekly earnings of male high school graduates may have fallen by as much as one-fifth, while school dropouts earnings fell by one-fourth or more. The decline in job prospects has been especially severe for young black men; earnings for black school dropouts age 20 to 29 are down by a third or more. The consequences of these declines for families and for family formation are profound. In 1973, the average 25 year-old, high-school dropout with a full-time job earned enough to support a family of three above the poverty line. Today, that is no longer true.

Broad statistical portraits fail to capture the nuances in individuals' lives. We were able to capture the experience of fifty PFS fathers and the life histories that emerged led us to believe that the broad statistical portrait does not exaggerate the barriers they face. The life history field research, conducted by Dr. Earl Johnson, found that the noncustodial parents in this group exhibited substantial job mobility, often moving from low-wage job to low-wage job with intermittent periods of unemployment. One reason for this instability was that many of the jobs they obtained were temporary, as one man explained:

> *".... the times I was working, I never had a job over six months ... I wasn't fired. It was always temporary."*

And without regular work, fathers seldom felt adequate as parents. Many of the men's perceptions of themselves as good fathers were tied to their ability to provide for their children. As a result, some men voluntarily fell out of contact with their children when they lacked money to provide support. As one father related:

> *"It's hard when you are trying to be a father, right, and then you turn around saying you're the best father in the world to your kids, which you're trying to be, and then all of a sudden you can't even buy a pack of Pampers, you know."*

Not surprisingly, these fathers seldom paid what they owed in child support. Only 23 percent of the noncustodial parents made a child support payment through the child support system in the 3 months prior to entering the study. As a result, many fathers face staggering child support debts. Nearly one in five fathers owed more than $8,000 in child support payments. The median amount of arrears for the whole study group was $2,755. While a portion of the outstanding arrears amounts may consist of reimbursing Medicaid for the costs associated with child birth (in some cases, this was retroactively billed to the noncustodial parent), the sheer size of some outstanding arrears also suggests that the system may be unresponsive to the challenges fathers face in meeting their payments when they do not have a steady stream of employment; it appears that orders are seldom adjusted down when fathers do not have earnings.

Despite not paying formal child support, most fathers had regular contact with their children. When questioned about how frequently they see their youngest child, nearly half of the fathers reported that they had contact with the child once a week. While only seven percent of the full sample said they had not seen the child in the last year, this varied widely across the sites: 28 percent of the men in Trenton and 73 percent of the men in Springfield had not seen their child in the last year. However, most of the fathers (three-quarters) lived within ten miles of their child's residence.

While the overwhelming majority of fathers were involved in the lives of their children and described strong feelings of love for them, program staff who worked with the fathers reported that many did not fully appreciate or understand a father's role. For example, staff noted that many fathers defined their role in purely financial terms. Similarly, some peer support facilitators who facilitated a discussion on parenting found that the time fathers spent with their children was often not "productive." Staff attributed these attitudes and behaviors, in part, to a lack of positive male parental role models—some men simply did not know how to be supportive parents, at least not by traditional middle class standards.

How Did PFS Respond to the Need for Jobs and Parenting Services?

The consortium of diverse agencies assembled to deliver PFS services faced a number of challenges. Employment and training organizations had to work with very disadvantaged men who were ordered to participate by the courts. Traditionally, these organizations are used to working with volunteers. Further complicating their task, the program model called on them to emphasize on-the-job training, a service which the system had sharply curtailed just as PFS was starting up. Finally, nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping fathers had to commit to the program's child support collection goals, goals that could conflict with their mission of helping poor fathers, since failure to pay child support or to actively participate in PFS could have led to an arrest on a contempt of court bench warrant.

Parenting instruction and support was successfully provided through a group peer support model where a facilitator met regularly with groups of fathers to discuss parenting issues. The facilitator followed a "Responsible Fatherhood" curriculum that included 18 modules covering such topics as the role of fathers in their children's lives, developmentally appropriate behavior for children of different ages, rights and obligations under the child support system, managing conflict, racism, and relationships with significant others. Groups generally met two to three times a week, covering a topic each week.

Peer parental support was generally well received by the noncustodial parents, providing them an opportunity to relate to a peer group in constructive ways, discuss troubling personal and societal problems, develop new problem-solving skills, and have access to an advocate who believed in their potential. In Dayton, the facilitator developed creative new ways to encourage parents to become involved with their children by, for example, giving participants assignments such as "make dinner for your child" or "take your children to the park" and report back to the group on the experience, and holding special events such as an Easter egg hunt that involved participants' families.

As reported in the forthcoming ethnographic report, for many PFS fathers, what was truly special about peer support was that for the first time in a long time they were listened to and heard. Two PFS enrollees who participated in MDRC's ethnographic interviews reported:

> *"I have a lot to thank for ... because he's instilled in me one thing: I have no fear of sharing anything that has hurt me. There was years and years of me walking around not trusting anybody to talk to about it. Now ... I don't walk around feeling as though I'm going to have an angina attack or I feel as if the top of my head is going to explode from blood pressure be-*

cause I keep holding all this crap in me. It's got to come out. It helped me to be a better father, to get better perspective on what I'm suppose to do as a father, and I appreciated that."

"I used to avoid my child because when he asked me to buy him Nikes I did not have the money and I could not face the disappointment. But now, I've learned that what my child is most going to remember is the time we went to the park or fishing and talked about things that were concerning him. That has given me a whole new outlook on what it means to be a father."

Peer support served as the focal point for the program around which all of the other services and activities were built. Participation was high—over 60 percent of those referred participated, even though the referral was initiated from a court order for failure to pay child support, not exactly a "warm" supportive referral. The sessions proved to be powerful and personal. For example, men with daughters had an opportunity to ask their peers for advice about how to be a father to a girl or young woman; they shared strategies for becoming involved with the school as a concerned parent; and they advised each other on how to handle issues in the home environment provided by the mother of their child, such as drug abuse or lax supervision, and they learned together about constructive ways to discipline their children. They talked openly, and with emotion, about the limited role their own fathers had played in their lives, and asked each other what their own children might say about them as fathers. In our day-to-day lives, there are few forums for fathers to learn their trade or share their concerns. Our observations of the sessions and our discussions with the facilitators and with the men themselves revealed that the fathers in PFS found peer support to be a valuable and helpful experience. In the coming year, we will be analyzing the surveys we conducted with fathers and mothers to see if these add more supporting evidence that the program did improve the parenting skills of participating fathers.

The additional support that PFS provided through peer support is not simply a need of poor fathers. James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt, directors of The Fatherhood Project, note in their book, *"New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood,"* that many institutions may systematically, albeit usually unknowingly, fail to include fathers in their programmatic activities. For example, Head Start centers are designed to engage mothers, but not fathers. And school teachers tend to look to mothers when they call to discuss a child's school performance. Many other examples abound, examples we often don't see until we look for them.

Getting fathers more and better jobs than they could have gotten on their own proved difficult; new models and approaches are needed. The design of PFS assumed that for the program to have a substantial impact on parents' employment and earnings, sites would have to offer an array of short-term skills training and on-the-job training to help participants obtain higher-wage or longer-lasting jobs, and job club/job search services to help those with only limited labor market attachment find employment. In practice, there was a tension between the program's interest in encouraging noncustodial parents to take the time to invest in skill-building activities, and the realization they could not afford to be out of the labor market for a long time. In most sites, these pressures led to an emphasis on getting parents into jobs quickly. But for the most part, fathers seemed to get jobs at about the same rate and of the same type as they had gotten in the past. Thus, for this early sample, and with about 6 months of follow-up for the full sample, the program does not seem to be increasing program eligibles' earnings, although two sites did appear to modestly increase employment rates for a brief period of time. Two sites made job development an integral part of their program, and as a result were able to emphasize getting participants better jobs than they had been able to find on their own, although the long run payoff was unclear.

Participation was relatively high, although not particularly long or intense when measured by hours of participation. Seventy percent of those parents referred to PFS participated in at least one PFS activity, usually parenting instruction and/or job club. Behind this average was substantial site variation related to differences in intake methods, service offerings, and the way in which referral back to child support enforcement was used. Participation rates varied from a high of 82 percent in Los Angeles to a low of around 60 percent in Memphis. Rates appear to be higher when: (1) the intake process produced parents who were motivated to participate in the program; (2) labor market opportunities for those referred to the program were weaker (because of high unemployment or substantial barriers to employment); and (3) when PFS activities started promptly after referral and participation was closely monitored. The shift from an emphasis on skill-building activities to job club/job

search resulted in a decline in the expected average length of program participation. Parents who participated in PFS were active in some service for an average of approximately five months.

Despite the absence of employment and earnings impacts during this early follow-up period, PFS did lead to increases in child support payments. At this time, we do not know whether the increases were simply the result of more fathers paying child support through the official child support system, rather than paying it directly to the mothers of their children or if the increases were the result of fathers who had not previously paid support beginning to do so. If this represents a true net increase in support paid, it could be because PFS' parenting program helped fathers to understand the importance of paying child support, or it may be because the program's intake and enforcement processes discovered fathers with earnings and income that were missed by the official systems monitored by child support agencies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

When these two PFS reports on the lives of fathers and the lessons learned about program effectiveness are published at the end of the summer, an important body of knowledge will be available about delivering services for very disadvantaged noncustodial parents. While the story will not be complete—additional reports will follow in about a year—it does suggest several lessons for future programming.

First, there is a tremendous need for services to help low-income fathers learn about and be supported in the active roles they already play as fathers. While the research literature on the value of the contribution noncustodial parents make in the lives of their children is mixed, our own personal experiences as fathers suggest that fathers matter to their children. Yet, parenting is a humbling, imperfect, trial and error experience for us all. Most of us in this room have more resources to draw upon in learning how to play that role—our own fathers, relatives, and well-baby care that often brings ongoing advice from the family doctor, to name a few. Low-income noncustodial parents could benefit from supports that helped to fill these gaps when they exist.

Second, while the PFS experience indicates that it is possible to build the agency partnerships required to deliver services to this population, it takes considerable ongoing work, and even with support, PFS sites fell short of its goals. Moreover, fathers interviewed in the life history study provided many examples where they thought the program had not delivered on its promises of better jobs or a more responsive child support system. These criticisms suggest that technical assistance and adequate funding will be necessary for new programs to succeed.

Third, more work is needed to develop employment and training services that would increase low-income fathers' employment and earnings. A lack of fit between the employment and training services emphasized in the sites and the needs of a substantial portion of the PFS parents contributed to the program's lack of overall impacts on employment and earnings. Because the PFS sample was largely men who had worked—with varying degrees of regularity—at low-paying jobs, the challenge for the program was to help them find better jobs. The employment and training system does not have a lot of experience in successfully obtaining these kinds of jobs. There were signs of a modest trend toward positive impacts in two sites, Los Angeles and Memphis; these sites emphasized skill-building activities in conjunction with work. In retrospect, that combined approach may have been better suited to boost earnings. Suggested new approaches that might better meet the needs of these fathers include:

- Developing new ways to combine work and skill-building. Doing so, may help these men secure incremental wage increases which could raise their incomes over time.
- Developing temporary community service jobs. While, on average, the fathers in Parent's Fair Share had some work experience, about a third of them had little or no work experience at all. In some inner-city areas, unemployment rates remain persistently high, suggesting that some men simply did not have the opportunity to gain valuable work experience.
- Finally, as part of a longer-term strategy, provide job-retention services to help low-income men hold the jobs they get.

Fourth, in the final analysis, our society still defines the fathers' role as provider. But when the men served in this program were working, they seldom had enough income left over after meeting their own basic needs to contribute to the needs of their children. As a result, they often feel the system is stacked against them. Consideration should be given to two possible responses:

• Child support systems need to be more responsive to the noncustodial parent's economic position when it sets orders, and it needs to respond when earnings change. To avoid saddling poor fathers with debts that they will never be able to pay, initial orders should reflect current earnings, and when paternity is established near the time of birth, arrears should not be charged. Most states expect fathers to pay about 30 percent of their gross income in child support, which is a substantially higher share of their net income than it is for high income parents. Rationalization of orders by income and greater uniformity across states could help.

• To treat fathers who do the right thing equitably, we should treat them in the same manner as mothers; thus, noncustodial parents who work and pay child support should be made eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), now available primarily for custodial parents who are working. To avoid family-splitting incentives, the EITC could be split between the two noncustodial parents, if both are working, or one could claim the entire credit, when only one is working, or fathers could be limited only to any unused credit amount. This will be complicated to implement, but we need public policies that line up better with our values.

Finally, I want to conclude with the words of one of the fathers who participated in the PFS program:

> *"The opportunity to change, turn my life around through education and the motivation to make a real impact in my son's life for the better, it's just made all the difference in my life, and I believe in [my son's] life too. We have our hard times, but I think we get along better. We understand each other a little bit more—a lot more, and Parents' Fair Share was—if it weren't—I don't know what it would have taken to improve our relationship that much if there wasn't a forum and a guiding hand and all of that. We've spent probably more time together since Parents' Fair Share than we did all the time before."*

Being a good father is difficult for us all. Being poor and unemployed makes parenting even harder. Developmentally and financially, all children need fathers involved in their lives. The PFS experience demonstrates that it is possible to provide valuable services, particularly around parenting. We have much to learn, however, about effective employment and training services for low-income fathers. But there is a strong case for trying new approaches: no group has been hit harder by the two decades long secular decline in earnings for those with low skills. And an important part of the nation's children depend on them.

Thank you for this opportunity to preview lessons about working with low-income fathers from the PFS project.

Chairman SHAW. Thank you, Dr. Berlin.

Mr. Levin, do you want to be recognized for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. LEVIN. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to submit for the record a summary of some of the initiatives the Department of HHS has undertaken to help fathers support their children, including the recent effort to improve outreach to fathers in the early Head Start Program.

Chairman SHAW. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FATHERHOOD AND CHANGES TO THE WELFARE SYSTEM HEARING

• In response to the President's directive in 1995 that all federal agencies strengthen the roles of fathers in families, HHS established an intra-departmental Fathers' Work Group. Deputy Secretary Kevin Thurm serves as Chair of this work group.

• In October 1997, HHS awarded $1.5 million in demonstration grants to states for projects to improve child support enforcement (CSE), including collaboration among CSE, Head Start and Child Care programs and programs to provide special services to low income non-custodial fathers. A management information system is being developed for the fatherhood programs and evaluations to assess the imple-

mentation of the demonstration projects will be conducted during the next 12 months.

• HHS awarded $10 million in block grant funds in October 1997 and will award a similar amount in FY 1998 to all 50 states, DC and territories to promote access and visitation of children by their non-custodial parents. This program was proposed by President Clinton in his 1993 welfare reform proposal and authorized in PRWORA.

• HHS has incorporated boys and young men into National Strategy to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy by funding demonstration programs through the Title X Family Planning Program and other efforts.

• In 1997, HHS added a new component to the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project, the Fathers Studies Project, which examines the role of fathers in early childhood development and how program interventions can strengthen and improve father involvement. This project is being funded by the Head Start Bureau, the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Ford Foundation.

• Since 1993, HHS has supported the evaluation of Parents' Fair Share, a demonstration project for low income fathers who owe child support but are not paying it. HHS, Labor, Agriculture, Pew Charitable Trusts, the Ford Foundation, and AT&T have invested more than $10 million in the demonstration.

• HHS, under the leadership of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, has completed a multi-year collaborative project to review the state of research on fathers. The Forum has just issued a report that contains the results of this review and recommendations for how government research in this area can be improved. The Report "Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation and Fatherhood" is available on the Internet at *http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/fathers/fhoodini/htm.*

• Presently, HHS is taking a more systematic and thorough approach to incorporating fathers' involvement in our programs and research. We are working to remove barriers within and across agencies, to promote positive partnerships, and to increase the visibility of fatherhood issues with the public and media.

Mr. LEVIN. I am going to leave, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for this hearing. I think this panel indicates how broad based this effort needs to be.

I just may say to Mr. Ballard, you say in your testimony that you believe to restore the fabric and fiber of American communities, we must revive the nucleus of the family, the father. I assume you mean the father and the mother?

Mr. BALLARD. Well, in many communities fathers are seen as the lead person, the priest of the household, the one everyone looks to when there needs to be authority and guidelines. We just brought this to the forefront. It is something that women accept, not as so-called browbeaters or head of the household, so to speak, but men who are serving heads. We promote in our program that men must first serve their wives and their children, then he becomes a head.

Mr. LEVIN. I would hope we could come together even if there are differences about that. I hope that doesn't keep us from attacking this problem.

Mr. CAMP. It didn't sound like a difference to me.

Chairman SHAW. I can say that it gives us all something to strive for.

Mr. LEVIN. I think my wife feels we are both the nucleus.

Mr. BALLARD. Well, see, in any corporation, and the family is the same way, there has to be a final decision made. Sometimes the two people may not agree. Someone has to make the final decision. In many cases, that is the father. I don't think we need to really get caught up on this issue because right now they are not at home in the first place. We have to get them back. But I wanted to show

you that what we model in our program, we actually move back into the community and we model the responsible fatherhood piece.

The women are held as equal partners in the relationship. But again, the final decision has to be made by someone. In fact, if we see mothers and fathers as unisex, then kids become confused. There is difference in both roles or both parents. When as distinctly seen by children, they grow up in a healthy way.

Chairman SHAW. I would like to add to that. That is an interesting observation. I don't think I have the sensitivity to have picked up on it, but it is interesting that you did. I think what we are trying to accomplish is to bring the father back from a position of irrelevancy. You have got to have goals. I think that one of the first things that you learn, and I know, Mr. Ballard, that you worked very hard on this, as does Mr. Jones and other programs such as yours, you have got to first talk about self-esteem. These guys are worthless when they come in and they feel worthless. They are irrelevant to their family. They are not the fathers. They don't have any goals in life. It is just a completely drifting back and forth. You first have got to teach them they are somebody.

I really like that thing, if it is going to be, it has got to be me. I think bringing that in, and if it's a—I don't think any of us are going to get bogged down as to who is going to be the head of the family or whether it's going to be shared power, but I think that we all need goals and the goal has to be at least to be part of that nucleus. I think that is something that all of us are going to have to work on.

Mr. Camp.

Mr. CAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't been here all that long, but as we debated welfare reform—first, I want to thank all of you for coming and taking the time to testify.

But as we debated welfare reform, we had a goal. That goal was that able-bodied people work. There were many people who testified before this Subcommittee and fought that tooth and nail and said you will destroy the system. You will only impact the rolls between 1 and 3 percent. We have seen in some parts of the country welfare rolls declining up to 40 percent. We have seen very positive change. Now we have seen the studies come back that the people that have left welfare have actually gone to work, the University of Oregon and others, that I know all of you are aware of.

The ideal or goal that marriage be promoted I think is something that is critical because it is going to set a standard. Clearly from the testimony we have heard, we are not there yet in many communities. Some are further along. But it isn't something that is going to happen tomorrow. But if you don't set that lofty goal, which may seem unattainable now, and may even seem counterproductive, as the work requirement we were told was counterproductive. But clearly that has not been the case. I just want to say I think that is something that we have got to do.

Then just last, Dr. Primus, I just want to make a point that your testimony, what we have tried to do is talk about support after welfare as well. Clearly, under our changes families are getting more money after welfare reform, after they move off welfare in terms of the child support than they were getting under the old system. What we want to do is not look at a model that rewards the de-

pendents, but continues to make sure that more of those child support dollars actually improve the life of that family after welfare. I think you would agree that is the case now under the current law.

But I think this has been a very good discussion. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to move on this legislation. Mr. Ballard, I would just say I think the idea of servant leadership is a very good one. I appreciate your bringing that forward. Thank you.

Mr. BALLARD. Thank you. I would like to just make a comment. Joe Jones from Baltimore indicated that there are few marriage models in the central city. We can't preach marriage. We have more churches today than ever before and the problems are worse. Religion itself is not the answer. There has to be a deeper sense of spirituality, a respect for self and community and family.

What this agency does, it takes young couples who have been trained by us and we move them back into the community. They buy homes so they are a seed in the community, what we call human antibiotics, to not only turn the problems around, but to increase viability for those communities. I think that marriage must become the cornerstone of America again. Unless it does, all the money in the world would not get us any place. I think the Subcommittee is right on target. That is why I support the bill. I could not support it if marriage was not a linchpin of it because we not only support it in terms of a precept, but our examples of moving to the worst communities in America, southeast and so on, I think testifies to that.

Mr. CAMP. Thank you.

Mr. MINCY. Seventy percent of African-American children today are born out of wedlock. Forty percent of Hispanic children are born out of wedlock. My question to the Subcommittee has long been how do you promote marriage in a context in which most children are born after the fact? The response I have is not one that says that marriage is not an ideal, but it deals with what the practitioner and what the families in those communities deal with on a day-to-day basis, and asking very pragmatic questions about what the on-ramp to family formation is in these communities. I don't want to be misunderstood.

Also, as Joe Jones commented, we are encouraging the whole field, not just individual programs, to learn about the practice of team parenting, to teach couples how to have a dialog, how to manage difficulties and conflicts. Those are the cornerstones of what marriage is about. But the devil is going to be in the details of this bill. When you, if you put allocation mechanisms in the bill that reward programs that tell you that they are going to be promoting marriage, my experience and my sense of the field is that you will skew that funding, you will skew what is happening in communities in ways that do not build upon the work that is taking place in the field over the last 20 years.

I think we can get there, but I think pragmatically we have to be very careful.

Mr. CAMP. I appreciate your comment that we can get there, because I think that is where we need to go. Clearly, Mr. Jones is developing that kind of program on his own. So, he knows. I don't

know, but he seems to think that there is a way to begin that. Realizing that is very far down the road for some people. I am not saying that you are going to see instantaneous results there. These are very long-term efforts. But I think the ideal is critical. I think we have agreement on that. I appreciate that and thank you.

Chairman SHAW. Wendell is chafing at the bit over there. [Laughter.]

Mr. CAMP. He's been here before. We better let him talk.

Mr. PRIMUS. Just a couple of responses to what you said, Congressman Camp. One is I think most of us never had a problem with the work. I think there was unanimous agreement that work was important.

Mr. CAMP. Not right away. It took a while to get there. We all got there, that's true. We eventually linked arms and jumped over that vine.

Mr. PRIMUS. The issue was time limits and block grants. The issue was never work, I would submit. I guess even having recognized the importance of work, I think we in this society have to recognize that there are going to be some parents, both custodial and noncustodial, that aren't going to be able to earn enough in our free market society. They may not have the God-given gifts to earn a livable wage. In those situations, we are going to have to look for government assistance to help them.

But the key I think, and most States have now recognized this in terms of earnings disregards and EITC, that as government—when mothers earn, we don't reduce government assistance dollar for dollar. I guess when I look at that chart and see the 100-percent tax rates, why should those fathers pay? I think we need the regulation. They ought to pay, but they also—it needs to be reinforced by a set of economic incentives.

Even if they are off of welfare, and I accept the goal of trying to reduce welfare by getting families into the work place, why not subsidize. I mean if the mother can't use up all of the tax credits that she is entitled to, why not give them over to the father to incentivize his child support payments and then add to his check as we transmit it to the mother.

I guess I am a little—my final point, I think it's a little too early to call welfare reform a success yet. I mean——

Chairman SHAW. You are still waiting on the recession. [Laughter.]

Mr. PRIMUS. No. I'm not waiting on the recession. I am waiting on to see whether or not we have really improved child well-being. I think you and I would both agree that's what we are all about. My understanding of some of the people that are leaving the rolls is only about 50 percent have earnings, not all. I think the jury is still out.

But one of the things about welfare reform, it has enabled at the local level us to have this discussion. Some of the funding that you have provided, TANF and welfare to work, can actually be used today to start and seed some of the vision you have in the Fathers Count bill.

Mr. CAMP. I would just say, and I appreciate those comments, it took 40 years to get the work requirement. I am not sure there was

agreement from the very beginning on that. It took a long time and it took a change in parties and majority to do that.

We have been at this a few short years, so there is no one saying that the world is fixed. But clearly the dire predictions that were made about what welfare reform would do have not come true. In contrast, it has been the other way. The number of people working have exceeded even the predictions, the positive effects at least initially. A lot of that is partly a result of a strong economy. Let's hope that recession doesn't come very soon because clearly we'll have a lot of strain and problems as we always do and as we did under the old system. That wasn't necessarily a perfect system in a recession either.

But I think the idea is true. How do we improve the lives of families and particularly the lives of children in those families. I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. PRIMUS. Just one final comment. I said in testimony that just as we tried to transfer welfare offices, I think that's what has got to go on with child support. I guess I firmly believe, and some of my friends say well, the child support offices aren't even doing a good enough job collecting child support, how can they take on anything more. But a lot of the reason, as you stated, is they don't have a job. We need to help them get that job and earn higher wages, help them be a better dad. The child support office by linking I think, I mean you may have thought I was a detractor or critic of welfare reform. I am now saying that is exactly what has to happen to the child support office, which is a very critical part here in the fathers' lives.

Chairman SHAW. Before we put this one to rest, and I think it is a very small part of this particular hearing, but you have brought us something with regard to child support that we should take a close look at. I assure you we will.

Mr. Collins.

Mr. COLLINS. Just briefly, Mr. Chairman. You know there is an old saying, a hit dog hollers.

Chairman SHAW. Say that again.

Mr. COLLINS. A hit dog hollers. [Laughter.]

Mr. Camp, you were right. The intent of the welfare reform bill was to encourage work and promote people to work and get off of welfare rolls. I understand there were even a few people who quit their jobs because the welfare reform bill was signed. I don't know who those people were or who any one particular person was.

Chairman SHAW. They are not in here.

Mr. COLLINS. I think it was that dog we heard from a while ago.

Mr. Ballard, it was very interesting to listen to your analysis of how a lot of this came about in a lot of our cities and communities where people just kind of moved from communities, and a lot of activities began to take place in those communities. You said that the churches alone can't do this. I am not convinced the churches alone can do it either. But I do think that all of our youngsters, and we know this, all of our youngsters at some time or another are exposed to education. We as a government prohibit even the hanging of the 10 most sensible laws that were ever scribed. We prohibit those from being within any public building. I think that is where

the Federal Government is obstructing the opportunity to promote just good morals, as you spoke of, in conjunction with our churches.

We appreciate each of you being here. Mr. Primus, we look forward to your return. It is always interesting to listen to your comments.

Mr. PRIMUS. Thank you.

Mr. COLLINS. We're all in high hopes that everything that we have done will work as it was intended to. But we all know that we're all human, and that's the reason that the Chairman continues to hold these types of hearings and promote different ideas of how to deal with a situation that is going to take a long time to change and go back to where we were 30, 40, 50 years ago with community and families.

It is interesting too to hear you state that this could be funded with existing funds, with existing programs, meaning that there would not be an additional cost, but just with the discretionary provisions that we put in for the States, that they could take some of those funds and use them for this type of purpose and to help promote fatherhood and family. Hopefully, the Federal Government will not step in and try to challenge any portion of this idea of Chairman Shaw's that would promote, allow religious faith-based organizations to participate.

Mr. Mincy, do you want to say something?

Mr. MINCY. Yes. Mr. Collins, not only is this a hypothetical, but it is occurring. You heard Mr. Jones' comment about the Partners for Fragile Families project in which the Office of Child Support Enforcement and the Ford Foundation and the Mott Foundation are working together in now 13 communities around the country where they are using existing funding and finding more creative ways of using child support funds to support fathers engagement with their children, to support team parenting, to support employment and training services for fathers, and to help you get to your goal, which was to increase paternity establishment rates, to increase work, and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

I think one of the issues is that as we sort of observe how this project is working out on the ground, there is a lot of uncertainty at the State level as to whether or not they indeed can take advantage of the flexibility that the Congress has provided. I think over the next 3 years that this project will be running, it will be a very important laboratory of how, with existing funds, we can restructure the set of incentives and penalties in relationships across agencies in ways that do get to your goal, which is to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families within a revised structure with existing funds.

Mr. BALLARD. Mr. Collins, Dr. Mincy in his opening comments quoted Malachi 4, verse 5 and 6 which is a cornerstone in our agency. We believe that a man's heart when it is changed by God, he will find his own job. He will go into his own education and become a good man.

I was in prison 30 years ago and was very violent, hadn't finished high school. I was honorably discharged. My heart was converted to Christ in prison. I came out of prison. I have a son who is 5 years old. I adopted him in 1959. Jobs were hard to get. But

I took the worst kind of jobs because my heart was different. It was changed by the power of God. There's a difference I think in God and church, one is an organization and one is a person. I subscribe that if a man has God in his heart, at the seam of his life, you don't have to tell him to get married. He will see fit to get married, as I have done.

I guess what I am saying is that I am taking the model in my life and over 5,000 fathers, at which 20 percent of those fathers have gotten married because of our example. If a government insists on a father being out of the home, and we see what has happened because of that, but over the past 40 years, we need a different thinking to reverse that. That same thinking that pushed them out of the homes cannot be the thing we use to bring them back.

I think what Chairman Shaw is suggesting here is a whole different thinking about the family, which means that we must bring marriage to the forefront as loving, compassionate, secure environment for kids to be raised in. When we do that, I think America becomes safe for all of us.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Chairman, if I may add one thing here. I would hope that this Subcommittee would not interpret Mr. Mincy's comments to indicate that there is unanimity of opinion here that one does not need this legislation because one could do this with existing funds. If that is Mr. Mincy's opinion, please, I hope this Subcommittee understands it is only his opinion.

I think that this legislation is very important, regardless of whether or not there is flexibility with existing funds within the TANF block grant, because it sends a very important signal that a priority of this Congress is to include fathers, not just as an afterthought, but to include them as central to what we are trying to do to rebuild America. And that we need to promote marriage as well.

If Mr. Mincy meant to indicate that we don't need this legislation, I just want to let you know I think we need it quite dramatically.

Chairman SHAW. No. I didn't interpret it that way.

Let me just conclude by a little bit of a summation about what I have observed today and what has happened. I think we have had a very, very good hearing. We all want to go the same direction. We think different roads are going to get us there and all of the roads are not going to get us there. I feel very strongly that just as we felt in welfare reform that belief in the human spirit was very important. We believe in the human spirit and we are being proven right. I am sure that many will say with the help of a strong economy. But in any event, it is working. Our faith has not been misplaced.

I think the same is true as far as these fathers are concerned. We can look in the history and we can see a lot of things that have gone wrong. But we know exactly where the results are. The results are that we have seen a disintegration of the family. We also know statistically, and all of us would agree statistically that with the disintegration of the family that we have seen, that the kids are the ones who have really suffered.

Having raised four kids myself, I know how strong they can be, particularly when they get into adolescence. I don't see how these moms can do it alone. I can readily see that a one-parent family is going to have big, big problems raising their kids. I don't care what color they are, I don't care what economic stratum they are in. There is going to be a problem, that is statistically proven. That means we have got to do something, everything we can to encourage marriage and not discourage it, whether we are talking about the Tax Code or whether we are talking about legislation such as this.

Dr. Mincy, you have mentioned that this should not necessarily be a goal of the legislation. However, and I don't think I misinterpreted you. Perhaps I am using some type of a license that doesn't clearly point out exactly where you are. But there is one thing that has come through very clearly in this hearing, and it's come all the way through, is that if we make these guys marriageable, women will want to marry them and they will get married. Whether we put it in the legislation or not, it is going to happen if we are successful in what we are doing.

Mr. Ballard, I have seen some of the accomplishments that you have had out at the housing project here in the District of Columbia, where you have brought these young people in. I remember the testimony that they gave to us when we were unveiling this legislation as to how these things will definitely work. We need to not only have faith in the human spirit, but we also have to let people know that we have faith in them. We have to raise that bar of expectation. That bar of expectation that went all the way down to the ground with some of these people because we expect nothing from them as we see them on the street corners. That is wrong. We have got to help them get their self-esteem up and their self-worth so that they feel that they are worth something.

Dr. Horn, I heard you express on a television program that you and I were on together, which has yet to be aired, however you expressed something which I hadn't thought anything about, I never noticed before. But since you have said it I have given it a great deal of thought. I have also noticed it in watching, particularly in these situation comedies. It is always the male who is the boob. He is the dummy. Particularly when you look at your African-American family situation comedies. This guy is just a guy who if it weren't for the women making him feel that he did the right thing or something, he would be absolutely a disaster.

You even brought up "Home Improvement." You see that. You can see the guy is constantly the dummy in the whole situation. I think when we talk about bringing the man back to the nucleus, whether he is the nucleus or shares the nucleus, it is very important that the male's self-worth as a member of the family and his self-esteem as an important part of that family has got to be emphasized. It's got to be emphasized.

I am not getting into an equal rights situation. Believe me, I know better than to get into that thing. I don't do that at home either. But I think that he has to feel that he's vital to the family image. If he doesn't, he is going to hang out on the corners and he is not going to rise beyond our expectation of him.

This has been a great hearing. I think we have had some great insight here and learned quite a bit. I would like to see this legislation move ahead. I will be filing it again. I think the calendar is very much against us now, but we will hope that in the next Congress this will become law.

Yes, Mr. Collins.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to comment to Mr. Ballard that sir, I make the final decision in our household. It's "Yes, ma'am," or "No, ma'am." [Laughter.]

Chairman SHAW. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:22 p.m., the hearing was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

[Submissions for the record follow:]

Statement of Catholic Charities/North, Lynn, Massachusetts

Catholic Charities/North, a community service site of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Boston, Inc., wishes to include the following program description in the proceedings of the hearing on Fatherhood and Welfare Reform. We believe that we have developed an effective program to meet the challenges of this population. It is clear that national attention must be drawn to such services. A recent PBS documentary "Fatherhood USA" featured our program and others like it which are attempting to make a difference in the lives of these young men. We are grateful for such interest and are willing to assist in this effort in any way.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Catholic Charities/North is seeking support in sustaining and expanding the Young Fathers Program. Americans have come to recognize that fathers' involvement in the development of their children is extremely important. Nearly 25% of our children, or more than 19 million, live in families with no father. The long term effects of this trend are very sobering: diminished opportunity for learning how to be a partner in a stable two parent family, economic loss, fewer educational opportunities, and increasingly limited access to employment. family adequately. Research also demonstrates that girls from single parent families have a threefold greater risk of bearing children as unwed teenagers. Catholic Charities has recognized the vital importance of services to young fathers, many of whom would otherwise be caught up in a web of criminal activity, domestic violence, and economic disarray. We are very clear that, if we are serious about creating a safe place in which to raise a child, we have to make a father's contribution to his child, both in terms of finances and parental nurturing, an absolute priority.

The target population of the Young Fathers Program is men who have become fathers, often unintentionally, who are undereducated, underemployed, and living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Referrals have been made through other Catholic Charities' programs which primarily serve young mothers and their children. Fathers are identified, and aggressive outreach efforts are made to engage them in services. Specific programs generating referrals are: Second Chance School for pregnant teens, co-sponsored by the Lynn School Department; the Amity Transitional Housing Program for young mothers, partially supported by the Lynn Housing Authority and a past recipient of Block Grant funds; the Educational and Parenting Skills Center, a GED program primarily serving young mothers; and the Young Parents Outreach program, supported by the Department of Social Services. Strong relationships have been developed with many other agencies including the departments of Probation and Social Services and other individual providers.

In the past year, 38 fathers, primarily under the age of 25, have been assisted directly in stabilizing their lives. Many more have contacted our agency and have been exposed to the principles upon which the program in based. A majority of those helped directly have been able to sustain employment, with few cases of criminal recidivism.. We have seen tremendous improvement in the living conditions of these young fathers and in their abilities to demonstrate appropriate parenting and relationship skills.

The program, currently staffed only by a half-time outreach social worker, contains two vital elements. First is the weekly Fatherhood group during which the young men are taught the basics of being responsible fathers in an atmosphere of positive encouragement. The focus is on five specific principles:

1. As a father, it is my responsibility to give affection for my children.

2. As a father, it is my responsibility to give gentle guidance to my children.
3. As a father, it is my responsibility to give financial support to my children and to the mother of my children.
4. As a father, it is my responsibility to demonstrate respect at all times to the mother of my children.
5. As a father, it is my responsibility to set a proud example by living within the law without the taint of drug or alcohol abuse.

The Fatherhood group provides weekly speakers who underscore specific principles and assist the men in learning how to incorporate these principles into their lives.

The second element of the program is the outreach and support of the social worker. By going "where they are," he provides a mentoring relationship for these men who have never known a positive relationship with their own fathers. The social worker encourages, leads, and connects young fathers to employment, education, and other necessary resources. He is there for them in crisis situations and provides a father's perspective regarding issues of child development, behavior management, and relationship concerns.

In the past year, the Young Fathers Program has been recognized in many arenas as a model for reaching this difficult population. The graduate School of Social Work at Boston College has utilized this as a placement site for their interns and, we hope they will continue to do so in the future. The Program Director is currently a member of a taskforce of the Governor's Commission on Father Absence and Family Support. Program staff have been asked to speak at national conferences in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Arizona, and Washington DC on building community partnerships to address the national problem of fragile families and father involvement.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To contact young men who have become, or are about to become, fathers to encourage them to become responsibly involved in the lives of their children.
2. To teach young fathers the necessary skills for responsible parenting and respectful, committed relationships with the mothers of their children.
3. To increase opportunities for young fathers to become sufficiently employed in order to provide basic necessities for their children.
4. To assist young fathers to end their involvement with the legal system, thus making them more able to be employed and to support their children.
5. To develop a network of supports that will empower young fathers to become active, contributing members of this community.

ANTICIPATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Children growing up without the positive support of a father are more likely to live in poverty. Boys who grow up without a father are more likely to be involved in criminal activity and become incarcerated. The elimination of these factors is the long-term goal of the Young Fathers Program. In the short term, through the continued development of comprehensive services, young men will have the opportunity to increase their confidence, motivation, and productivity. Young mothers will be able to increase their sense of safety and security as they get realistic support from their children's fathers. Young fathers will take an active role in providing safe, affordable housing for their children, as well as encouraging them to improve their own lives. With a decrease in unemployment and criminal activity for this population, it is clear that resources can be utilized in other ways to build a stronger community.

EXPANSION PROPOSAL

Catholic Charities/North is hoping to expand services in this important initiative. To insure the quality of services and to reach a greater number of young families, we are hoping to increase the outreach and social work staffing. We believe a "team approach" is extremely effective in outreaching to and supporting these young men.

The outreach worker and social worker are the heart and soul of the program. These individuals will provide resource development, encouragement, and mentoring. They know what is possible and what is available to help young fathers meet their individual goals. The program director provides supervision and support, as well as assists in networking with other community agencies serving these families.

PROGRAM BENEFIT

The Young Fathers Program is providing a necessary services to a very "hard-to-reach" population. Since its inception, the program has served nearly 100 men, including 38 in the past year. Many other young men have been exposed to the principles of being a responsible father as the graduates of our program outreach to their friends and relatives. It is impossible to determine what proportion of the young parent population may have been effected in some way by this contact.

With the additional funding, our hope is to provide ongoing support to the young men currently involved in the program as well as to increase annual individual contact to 125 individuals. Well over 90% of program participants have been and will continue to be from low-income and "inner-city" sections of Greater Lynn.

Statement of Center for Families, School of Consumer and Family Sciences, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

PURDUE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR FAMILIES AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER WITH FATHERS

"IT'S MY CHILD TOO"

A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG FATHERS

What does it mean to be a responsible father? What are the roles and responsibilities associated with fatherhood? What role do communities play in supporting young fathers to increase their commitment and involvement in the lives of their children?

The Center for Families at Purdue University has found supportive parent education programs such as *It's My Child Too,* disseminated through the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, to be a valuable resource for young fathers.

The Center for Families and the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service collaborate in the implementation of this model program for young fathers. The Center for Families is a catalyst for initiating and integrating outreach, teaching, and research activities that support families. The Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service is an educational organization operating in each of Indiana's 92 counties to maximize the contributions that Purdue, a land grant university, makes to the well-being of Indiana residents.

The *It's My Child Too* program is aimed at young fathers 14–25 years of age in need of knowledge and skills associated with competent parenting. Most participants to date have been living in high-risk circumstances due to limited economic and educational resources. The short-term parent education program (minimum 6 90-minutes sessions) is viewed as a first step in heightening young men's awareness of the roles, responsibilities, and skills of fatherhood. The content is tailored to the needs of participants. Major content areas include: young father's roles in the lives of their children; responding appropriately to children's developmental needs; coping with stress; communicating with the mother of the child; and responsible decision-making (sexuality, financial support, and establishment of paternity).

The unique county-team design calls for community collaboration to support the successful implementation of the *It's My Child Too* program. Technical assistance and evaluation provided by Purdue University's Center for Families further supports county teams through resource, referral and evaluation feedback.

Statement of Citizens for Parental Accountability, Chantilly, Virginia

A REAL RX FOR WELFARE REFORM

On Thursday, July 30, 1998, the United States House of Representatives Subcommittee on Human Resources will hold hearings regarding the role of fatherhood in the welfare reform effort. IT IS ABOUT TIME THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ADDRESS THE "ABSENT PARENT" COMPONENT OF WELFARE REFORM IN A FUNDAMENTAL AND MEANINGFUL WAY.

As a single-parent of five and public assistance recipient, I participated in two sets of welfare reform hearings; (one in July of 1994 and one in February of 1995). During my testimony, I emphasized the importance of parental accountability for both parents involved as Congress pursued a "work first" approach to welfare reform. Today, I can offer a unique and different perspective on this issue.

After seven years of separation and the receipt of various types of public assistance, my family was reunited in February of 1997. My husband and I have five children. In today's economy, the adequate provision for and care of children generally requires the combined effort of both mothers and fathers. Of course there are exceptions. However, the majority of typical American citizens living as single-parents have difficulty in meeting the needs, both financial and emotional, of their children. This is not an unkind remark. It is simply a fact. I know. I've been there.

After a lot of hard work, discussion, and compromise, my husband returned to our family. It has not been easy to rebuild our broken home. He has participated in forums I hold to inform others about child support availability and enforcement. He has freely acknowledged the error of what he did in financially abandoning us and has been diligent in progressing forward at his current employment.

We, together, can share the experience we have had as the only realistic answer to the welfare dilemma. It takes two parents to make a child. It takes two parents to appropriately support that child. This message is important and needs to be shared with any legislator who truly desires to make a difference in this frustrating area of American social policy.

HOPEFULLY, THESE HEARINGS WILL PROVIDE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDING BOTH PARENTS IN THE WELFARE REFORM PROCESS. TRUE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED WHEN BOTH PARENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE BEST OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL ABILITY.

CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CHILDREN
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
July 30, 1998

RE: The Fathers Count Act, 1998, H.B. 3314

Honorable E. Clay Shaw Jr.
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources

Good day, Congressman Shaw and honorable members of Congress. The Connecticut Commission on Children is pleased to have this opportunity to submit testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee, Sub Committee on Human Resources regarding House Bill 3314, "The Father Counts Act of 1998." We submit this testimony to you in the spirit of our statutory charge by the Connecticut General Assembly to "promote public policies that enhance the interest and well being of children and make recommendations for children annually to the Legislature and to the Governor." To that end, we support the efforts of this Committee to fund programs that promote and enhance positive father involvement with their children.

BACKGROUND

Unfortunately, in the past three decades, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of children living in households without fathers. In a 1997 report published by the Connecticut Association for Human Services, 149,702 families in Connecticut were single-parent families—that translates into 20% of all families in Connecticut. Research on promoting positive father involvement suggests that encouraging fathers to provide for their children economically and to be regularly and positively connected to them, whether or not the father lives in the home, helps children to do better emotionally and academically and lessens the incidence of behavioral problems, whether or not the father lives in the home. Thus, encouraging positive father

involvement is central to an agenda for children in order to ensure economic security, emotional well being and opportunity to achieve educational success.

In recent decades, fathers have become increasingly involved in their children's lives. But fathers are still much less involved than mothers. It has been estimated that fathers engage their children only two-fifths as much as mothers do and are only two-thirds as accessible to their children as are mothers. In 1994, 24% of American children lived in a single mother household, up from 8% in 1960. Most single-mother households are the result of the high divorce rate in this country, but a growing number are due to never-married child rearing. In 1993, almost 10% of children in the United States were living with never-married mothers, up from less than half of a percent in 1960.

This rise in father absence has attracted public concern across the political spectrum. For example, according to a recent Gallup poll conducted for the National Center on Fathering, 79% of Americans either agree or strongly agree that "the most significant family or social problem facing America is the physical absence of the father from the home."

In reaction to the growing focus on the importance of fathers, we at the Connecticut Commission on Children have researched the effects of father involvement and the types of programs being implemented to promote positive father involvement.

RESEARCH

In recent years, research on fathers has burgeoned. Two general fields of research have emerged. The first field investigates the benefits of father involvement in married-parent families. University of Illinois professor of human development Joseph Pleck has differentiated three levels of father involvement: amount of fathers' engagement with their children, fathers' accessibility, and fathers' share of responsibility in taking care of their children. To be beneficial, this involvement must be positive. The second field looks at differences between children growing up in married-parent families and single-parent families. These two fields of research indicate that positive father involvement benefits children and parents, while father absence is detrimental to children and parents.

According to the research, positive father involvement contributes to the cognitive, social-emotional, and moral development of children from infancy through early adulthood. In young children, positive father involvement is positively related to cognitive performance, empathy, self-control, appropriate sex-role behavior, and security of parental attachment. In school-aged children and adolescents, positive father involvement is positively related to academic performance, social competence and self-esteem, and is negatively related to behavior problems.

For example, a recent report by the U.S. Department of Education indicates that children fare better in school if their fathers, in addition to their mothers, are involved in their education.

In a study of fathers and their children spanning four generations, Harvard psychologist John Snarey found that fathers' involvement was predictive of the educational, social, and occupational success of their children in young adulthood as well. Furthermore, he found that the best predictor of men's involvement with their children is the involvement of their fathers when they were growing up.

Positive father involvement benefits parents in addition to children. Snarey found that father involvement not only does not impede occupational success, but it is modestly related to greater occupational success. Other studies also indicate that involvement with one's children serves as a buffer for work-related stress and can increase productivity. Furthermore, Snarey found that marital success is predicted by men's involvement with their children.

Unfortunately, fathers who are divorced or never married often have limited contact with their children. Furthermore, even when non-residential fathers remain involved in their children's lives, the benefits of this involvement are questionable, particularly if a father does not have a good relationship with his children's mother.

Not surprisingly, father absence has been found to be detrimental to children. For example, in a study utilizing four national data sets, Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur at the University of Wisconsin have found that children of single-mother families are at modestly greater risk, compared to children whose parents are married, for dropping out of school, becoming teen parents, and being detached from the workforce as young adults. Children of never-married mothers are slightly more at risk than children of divorce. Additionally, McLanahan and Sandefur found that the risks experienced by children of single-mothers are not significantly reduced by the presence of stepfathers.

A good deal of the increased risk experienced by children of single-mothers is due to the loss of their fathers as economic providers. Furthermore, single-mother fami-

lies move more frequently and have less community support resources than do married parents. These factors affect mothers as well as children. Because of their low-income level and isolation from community support resources, single-mothers experience greater amounts of stress than do married mothers.

Fathers also suffer from being separated from their children. In fact, fathers may suffer more depression and psychological problems as a result of divorce than do their spouses. Evidence shows that fathers who have never been connected with their children also suffer adverse psychological consequences such as depression and low self-esteem. Additionally, Rutgers University sociologist David Popeno argues that responsible fatherhood helps to socialize men as responsible members of society. When men forfeit the responsibility of fatherhood, they run the risk of becoming marginalized from society.

On a broader scale, father absence is associated with a number of social problems. A number of theorists and policy makers argue that father absence is a leading cause of a number of this country's social ills. Research does indicate that communities with high levels of father absence tend to also have high rates of poverty, crime, and young men in prison. From these findings it is tempting to conclude that father absence contributes to the social ills. However, one must be cautious in interpreting these findings because they are correlational and do not imply father absence causes the other problems with which it is associated.

PROGRAMS

Our research has revealed that there are a large number of growing efforts throughout the country designed to promote positive father involvement. Efforts to promote positive father involvement generally have one or more of three aims.

- First, efforts can aim to increase positive paternal involvement in families where the father lives with his children.
- Second, efforts can aim to facilitate and support positive connections between non-residential fathers and their children.
- Third, efforts can aim to prevent father absence.

These aims are not mutually exclusive, and successful efforts should incorporate all three of them.

In order to effectively promote positive father involvement, it is important to understand the factors underlying father involvement and the barriers that fathers encounter when they try to increase their involvement. Developmental psychologist Michael Lamb and his colleagues have identified a widely adopted hierarchy of four factors influencing paternal behavior, all of which must be met in order to successfully enhance men's involvement with their children. These factors include: motivation, skills and self-confidence, support, and institutional practices. A father's motivation is influenced by his personality characteristics, his family history (including growing up with his own father), his beliefs, and the beliefs of the community to which he belongs. Once motivated, a father must have confidence in his skills and ability as an individual and as a man to successfully raise his children. To be successfully involved with his children, a father must also be supported by his family and community. Furthermore, it is imperative that institutions, such as a father's workplace and the childcare and educational institutions which his children attend, do not impede (and hopefully encourage) his involvement with his children. On a broader institutional scale, society must provide social and economic support for fathers' involvement. To effectively promote positive father involvement, a repertoire of programs and legislation should be designed to impact all four of the factors.

A variety of programs exist that have at least one of the three aims mentioned above and are designed to impact multiple factors influencing father involvement. These programs can be further divided into four general categories.

- The first category consists of programs designed to prevent males from fathering children until they are prepared to be good parents.
- The second category consists of programs designed to connect fathers with their children either at birth or after a period of absence.
- The third category consists of programs designed to support fathers' continued involvement with their children.
- The fourth category consists of programs designed to help fathers to be better economic providers.

Prevent. Programs designed to prevent males from fathering children until they are prepared to be good parents are usually aimed at adolescents and preadolescents. These programs are offered by a variety of institutions, including schools, community centers, and religious groups. Most prevention efforts, however, take the form of curriculum-based programs offered in schools or community centers. These prevention curricula have typically focused on females, and research indicates that

teen pregnancy prevention efforts may be less effective for males. Recently, Planned Parenthood, in conjunction with the Children's Aid Society and Philliber Research, outlined a conceptual framework for successful male focused teen-pregnancy prevention programs. The authors conclude that successful programs should be long-term and intensive, provide close relationships with caring adults, elicit the support of peers and parents, and focus on skills building and activity-based lessons.

Connect. Programs to promote fathers' positive involvement with their children must first address the most basic connection between father and child. The man's acknowledgment that he is the child's father. This establishment of paternity has clear financial benefits for children. When paternity is established, children are eligible for social security and health care benefits (if their fathers are insured), and fathers are also legally responsible to contribute financial support to their children. But paternity establishment has psychological benefits as well. It encourages fathers to develop a sense of responsibility towards their children, and even if fathers do not get involved in their children's upbringing, the children still grow up with a better sense of their heritage and identity.

The best time to establish paternity is at birth. Programs based upon this premise have significantly increased the rates of paternity establishment by encouraging unwed fathers to establish paternity while in hospitals' maternity wards. Even if fathers do not establish paternity at birth, programs can encourage them to do so at a later date.

Support. After a father forms a connection with his child, he must feel supported by his family and his community in order to remained involved. A number of resource centers and support groups have been established to help provide such support to residential and non-residential fathers. These services typically offer services such as legal aid and advocacy for fathers, parenting classes, counseling for couples, and job training.

Job Training. Since father's absence is most prevalent in impoverished families; most of these programs focus on helping low income fathers develop employment skills and help him stay psychologically involved with his child. A key component of promoting the involvement of low-income fathers is to overcome economic barriers to positive father involvement by helping them find employment. In addition, states should evaluate welfare reform policies to make sure that they promote a positive fatherhood agenda.

In summary, effective efforts to promote positive father involvement intervene on multiple levels to break down the personal, cultural, political and societal barriers that many men encounter as they try to increase their involvement in their children's lives. In Connecticut, and throughout the country, a growing number of programs are helping to prevent unprepared young men from becoming fathers, connect absent fathers with their families, support fathers' continued positive involvement with their children and become better economic providers.

The Commission on Children strongly supports H.R. 3314 because, by providing these programs with much needed support, the Fathers Count Act will help Connecticut parents who are struggling to balance the responsibilities of work and family, and it will help bolster their children's success in school and as future parents.

The Commission also supports federal policies (the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRA) and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997(BBA)) that have given states the opportunity to promote responsible fatherhood in several ways. Under the new welfare law, states can increase family income by: 1) providing employment and training to fathers; 2) increase child support collections; and 3) increase the distribution of child support collected on behalf of families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy families (TANF). Funds allocated to the States from H.B. 3314 should be linked to and coordinated with State welfare reform initiatives to ensure maximization of funds and to eliminate duplicative programs.

The Commission on Children has made available to you copies of our recent study on "The Importance of Fatherhood: Promising Efforts to Promote Positive Father Involvement" written by Christopher C. Henrich, M.S. Psychology, Yale University. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

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