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Editor's Note

This issue of *Policy Currents* is devoted to the topic of children and public policy. Three groups of scholars have contributed articles on this very important topic. Sally Cohen and Alice Sardell write about policymaking for children. Their scholarship contributes to a growing body of knowledge about politics and policymaking for children and families. Cathy Johnson, Thomas Lewis Gais, and Catherine Lawrence focus on the connection between welfare reform and childhood poverty. They explore the question of what policy theories underlie welfare changes that have been adopted across the American states and the impacts of these changes on children. Finally, Maureen Pirog, Tara Grieshop, and Brooks Elliot report on child support guidelines across the states. They look at the patterns of variation in court-ordered payments by noncustodial parents and the relationship between these payments and relative generosity of welfare benefits to low-income children.

Hoping to establish a forum for political scientists interested in this area, Cohen and Sardell would like to start an APSA Related Group on Children and Family Policy at the 2003 annual meeting. Anyone interested in joining this group should contact Sally Cohen at sally.cohen@yale.edu or Alice Sardell at alsard@aol.com.

Ken Bickers

Editor, *Policy Currents*; Co-Associate Director, Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis

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Policymaking for Children's Issues¹

Sally S. Cohen and Alice Sardell

Children are a unique group politically. Although they lack political resources of their own, others often use them as powerful symbols in political rhetoric (Gutterman, 2002). An examination of policymaking for children can thus be a rich source of thinking about representation and the development of public policy. Several political scientists have analyzed policymaking for children as part of social movements (Imig, 1996, 2001), historical analyses of social policies for women and children (Skocpol, 1992; Skocpol & Dickert, 2001), or scholarship in a specific children's policy area (Cohen, 2001; Gormley, 1995; Sardell, 1991; Sardell & Johnson, 1998). But few have analyzed the recent history of children's issues across policy domains. Our work is unique in spanning two areas, child health and child care, and in its attempts to draw general conclusions about policymaking for children.

The findings presented in this paper are based on two separate longitudinal studies of children's issues from the 1970s through the 1990s. One study focused on child care and the other on children's health policy. We identify common themes in both studies so as to enhance our understanding of the policy processes in which children are target populations.

Methods, Frameworks, and Overview of Cases

Methods and Frameworks

Each study used a multi-case approach and was based on an extensive review of government documents and semi-structured interviews with key informants. Combined, the investigators interviewed approximately

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175 policy actors. The child care study is completed (Cohen, 2001). The study of children's health policy, still in process, analyzes six cases of child health policy from 1977 to 1997.² This paper draws upon three of those cases, each of which addresses children's health insurance.

Both studies independently focused on the interactions among political structures and institutions (i.e., Congress and the executive branch) and organized interests in shaping policy outcomes. Both studies also analyzed policy communities, conceptualized as networks of experts in a given policy area (in and outside of government) who relate professionally to one another on the basis of their specialization.

Both the child health and child care studies used Baumgartner and Jones's (1995) model of punctuated equilibrium to describe how periods of relative stability in policymaking were followed by major junctures of rapid policy change. Both studies also used the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier, 1988) for understanding how coalitions interacted in the policy process and influenced policy outcomes. In addition, the child health study used Kingdon's (1995) model of agenda-setting.

Overview of Cases

Each study had a different mix of cases, reflecting their different research questions. The child health policy data encompass three cases related to health insurance coverage for children. The child care research analyzed three key periods of child care policymaking ending in 1971, 1990, and 1996, respectively.

Child health cases. The first child health case examines the expansions of the Medicaid program during the 1980s. Medicaid, enacted as Title XIX of the Social Security Act of 1965, is a major source of public financing for children's health services. In the early 1980s, federal funding for Medicaid was cut as part of the Reagan Administration's efforts to reduce funding for social programs and return decision-making to the states. Congress enacted a series of incremental changes in the Medicaid program each year between 1984 and 1987, and 1989 to 1990. These reforms greatly increased the number of eligible pregnant women and children and separated eligibility for Medicaid from welfare (Sardell, 1991). A broad coalition of children's advocacy groups, professional associations, health policy groups, religious organizations and state officials, including the National Governors Association (NGA), pushed for the Medicaid expansions. However, by the end of the decade, the NGA opposed further eligibility expansions, arguing that states could not afford the growing costs of the Medicaid program.

The second child health case analyzes efforts by the governors to change Medicaid from a federal entitlement program to a block grant to the states. The 1994 election of a Congress dominated by conservative Republicans, who advocated for a diminished federal presence in social policies, strengthened the governors' influence in federal policymaking. In 1995, and again the next year, the NGA proposed to reform Medicaid by making it a block grant to states and thus end Medicaid as a federal entitlement for those deemed eligible. Although Congress passed the governors' proposal, President Clinton first vetoed it and the next year threatened a veto (Sardell & Johnson, 1998). Nonetheless, the governors' call to replace Medicaid with a block grant had an important influence on the 1997 law to subsidize health insurance for uninsured children.

The third child health case examines the 1997 enactment of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). In August of that year, President Clinton signed two laws that included a total of \$48 billion to fund a new federal-state children's health insurance program for ten years. The program was widely hailed as the largest federal investment in children's health services since the enactment of Medicaid. The swift enactment of SCHIP was partly due to the entrepreneurial activity of Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) who in partnership with the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) proposed and advanced a block grant to states for children's health insurance.

Child care cases. In 1971, Congress passed the Comprehensive Child Care Development Act, which proposed the establishment of a universal, comprehensive, and voluntary child care program, based on Head Start. The bill generated considerable controversy over the issue of prime sponsorship—which level of government and what size local entity would be eligible to administer the child care programs. But arguments over the administrative components of the bill paled in comparison to the ideological conflicts that the bill sparked. Critics of child care legislation rallied against what they considered the wrongful involvement of the State in the rearing of children. In December 1971,

Nixon vetoed the child care legislation (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S.*, 1972) allegedly to show support for his conservative constituents (Cohen, 2001; Steiner, 1976).

The next major juncture in child care policymaking was in 1990, when Congress enacted landmark legislation creating the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).³

Technically, 1988 was another major juncture for child care policymaking when the Family Support Act required states to offer child care to welfare participants enrolled in the federal JOBS program. It is not included here because it was not part of the ongoing effort to establish a federal child care program

The bill, first introduced in 1987, had bipartisan support and featured a child care block grant to states for low-income working families. However, conservatives, governors, and several religious groups opposed the bill's language on federal child care standards and its restrictions on federal funding of religiously-affiliated providers. Conservatives also preferred helping low-income working families with children through tax credits. Ultimately, members of Congress and the Bush administration brokered a deal that created the CCDBG and packaged it with expansions of the earned income tax credit as part of the 1990 reconciliation act.

In 1996, under welfare reform legislation, Congress reauthorized and restructured the child care block grant. Both sides of the aisle agreed to consolidate seven major federal child care programs under the CCDBG, but disagreed about funding levels, health and safety standards, and how to exempt mothers with young children from work requirements. Eventually, compromises were reached on these issues and child care advocates succeeded in getting Congress to increase funding for child care by \$22 billion over seven years.

Common Characteristics of Child Care and Child Health Policymaking

Both the child care and child health policy arenas were characterized by failed efforts to enact major legislation before the 1980s, followed by successful enactment of important legislation by 1990. This was partly because each policy arena benefited from a renewed interest in children's issues during the 1980s. Both the child care and child health policy communities were characterized by major advocacy coalitions, which featured CDF as the lead organization. In both policy areas, the NGA and the US Catholic Conference played major roles, while mainstream women's organizations were not consistently involved. In both child care and child health, enactment of major new legislation created a critical policy juncture. The growth of the right in American politics was significant in both areas. Finally, both areas reveal important themes about the social construction of children in the policy process.

Putting Children on the Agenda

Both child health and child care legislation were on the governmental agenda during the 1970s and faced conservative opposition, although for slightly different reasons. Conservatives opposed a federal child care program because of their fear that it would usurp women's rightful role in child-rearing. During the late 1970s, the Carter Administration, supported by children's advocacy groups, sought to convince Congress to expand Medicaid eligibility and services for pregnant women and children. Their efforts failed partly because of opposition from conservative legislators and controversies over anti-abortion amendments added to the Medicaid funding bill (Rosenbaum 1988).

The early to mid-1980s witnessed a renewed interest in children's issues. The economic recession of the 1980s exacerbated the economic plight of low-income working families with children (Levy, 1984). In response to Reagan Administration cutbacks in children's services and programs, activists in the child care and child health policy communities drew attention to the needs of children and their families (Imig, 1996; Kimmich, 1985). Their work was facilitated by the establishment of several new congressional panels that focused on children's issues.

One of the most important developments was the establishment of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families in 1983. The Committee's purpose was to examine data and explore issues related to the status of children and families and to engage members across the ideological spectrum. On the other side of the Capitol, Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) formed the Senate Children's Caucus. Other important public and private entities created in the early 1980s facilitated the promotion of child health and child care issues on public and governmental agendas.

Children's Advocacy Coalitions

Policy communities may have one or more "advocacy coalitions," defined as networks of individuals from different institutional positions "who share a particular belief system" or set of basic values about the role of government, have similar perceptions about the nature of problems, and coordinate activity over time (Sabatier, 1988, p. 139). Competing advocacy coalitions with different belief systems may co-exist within the policy community, or one advocacy coalition may dominate. The dominant coalition may be fragmented at various junctures. Both the child health and child care policy communities had a dominant advocacy coalition that changed over time because of conflicts over aspects of pending legislation.

Major child health coalition. During the 1980s, members of the child health policy community could be considered a dominant advocacy coalition because they shared the view that the health status of low income children could be improved by providing comprehensive, integrated community based health care. They also all agreed that the federal government should have a major role in financing and facilitating the provision of services. It was a coalition in which, "Everyone viewed Medicaid as the legislative vehicle for effecting policy change that addressed children's access to health care" (Sonosky & Rosenbaum, 2001, p.99).

The NGA ceased to be part of this dominant advocacy coalition when it withdrew its support for further federal mandated expansions of Medicaid at the end of the 1980s. It directly opposed the core values of that coalition when it acted as a policy entrepreneur in 1995 and 1996, advocating for a Medicaid block grant to the states as a replacement for the individual federal entitlement to Medicaid.

By the early 1990s, the dominant child health advocacy coalition divided over whether Medicaid expansion should continue to be the vehicle for expanding coverage of uninsured children. In 1996, the CDF and Senator Kennedy, a longtime child health advocate, claimed that given the control of Congress by conservative Republicans, further Medicaid expansions were not feasible. Kennedy and CDF proposed block grants to the states to subsidize private health insurance coverage for low-income children. Others within the advocacy coalition viewed the CDF-Kennedy proposal as potentially weakening Medicaid and threatening the stability of children's coverage. They supported bills that Senators John Chafee (R-RI) and John D. Rockefeller (D-WV) introduced, which would have further expanded Medicaid. By mid-1997, with the child health policy community split over how to expand coverage for children, the chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator William Roth (R-DE), crafted a compromise that allowed states to either expand Medicaid or establish a separate program to cover uninsured children (Nather, 1997). This provision was retained in the final legislation negotiated by President Clinton and the Republican congressional leadership.

Major child care coalition. Since the late 1960s, one dominant advocacy coalition has strived to increase the federal government's investment in child care. Its members have a commitment to increasing access to affordable and good quality child care, especially for low-income families. The enormous increase in federal funding for the child care block grant over the past decade, reaching over \$4 billion by 2001, is largely attributable to the efforts of this dominant advocacy coalition.

Between 1971 and the mid-1980s, much changed within the dominant child care advocacy coalition. Under CDF's leadership, it grew from a coalition of about 20 organizations in the early 1970s to more than 100 by the late 1980s. Many new organizations that lobbied for child care were formed in the 1970s and early 1980s. Furthermore, the proportion of women in the paid labor force with young children steadily climbed, reaching 65 % by 1988 (U.S. House of Representatives, 2000).

In 1986, the organizations in support of a new federal child care program formed the Alliance for Better Child Care. With input from congressional staff, the Alliance drafted the Act for Better Child Care (ABC). Senators Dodd and Representative Dale Kildee (D-MI) introduced the Act in 1987.

Internal rifts among the Alliance's many members delayed advancement of the ABC bill. Many women's and educational organizations opposed its final language on funding of religiously-affiliated providers. In particular, language on vouchers for federally financed child care threatened these organizations' longstanding commitments to upholding separation of church and state.

After the 1990 enactment of the CCDBG, the Alliance for Better Child Care slowly dissipated. In the mid-1990s, many of its members reconvened under CDF's leadership and successfully lobbied Congress for both annual increases in appropriations for the CCDBG in the 1990s and its reauthorization in 1996.

The Dominant Role of CDF

For both child care and child health, CDF took the lead in developing legislative strategies, working the media, and coordinating the efforts of a broad array of organizations. It was the center of the dominant advocacy coalition in both policy communities. In synthesizing data from both research projects, we look inside the "black box" of CDF and identify nuances of its work.

Within CDF, we distinguish between Edelman's role as a "political entrepreneur" and lead staffers who functioned as "policy entrepreneurs." Edelman relied on rhetoric that emphasized the moral responsibility that American society has for its children. She combined a "liberal" "language of rights" with a religiously-based "language of good" in her appeals for support of children's needs (Marlow, 1995, pp.163-165). As discussions of morality in social policy, framed in religious terms by the Right, have become central in American political debate, Edelman is a singular representative of the use of religiously-based moral rhetoric on the Left (Marlow, 1995).

As CDF's financial resources grew in the 1980s, it was uniquely able to lead other nonprofit organizations concerned with both child care and child health. CDF has developed grassroots networks in all 50 states, which enables it to identify advocates across the country, keep them informed through electronic updates, and teach them advocacy strategies. CDF also has field offices in nine states and an extensive network of faith-based communities.

The policy implications of CDF's dominance are somewhat hard to discern. It does mean that issues such as child care and child health are often framed according to CDF's legislative and organizational agendas, which might not emphasize perspectives that are priorities for other groups. For child health and child care, this often created divisions within the dominant advocacy coalition.

The National Governors Association and the U.S. Catholic Conference

Both child care and health insurance involved policy disputes about the role of federal authority vs. state autonomy. Thus, state level actors, particularly the NGA, were important in determining political outcomes at key junctures. As described above, the governors had a pivotal role in the three cases involving children's health insurance. Their influence increased markedly with the 1994 election, when a Republican majority supporting a diminished federal role and increased state authority came to power. Similarly, the governors were influential in opposing the 1971 child care bill because of its potential to diminish their role in administering child care programs. They successfully defeated proposals for federal child care standards in the late 1980s, and their calls for increases in child care funding were important in 1996 (Cohen, 2001). Another major actor in both child health and child care was the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). During the 1980s, lobbyists for the Catholic Church enlisted "pro-life" legislators, such as Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL), to become part of the coalition supporting the Medicaid expansions. The 1980s expansions were made possible by an agreement among CDF, the USCC, and key congressional staff to separate child health issues from abortion (Rosenbaum, 1988, pp.25-36). In the case of child care, in the late 1980s the USCC successfully fought for child care vouchers and the loosening of restrictions placed on religiously-affiliated providers under the original version of the Act for Better Child Care. Its support was crucial for obtaining votes among members of both parties.

Enigmatic Role of Women's Organizations

In both the child care and child health cases, the role of women's groups was complicated. They did not assume leadership roles in the dominant advocacy coalitions for either child care or child health. This was particularly puzzling for child care, since policymakers and advocates frequently referred to the growing number of women in the paid workforce as a major impetus for federal support of child care programs. The only women's organization that was a consistent partner with CDF in leading the coalitions for both the child health and child care was the National Women's Law Center (NWLC).

One explanation for the lackluster involvement of women's organizations in child care was that during the 1980s many feminists thought that lobbying for child care legislation would perpetuate the incorrect assumption that women were solely responsible for the care of children. Furthermore, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, feminist organizations focused on pay equity, nondiscrimination in the workplace, and enactment of the Equal Rights Amendment, all of which took priority over child care (Cohen, 2001). Finally, as mentioned above, in the 1980s many women's organizations distanced themselves from the final child care bill because they thought its provisions for religiously-affiliated care threatened the Constitution's separation of church and state. By the late 1990s, several women's organizations, especially the National Council of Jewish Women, resumed their lobbying for child care. They addressed their concerns about church-state separation through other issues.

Major Policy Junctures

Both child health and child care were characterized by critical policy junctures as described by Baumgartner and Jones (1993), which coincided with the enactment of significant legislation. For child care, the 1990 enactment of the CCDBG began a new era in child care policy. It signaled the acceptance of a federal presence in the child care arena, even among conservatives who had been critical of federal involvement for decades. As a result, the legislative battles in the years after 1990 focused on the size and nature of the federal government's investment in child care, not whether or not it would be involved. The enactment of the CCDBG, significantly altered the child care policy domain.

Similarly, the enactment of SCHIP in 1997 was a critical juncture for child health policy. It marked the end of the twenty years in which the expansion of Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women and children had been the focus of children's health activists. Since 1997, the child health policy community, including state and federal policymakers, has focused on the factors that promote and impede SCHIP implementation at the state level. Enactment of SCHIP marked a reconfiguration of federal and state relationships as they pertain to children's issues and health care. Some policymakers view the enactment of SCHIP as signaling the end of new federal entitlements in health policy. Clearly, the 1997 enactment of SCHIP has created a significant policy legacy.

Opposition from the Right

Both child care and child health policies were affected by the growth of the conservative and religious right political movements in the U.S. and ensuing ideological debates over the relationship between families and the State. The child care policy community included not just the dominant advocacy coalition, but also those opposed to an expanded federal presence in child care. These individuals and groups comprised the competing advocacy coalition. In the early 1970s, opposition to the federal child care program came mainly from a loosely-knit group of individuals. By the late 1980s, opposition came from newly formed think tanks and organizations, such as the Heritage Foundation and the Family Research Council, and the burgeoning religious right.

Unlike their predecessors in the early 1970s who simply opposed a federal child care program, conservative opponents in the late 1980s offered policy alternatives such as vouchers, parental choice, and tax credits that were eventually enacted into the final 1990 law. The compromises between liberals and conservatives in the late 1990s have had a lasting impact on child care policy.

By the late 1990s, the coalition opposed to a federal child care program began to dwindle. For conservatives, other issues—such as reducing the tax burden, eliminating the marriage penalty, and promoting school vouchers—took priority over child care. Moreover, child care had become an accepted component of the social policy landscape, especially given the work requirements under the welfare reform law of 1996, which many conservatives had advocated.

Within the child health policy community, proposals to expand Medicaid during the 1980s did not raise serious ideological controversies mainly because such proposals were framed as preventing infant mortality—a goal supported by actors across a broad ideological spectrum. Moreover, as discussed above, legislators and advocacy groups were able to reach an agreement that separated reproductive health issues from Medicaid expansion, thereby eliminating the potential for ideological conflicts related to the Medicaid bill. When the NGA later opposed further Medicaid expansions on both budgetary and ideological grounds, they found Congressional allies outside the child health policy community.

Framing the Issues

Many political observers have noted that children lack the ability to mobilize or to vote. Low-income adults, the disabled, and even prisoners have the *potential* to vote or to protest, while children do not. Consequently, policy entrepreneurs use the “social construction” of children in their appeals on behalf of children.

Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram (1993) described children as a “dependent” group, with low political power, but a positive social image (p.336). Children are generally seen as biologically, psychologically and socially more vulnerable than adults. The vulnerability and innocence of children is, in fact, the basis of moral appeals for their care. As an example, advocates framed the expansion of Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women and children as a solution to the problem of high infant mortality rates, an issue with much emotional resonance (Sardell, 1991).

Children are also socially constructed as unformed and malleable; they are not yet what they will become. Therefore, they are more “fixable” than adults (Sardell, 1991). They have a “dual status” as existing in both the present and the future (Mayall,1998). These dimensions of children’s uniqueness were central to the arguments made in both the child care and child health policy debates about the contributions that child care and child health services would make in building a productive work force or contributing to a safer and more literate society. During the 1980s, foundations, corporate research organizations, and congressional agencies issued reports that described how investments in child health and child care were cost-effective. They argued that to compete in a new world economy, the U.S. must invest in children.

In 1997, child health advocates framed their successful effort to expand child health insurance coverage in terms of assisting hard-working, deserving families and protecting innocent children from the immoral activities of “Big Tobacco.” Their plan for expanding child health coverage relied partly on an increased tobacco tax. Thus, the primary message from the political coalition formed to support the Kennedy-Hatch proposal was that the legislation advanced a powerful good — the health of children — while simultaneously opposing a powerful evil — smoking by children and adolescents. Many of the ads sponsored by the coalition featured a picture of a young boy and the image of “Joe Camel” with the words underneath, “Joey vs. Joe Camel.” Knowledgeable sources noted that the framing of health insurance legislation for children in these terms made it very difficult for the Republican leadership to oppose it. This was the politics of morality writ large, with simple icons of good and evil.

Children’s Issues in the Policy Process

Implicit in our research and findings is the notion that children are a unique target population for social policymaking. Thus, children’s advocates have used the social construction of children to appeal to certain interested publics on the basis of children’s vulnerability or innocence, or on the basis of their potential future contributions to society. But the politics of children’s issues is not simply about the effectiveness of moral appeals.

Because there is fundamental conflict within the American polity about the relationship of families and the State, disagreement persists over how to achieve policy goals that may improve children’s well-being. The great political debates surrounding children’s issues have centered on how to achieve an acceptable balance between public and private sector responsibilities; or, how to balance the role of government and family in caring for children and their families. Resolving the conflicts in determining the proper balance between family and State has historically been difficult (Cohen, 2001; Garfinkel, Hochschild & McLanahan, 1996; Michel, 2000). It has also been intensified by the growth of the conservative and religious right since the mid-1970s.

Another characteristic of the politics of children’s issues is that the agendas of children’s advocates were often acted upon in the shadow of other adult-centered issues. For child care, the bitter political arguments were often not about child care, per se, but rather about adult-oriented issues, such as welfare reform or the distribution of the tax burden among families with different incomes. In a similar way, children’s health had to compete for congressional attention and entrepreneurial interest in the face of health care reform efforts aimed at the whole population under the Carter and Clinton administrations. Policy entrepreneurs for children’s health positioned themselves to take advantage of opportunities for incremental reform after the failure of those efforts.

Further empirical research and analysis is needed to understand how the six cases described here compare with other issues in children's policymaking. Such research will contribute to the development of a body of data that can be used to advance our knowledge of the policymaking process for children and social policymaking, generally.

Footnotes

¹ This is a revised version of a paper that the authors presented at the 2002 meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA.

² Alice Sardell is working with Kay A. Johnson of Dartmouth Medical School on the six child health policy cases. They gratefully acknowledge financial support for their work from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research Program. Sardell's work was also funded by the City University of New York PSC-CUNY Research Award Program.

³ Technically, 1988 was another major juncture for child care policymaking when the Family Support Act required states to offer child care to welfare participants enrolled in the federal JOBS program. It is not included here because it was not part of the ongoing effort to establish a federal child care program

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Children and Welfare Reform: What Policy Theories are Being Implemented in States Where Most Poor Children Live?

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When Aid to Families with Dependent Children was replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a main argument for adopting a block grant rather than an entitlement was that states should have leeway to decide how to structure their welfare programs. Advocates of devolution argued that states could accomplish more with less money if they were not constrained by federal requirements. States could identify their most important problems and figure out how to mitigate them by devising solutions pertinent to their own communities and economic conditions. Devolution would thus allow states to achieve responsive government and policy innovation.

Opponents were not sanguine, however, about the possibility that states would meet these expectations. Concerned about incentives for supplantation, they feared states might use federal funds to replace rather than buttress state funding for social welfare policies. Moreover, many state governments had a reputation of poorly representing disadvantaged populations, suggesting little interest in searching for new ways to reduce poverty. Also, even if states wanted to pursue cre-

ative policies, few had the resources or the administrative capacity necessary for policy innovation.

In this article, we look at the welfare programs of states that faced a particular problem—high rates of child poverty. Most political actors admit that child poverty is a problem because it limits child development and prospects for a full adult life, even though they differ on the nature of the problem and its causes. Do states that share this problem have similar welfare programs? Do these states use the flexibility granted to them under devolution to develop innovative policies concerning children? Do they differ in important ways from other states, such as states with low child poverty rates? We investigate how sixteen states with high rates of child poverty responded to welfare reform.¹ In 1999 these states had poverty rates among children above 20 percent, ranging from 21 percent in Kentucky to 27 percent in New Mexico. To help us see whether these states are implementing distinct approaches to welfare reform, we compare their policies to states with low rates of child poverty.²

While AFDC was and TANF is a children's program, political actors do not all agree on what constitutes child wellbeing or what government should do to advance it. In previous research, we argued that there were three different policy theories about child wellbeing contained within the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Johnson and Gais 2001). The environment theory maintains that children reap psychological and sociological benefits from being part of a family in which the head of the household works. The resource theory holds that children benefit from increased resources as caregivers enter and progress in the workforce and not simply from having a working parent. The family structure theory contends that children benefit from being born and raised in a particular kind of family—specifically married, two-parent families—and suffer when raised in a single parent family or by unmarried parents. Drawing on field research conducted in 1997-98—that is, the first years of state implementation of TANF—we found that states were most likely to implement the environment theory and were less likely to create policies, programs, structures, and processes that put the other two theories into effect.

In this article, we revisit those findings in light of a wider base of data, including two additional rounds of field research, and with a specific focus on sixteen states. We find that states with high rates of child poverty continue to have TANF policies consistent with the environment theory; they emphasize going to work and staying off or getting off public assistance. These states have not expanded the resources available to poor families, although many other states have expanded work supports and other resources for working families since the first years of TANF implementation. Finally, all states have done relatively little with respect to family structure theory, although states with high child poverty devote more money to such policies.

The Environment Theory

The first theory involves changing the child's home environment by moving parents into the workforce. According to this line of thought, a child should be raised in an environment strongly connected to the world of work. A working parent would provide a role model for children by demonstrating that adults are expected to work for their livelihood and not rely on public assistance. Having a working parent would also structure the home environment by creating daily routines and schedules, which some proponents viewed as important for child development. Whether employment increased household resources so that children were no longer poor is not cen-

tral to this theory. Rather, exposing children to the world of work and removing them from the world of welfare are essential elements for improved child wellbeing.

The broad structure of the federal act contains the policy elements critical to the environment theory. Work requirements and time limits on assistance advance the theory's central goals of getting adults into the workforce and off the rolls. Thus, if states develop welfare programs consistent with these federal contours and do little or nothing else regarding children, their programs fit with the environment theory. Time limits on assistance, stricter sanctions, work requirements, and other policies and signals stressing work would by themselves be expected to have beneficial effects on children.

Much research has found that states moved quickly to develop and implement welfare programs that strongly signaled the importance of employment and getting off the rolls (Nathan and Gais, 1999; Gais, Nathan, Lurie, and Kaplan, 2001). States with high rates of child poverty are no exception, and overall, their welfare programs are highly consistent with the environment theory. They have adopted policies intended to discourage individuals from coming on the rolls, strong work requirements that apply to women with children, and work programs emphasizing "work first" or immediate placement in entry level employment. Indeed, with respect to these policies, their TANF programs are similar to those states with low rates of child poverty.

All but two of the high poverty states have at least one policy designed to encourage applicants to work and discourage them from coming on the rolls. These include a formal diversion program and mandatory job search requirements for applicants. States with low child poverty are only slightly less likely to have either of these policies. Four of those 17 states have neither a diversion program or mandatory job search. But 13 have at least one, and like the high poverty states, they also prefer a diversion program to mandatory job search.

For individuals who receive TANF cash assistance in the high poverty states, participation in state work programs is required shortly after going on the rolls. Similar to other states in the nation, most of these states require that adults comply with work requirements immediately upon or shortly after receipt of aid. The low poverty states were again slightly more generous with five states using the federal government's 24 month time frame. But 10 of these 17 states also imposed work requirements immediately and two gave adults just a few months before requiring their participation in the work program.

States have backed up these expectations about work by making it clear they apply to women with children. Under federal law, states can exempt single parents caring for a child under one year of age from work requirements. Among the high poverty states, seven states have opted not to do this. Only one state, Texas, uses a higher age, granting an exemption to single mothers with toddlers. This is not out of line with the policies of other states although there is more variation among the states with low child poverty. More of these states have a higher age limit for their exemption but more also make this decision on a case-by-case basis.

States with high child poverty are less likely to recognize child care problems as a good cause for noncompliance with these work requirements. Federal law specifies that states cannot sanction individuals for not complying with work requirements if child care is unavailable for children up to age five. Some states, though, have expanded this good cause reason to include school-age children. States with high child poverty rates were less likely to do this than states with low child poverty, a move consistent with the environment theory because it weighs so heavily the importance of work.

Accompanying these strong work requirements are tough sanctions and lifetime limits on receipt of welfare. Sanctions enable states to enforce their work requirements, and high poverty states resemble low poverty states in the structure of their penalties. A majority of both groups partially reduce grants in the first instance of noncompliance and then end cash assistance entirely for the ultimate sanction. Only five of the high poverty states and four of the low poverty states end the ultimate sanction when the adult comes into compliance with the program requirement; a majority of states continue the sanction for some set period, although this ranges considerably from a low of one month in Arizona to a lifetime sanction in Mississippi and Georgia.

Time limits underscore the need for adults to enter the labor market quickly in hopes of gaining the work experience needed to acquire steady employment before time limits apply. Few states have decided to forego time limits on the receipt of aid, and not surprisingly, none of the states with high child poverty rates have decided to do this, although Arizona has an intermittent time limit (24 out of 60 months) with no lifetime ceiling. Among the low poverty states, only Vermont has no time limit at all, and Massachusetts has a policy like Arizona's. Most of the high and low poverty states have adopted the federal government's five-year limit, with a few in each group opting for lower limits. Most states in both groups have

also decided not to extend benefits to children if their families hit the lifetime limits.

With respect to their work programs, states with high child poverty operate programs that emphasize work first activities. While these states are slightly more likely to disallow activities related to education and training than activities related to immediate employment, they accept most of the work activities allowable under federal law and compare favorably to states with low child poverty. But in most states, individuals participating in the work programs are involved in activities related to immediate entry into the labor market, such as unsubsidized employment, job search, or work experience. Among high poverty states, on average, 87 percent of participating adults are engaged in work activities related to immediate employment, similar to the low poverty states at 88 percent. Some of the high poverty states do have higher proportions of adults participating in education and job training activities, such as Arizona at 37 percent and Georgia at 27 percent. We know from Institute field reports that this training is not necessarily for higher-level, better-paying jobs. In Georgia, for example, "clients are told to 'get a job, any job,'" and training programs are short term and generally used for individuals who cannot find entry-level positions through job search.

Resource Theory

Proponents of the resource theory focus on increasing family income and other resources in order to improve children's wellbeing. Maternal employment is an important part of this endeavor, not because it changes the environment in which children are raised, but because it enables families to meet their material needs. Employment alone, however, generally does not raise family incomes sufficiently, leading proponents of the resource theory to emphasize "make work pay" initiatives, including income subsidies and work supports such as child care assistance.

Our initial review of state implementation in 1997-98 found that states did little to advance the resource theory, as they devoted their early efforts to signal expectations about work (Johnson and Gais 2001). Since then, however, states experienced fiscal surpluses under TANF, and many responded by increasing spending on services and benefits for working families, such as child care subsidies, enhanced earnings disregards, and transportation assistance (Gais, Nathan, Lurie, and Kaplan 2001).

But this response was conditioned by the structure of the block grant, which allocated different levels of re-

sources per child in needy families across the states. The formula used for the TANF block grants froze into place the sharp differences in federal funding *across states* under AFDC. Such differences were reinforced by the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements under TANF, which were keyed to *state* expenditures in the same time period. A supplemental grant reduced some of these differences in total federal and state spending, but they remained substantial. As Table 1 indicates, states varied greatly in the fiscal size of their federal and state TANF programs relative to the number of low-income children living in their boundaries. These differences are strongly correlated with the proportion of children who are poor in each state. Most of the states with high child poverty have few resources per low-income child under the block grant, while just the opposite pattern exists for states with low concentrations of poor children. TANF thus provides and mandates fewer resources per poor child in states where such children are most likely to live.

Fiscal resource differences across states are related to state policy choices, even after political and other state-to-state differences are taken into account (Gais and Weaver 2002). We found that states with high rates of child poverty were less likely to adopt policies that made it easier for families to combine work and cash assistance than their low-poverty counterparts. Most states increased their earnings disregards after the enactment of TANF in 1996, allowing families to keep more of their income as they increased their wages and hours worked. States with high concentrations of child poverty were less likely to adopt generous earnings disregards when

compared to other states, particularly those with low child poverty, and the disregards tended to decline over time, especially after the first four months of work. The message of these states was that combining earnings and assistance was only a short-term option. Even if such states did adopt significant disregards, their benefit levels remained low (with two exceptions, New York and California) and thereby limited the income supplements for working families. Thus, among states with high child poverty, the potential gains for families from combining cash assistance and earnings were smaller on average than for other states.

Admittedly, however, the role of cash assistance under TANF is small and generally shrinking. Like other states, states with high child poverty rates have shifted their spending away from cash assistance and toward services and in-kind benefits important for working families, such as child care, transportation assistance, job services, post-employment training, and case management. Still, they have increased their spending on these nonassistance programs much less than states with low child poverty.

To understand whether states are really making major changes in their human service priorities—or whether they are simply shifting around program expenditures to take advantage of TANF's flexibility—the Institute conducted a study of overall changes in spending on all nonhealth human services before and after the implementation of welfare reform. Data from 17 states in fiscal years 1995 and 1999 are available now. These data included all nonhealth expenditures in state budgets—not

TABLE 1. Number of states by fiscal resources per low-income child under TANF, stratified by proportion of children under the federal poverty level

	Under \$401 per child	\$401-\$800 per child	\$801-1,200 per child	\$1,201-1,600 per child	Over \$1,600 per child
States with highest proportions of low-income children (N = 16)	4	6	4	1	1
States with relatively low proportions of low-income children (N = 17)	1	4	4	1	7
All states (N = 50)	7	16	14	3	9

Spending ratios per child are calculated as total federal TANF, state MOE, and federal supplemental dollars, divided by the number of children in the state under 125 percent of the federal poverty level (averaged across 1997, 1998, and 1999); rows represent states with different proportions of children under the federal poverty level (for example, states in top row with highest proportion are those with 20 percent or more of the children in the state under the federal poverty level)

just TANF money—including spending from federal as well as state sources. Of these 17 states, five have high rates of child poverty and six have low rates of child poverty. We examine broad spending in these states to see overall shifts in state priorities, not just idiosyncratic differences among states in decisions about what programs to move under the broad TANF or MOE umbrellas.

In 1995, before TANF, important differences in median expenditure levels already existed between states that had high child poverty rates and those with low rates in all spending categories, demonstrated in Table 2. Regarding cash assistance and other basic needs, states with many poor children spent less than half of what the low-child-poverty states spent per poor child. The difference was greater for work supports. Finally, since most states spent little on child care, the difference between states with high and low child poverty rates was not great.

In 1999, these differences persisted, but their magnitudes changed. States with high child poverty rates reduced their spending on cash assistance per poor child by more than half, while increasing their spending in all other categories. However, these increases were not nearly as large as the spending increases in the states with low child-poverty rates. As a consequence, 1999 showed larger differences between the median spending levels of states with high and low poverty levels—most notably in the case of child care.

Why have states with high child poverty rates failed to increase their spending on services to the same degree as other states?³ Many of these are southern and

western states that historically offered lower levels of benefits to low-income families, and their political cultures, economic conditions, and other factors affecting such policies probably did not change enormously in the 1990s. However, because of the relatively small block grants per poor child in most of these states, the states did not have the resources under the TANF block grant to greatly increase their spending on services and in-kind benefits—even if their political and economic circumstances had changed substantially. Also, despite the fact that the southern and mountain states typically showed larger cash caseload declines than other states, these declines did not produce the same fiscal savings under their cash assistance programs as did states with more generous benefit levels.

That is not the complete story for these high poverty states, however. New York and California had relatively large cash assistance programs and benefited from large TANF grants. Yet neither of these states underwent the same degree of transformation—from reliance on cash assistance to a greater focus on services and in-kind supports—as was common in many other states with similarly large TANF grants. In the fiscal effects dataset, California and New York are among the few states that still rely much more heavily on cash assistance than most other states in fiscal year 1999. Although we cannot yet be sure, one factor seems to be the heavy reliance of these states on their counties to implement welfare reforms. Although some counties may be quite eager and able to shift toward service strategies, many are not. The weaker increase in spending on services among high child poverty states may thus be attributable in part to the small TANF grants, political traditions, and other vari-

TABLE 2. Median levels of spending on social programs per poor child, Fiscal Years 1995 and 1999

	<i>Cash Assistance</i>	<i>Other Basic Needs</i>	<i>Child Care</i>	<i>Work Supports</i>	<i>Other Welfare Related</i>
	1995				
States with highest proportions of low-income children (N = 5)	395	351	128	86	112
States with low proportions of low-income children (N = 6)	813	834	166	247	256
	1999				
States with highest proportions of low-income children (N = 5)	163	469	190	206	128
States with low proportions of low-income children (N = 6)	294	1,045	367	513	309

ables that have limited resources for poor families in the southern and mountain states; and on the fact that child poverty is also concentrated in two large and highly decentralized states that have faced important institutional barriers in shifting toward effective service strategies.

Family Structure Theory

We have called the third theory, highlighted in the preamble of the 1996 federal legislation, the family structure model. Children are assumed to do best when they are born to and raised by married couples living together—and to do poorly under virtually any other arrangement. Because they do not try to reduce the number of single mother families, policies that require work and reduce welfare receipt among single mothers are considered to be imprudent by the most vocal proponents of this theory. Welfare policy instead, they argue, should focus on encouraging and sustaining marriage, and discouraging the birth of children out of wedlock.

Increased state flexibility under TANF is particularly large in this program area. States are free to deny aid to unwed teen mothers and to children born to parents already receiving assistance. Other elements in the federal act, such as restrictions on teen mothers, performance bonuses for states that reduce out-of-wedlock births, and special funds for teaching sexual abstinence, were designed to encourage states to create and implement programs that try to increase the proportion of children born in married, intact households. States with high child poverty rates may find family structure theory particularly attractive as multiple parents may increase the economic and emotional resources available to a child and thus reduce the pressure on other institutions to provide those resources.

During the congressional debate about the adoption of welfare reform in 1995-1996, much of the discussion about family structure centered on proposals to deny aid to unwed teen mothers and to children born to women already receiving assistance. The focus was on manipulating eligibility requirements in hopes of reducing the number of children born out of wedlock. None of the states have adopted a policy of denying aid to unwed teen mothers, and half of the states with high child poverty rates have adopted family caps, compared to 8 of the 17 states with low child poverty rates. Because family caps apply to children born to married as well as unmarried parents, it is unclear to what extent they are expected to alter family structure. Overall, states have not moved aggressively to try to alter family structure by denying aid to single mothers and their children.

They have relaxed, however, eligibility rules that made it more difficult for two-parents to receive aid. Under AFDC, three eligibility restrictions could be applied to two-parent families; 15 of the 16 states with high child poverty adopted all three, compared to 12 of the 17 states with low child poverty. Among the states with high child poverty, 10 now have no restrictions for two-parent families, compared to 12 of the 17 low poverty states, and only one (Mississippi) maintains three restrictions. Relaxing all three of these rules for two-parent families has been the modal response across the states; thirty-three states have eliminated all restrictions.

Other than these changes regarding eligibility, spending patterns among the states indicate how limited state attention to family structure strategies has been. In federal fiscal year 2000, the fifty states spent minimal portions of their TANF grants (including MOE) on efforts to promote or maintain two-parent families and efforts to prevent unplanned pregnancies. State spending on family structure does vary, however, by the concentration of child poverty in the state, if only slightly. States with low child poverty rates spent on average 0.30% of their TANF dollars on two parent family formation and pregnancy prevention. States with the highest levels of child poverty spent the most, on average 1.96% on the combined efforts of two-parent formation and pregnancy prevention.⁴

State initiatives in this area are quite varied. Some states, such as Arizona and Oklahoma, focus on promoting marriage through exhortation and information. Arizona has adopted a marriage commission, a marriage skills course, and free marriage manuals to all applicants of marriage licenses. Oklahoma got national attention for its “marriage ambassadors,” two academicians who give seminars on relationship skills. West Virginia has adopted a financial incentive by offering a cash bonus to single women who marry while on welfare, a practice the state was planning to discontinue until it received national attention during reauthorization discussions. Some programs are service oriented, such as West Virginia’s youth development programs, while others are educational, such as Florida’s new requirement that all high school students take a class on marriage and the family. Other states target family planning and pregnancy prevention. In Georgia, family planning is deeply integrated into the welfare system as counseling is mandatory for all TANF recipients. In New York and Texas, however, family planning efforts are generally independent of TANF, funded by other sources, and administered outside of the welfare agency.

The variation in these state programs may eventually lead to a few innovative policies widely adopted by other states. Certainly, the Bush administration hopes that it can spur creativity through encouragement and grant money. But the initiatives adopted to date suggest few cohesive ideas about what government can do to induce adults to bear and raise children in married two-parent families. While many argue that children should be raised in two-parent families, there are more claims about the desired outcome than agreement on ways to achieve it. Despite the flexibility in the federal law, states have not embraced family structure theory as a key strategy in current welfare programs.

Conclusion

Compared to the other policy theories concerning child wellbeing, adoption of the environment theory is relatively widespread among the states, including those with high rates of poverty. Policies consistent with the environment theory are easier to design and implement. The policy ideas are not complicated, and the assumption that child wellbeing can be achieved by having a working parent reduces considerably the obligation to provide additional programs for children. This does not mean that policies consistent with the environment theory hold out no pitfalls for these states. Successful implementation of the environment theory relies heavily on the private sector for jobs, and states with high rates of child poverty may find it difficult for their local economies to generate sufficient entry-level positions.

Although states are doing more than they were in 1997-98 to implement the family formation goals of TANF, we still see a rather scattershot, incremental approach by all the states. Although states with high child poverty rates are spending more on average than other states, even in these states efforts are marginal and unfocused.

Perhaps most difficult to implement—and certainly more costly—is the resource theory. This approach to welfare reform has spread significantly since the first years of TANF implementation as many states built greater work incentives into their cash assistance programs and began to transform their welfare systems toward the provision of work supports and services. However, these developments did not spread evenly among all states. Most important, the expansion of services and the provision of the most generous disregards are much less evident among states with high concentrations of child poverty. To the extent that the resource theory is viewed as critical to child wellbeing (see Duncan and Lansdale 2001), the problem of extending elements of this

model to these states ought to be a priority. Important policy changes to consider include revising the fiscal formula in a way that provides greater resources to states with high rates of child poverty, while at the same time ensuring that states spend the money on low-income families, and helping to build the capacity of and incentives for local governments to deliver work supports and other services to poor families.

Footnotes

¹ The states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia. Although these constitute less than one-third of the states, 58 percent of all poor children in the U.S. live in these states

² The states with low rates of child poverty are Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

³ Although states with moderate rates of child poverty are not displayed in the tables, in fact they too show higher median levels of spending on social programs per poor child than the states with the highest rates of child poverty.

⁴ States with moderate levels of child poverty spent 0.60%.

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Presumptive State Child Support Guidelines: A Decade of Experience

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Abstract

This article examines the financial burden placed on low-income noncustodial parents by state child support guidelines, variability in this burden across states and over time, policy rationales for this variability, and the effects of high or low support orders on state child support collections. We find tremendous variability in the support orders of low-income obligors across states, suggesting that states are adopting very different strategies for meeting the income needs of low-income children and obligors. Also, child support orders are quite regressive, although this regressivity has abated somewhat over the past decade. There is some evidence, albeit mixed, that states with low child support orders for low-income families have generous welfare programs, using cash assistance from TANF and child support as substitutes for one another in sustaining poor children. The data also support the notion that states with high support orders for low-income parents collect a smaller percentage of the amount ordered. The data was gathered from a series of mail surveys from 1988-1999 of the State Courts and Child Support Enforcement Agencies of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Keywords: Child support, noncustodial fathers, welfare

Introduction

Since the passage of the Family Support Act of 1988, each state has been required to develop and use income-based child support guidelines. The evolution in setting child support orders from loose judicial discretion to the mandatory adoption of a predetermined set of objective and numeric formulas largely was motivated by three observations. Many researchers maintained that existing child support obligations were of inadequate size to meet the needs of children, created both horizontal and vertical inequities, and hence, resulted in inefficiencies in the child support enforcement system (Garfinkel, 1992; Pearson, Thonnes, and Tjaden, 1989; White & Stone, 1976; Williams, 1987; Yee, 1979). However, state changes have primarily addressed horizontal inequities. That is, the guidelines established insured that equals were treated equally – noncustodial parents in similar economic situations within the same state should pay similar amounts of child support (Garfinkel, 1992; Garfinkel, Meyer, and McLanahan, 1998; Morgan, 1996, 1998; Pirog-Good, 1993; Sorensen, 1999; Williams, 1994).

Recently, increasing attention has been given to the treatment of low-income noncustodial fathers under welfare reform.¹ The persistent pattern of meager compliance with, or complete nonpayment of, child support obligations by low-income obligors has prompted observers to reconsider enforcement strategies. Focus, in part, has turned to the effects of presumptive child support guidelines on poor, nonresident fathers (Meyer 1998; Primus & Castro, 1999; Roberts 1999a; Sorensen, 1999). In particular, researchers are examining the extent to which state guidelines require low-income obligors to provide unreasonable proportions of their incomes as child support and the effects of these vertical inequities on their ability to pay (see Garfinkel, Meyer, et al., 1998 for a brief review of this literature).

A 1998 report by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) examined the collection of child support for families leaving welfare due to the expiration of time limits.² The study found that the majority of families leaving welfare due to time limits would not receive substantial amounts of child support. For example, 29-41% of families with support orders received no support during the 12 months prior to the termination of assistance; 46-59% reported receiving some of the support owed. Only 2-13% reported receiving the full amount due over the same time period. These are rather discouraging figures in light of the increasingly aggressive collection efforts made by state and local child

support enforcement (CSE) agencies across the country. However, the continued resolve of policy makers and CSE officials is manifest in the passage of the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998.³

Some researchers, though, rather than urge the imposition of harsher penalties for failure to meet obligations, suggest that more realistic child support orders be established for low-income noncustodial fathers up-front (Garfinkel, Meyer, et al., 1998; Primus & Castro, 1999; Roberts, 1999a; Sorensen, 1999). Suggestions to lower child support orders for poor fathers will likely face strong opposition – reductions in child support awards imply less income for poor children. On the other hand, if lower child support orders affect greater compliance by these fathers, it is possible that reliable and proportionate streams of income through child support can occur.

In this article, we analyze variability in the amounts and regressivity of child support orders across states over time based on data from a series of biannual mail surveys. Next, we explore one rationale for the variability in states' treatment of low-income obligors: the notion that states use cash assistance from welfare and child support income as two alternative ways to support poor children. It is possible that some states have more generous welfare benefits to offset losses to custodial families resulting from lower child support orders and vice versa (Primus & Castro 1999). Finally, we assess the extent to which the amount of child support ordered is related to child support compliance.

Background

Welfare and child support legislation enacted during the past decade has placed increasing emphasis on family self-sufficiency and parental obligations. Welfare reform under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) eliminated the entitlement status for receiving cash assistance and imposed time limits on the receipt of welfare, while often making eligibility contingent on education/training and work requirements. Welfare laws require single, custodial parents to enter the workforce. The laws also created an expectation for nonresident parents to remain involved in their children's lives, at least in terms of the provision of financial support. The push for reduced reliance on public assistance and increased reliance on private means has rendered the child support system a crucial component to the children of low-income families. This awareness certainly has contributed to the aggressive enforcement of child support legislation by state child support enforcement agencies.

Many researchers, however, question this policy approach. Some studies suggest that unless considerable improvements are made in the formal child support system, this approach will exacerbate the poverty experienced by poor custodial families. Simulation studies have long indicated that even in an ideal environment (that is, the setting of child support obligations for all eligible resident parents and full compliance with both hypothetical and existing orders) child support awards are too low to appreciably increase welfare exit rates or the labor supply of women (Beller & Graham, 1993; Garfinkel, Robins, Wong, & Meyer, 1990; Hu, 1999; Meyer, 1993; Robins, 1986).⁴ As a result, these authors prescribed policy initiatives establishing higher child support award amounts. In light of historically low compliance rates among fathers of children receiving cash assistance, one wonders whether this is realistic or beneficial.

A national portrait of noncustodial fathers and their ability to pay child support has been painted in a series of articles (see Mincy and Sorensen, 1998; Sorensen, 1999, 1997; Sorensen and Halpern, 1998). Using two surveys, the 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) and the 1990 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Sorensen, et al. created the well-accepted profile of low-income obligors. While nonresident fathers as a whole were found to be able to pay more in child support (an estimated \$34 billion under Wisconsin child support guidelines), 13-26% of noncustodial fathers were poor or had extremely low incomes. In 1990, 23% of fathers had incomes below the gross income standard for food stamp eligibility and did not pay any support. These fathers were young, half had not completed high school, and most were black. While 90% were employed or actively seeking employment at some point in 1990, only 18% had full-time, year-round employment.

Recently, Garfinkel, McLanahan, and Hanson (1998) used NSFH data to show that a "large minority" of nonresident fathers has very low incomes.⁵ They found that nearly all of the fathers of children on welfare have incomes below \$20,000, while 50% have incomes below \$6,000 (in 1995 dollars). Moreover, noncustodial fathers have fewer assets than custodial fathers and are less likely to own a car or a home (see Pirog-Good and Amerson, 1997, for similar results using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth from 1979 to 1993). These results strongly suggest that even when willing, low-income obligors possess limited ability to meet their child support obligations.

Complicating matters, Sorensen (1997) found that resident mothers in the NSFH and SIPP surveys are considerably worse off economically as compared to noncustodial fathers. These single mothers had poverty rates that were two to three times higher. And, while national surveys are not matched samples and are unable to prove conclusively that low-income nonresident fathers and poor resident mothers are necessarily partners, many believe that this is the case (Beller and Graham, 1993; Garfinkel, McLanahan, et al., 1998; Sorensen, 1999). Policymakers find themselves in a very difficult position.

Poor single-parent families desperately need child support income to augment their own earnings and public assistance, while low-income obligors seem unable to meet their existing obligations, let alone withstand higher award amounts. Yet for child support to effect welfare exit rates and the supply of labor by women, higher award amounts are crucial. Some researchers believe that efforts to cull greater child support amounts from these fathers actually could be counterproductive (Garfinkel, Meyer, et al., 1998; Primus & Castro, 1999; Roberts, 1999a; Sorensen, 1999). At best, it seems such efforts might simply shift poverty from one group to another. At worst, poor, nonresident fathers may find their obligations impossible to meet, stop paying child support altogether, and possibly enter the underground economy. Indeed, anecdotal evidence shows that for some fathers, their relatively high child support orders along with low child support pass-through amounts have this effect (Edin, 1995; Edin & Lein, 1997; Furstenberg, Sherwood, & Sullivan, 1992).

Several policy changes have been prescribed or undertaken to varying degrees by some states to address the lack of compliance with child support awards by poor nonresident fathers. The provision of employment-related services to low-income noncustodial fathers likely would have the greatest long-term effects. The TANF program allows states to use welfare block grant funds and maintenance-of-effort money to assist in providing education and training, obtaining transportation, etc. for nonresident fathers of children receiving cash assistance. Increasingly, revisions of the child support pass-through program have been suggested (Garfinkel, Meyer, et al., 1998; Primus & Castro, 1999; Sorensen, 1999). PRWORA allowed each state to determine the amount of child support passed through to custodial TANF families without a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their welfare grants. At the time, most states passed-through the first fifty dollars of child support paid each month and disregarded this income in the calculation of their welfare benefits. As of January 1, 1999, some thirty states had decided to discontinue the program completely. In 1998, Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) offered legislation requiring states to pass through all support collected; it was not enacted. Researchers also have proposed revisions of arrearage policies – the amounts established and the stringency of related penalties.

Methods and Data

In 1988, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) computed child support orders for every state and the District of Columbia using each state's child support guideline. The calculations were based on a scenario describing a family and its circumstances at four different income levels (Munsterman, 1990). In 1988, the four income levels represented the 25th, 50th, and 75th income percentiles as well as a high-income level for a family of four (Cases A-D). The four scenarios and levels are as follows:

Mother and father are divorced. Father lives alone. Mother and the party's two children, ages 7 and 13, live together. Father pays union dues of \$30 per month and the health insurance for the two children at \$25 per month. Mother incurs monthly employment-related childcare costs of \$150. There are no extenuating factors to be added or considered for this unit. The gross combined monthly income for this family is as follows:

Case A: Combined \$1200	- Father \$720 Mother \$480
Case B: Combined \$2500	- Father \$1500 Mother \$1000
Case C: Combined \$4400	- Father \$2640 Mother \$1760
Case D: Combined \$10500	- Father \$6300 Mother \$4200

Finally, the father files taxes as a single person with one deduction, while the mother files taxes as the head of a household with three deductions. The father spends less than 10% of this time with his children. Union dues are a mandatory condition of employment.

The results of the NCSC calculations were sent to the director of each state's CSE program and the administrative director of each state court for verification or modification. At least one agency responded to the 1988 survey. When both agencies responded and discrepancies occurred, efforts were made to reconcile the differences. However, when the agencies used different methods to compute the child support orders and both methods were consistent with the state's guidelines, the NCSC reported the higher figure.

The scenarios and process used by the NCSC to determine the size of child support orders were replicated in 1991 by Pirog-Good (1993); in 1993 by Pirog-Good and Mullins (1995); in 1995 and 1997 by Pirog-Good and Brown (1996) and Pirog, Klotz, and Byers (1998); and in 1999 by the current authors. All of the bi-annual survey data are used in this article. The same scenario and income levels have been used for each survey. While the income levels certainly do not represent the income percentiles originally set in 1988, we believe maintaining these amounts provides a way to determine the extent to which child support orders have changed over time solely because of the evolution of state guidelines. This process abstracts from changes in nominal income levels due to changes in inflation or real factors.

Garfinkel, Meyer, et al. (1998) noted that order levels had increased since the implementation of guidelines but were unable to determine whether the increase resulted from the existence of guidelines or from an increase in men's incomes during the same time period. We feel this process goes a way towards addressing the question of whether guidelines cause an increase in the levels of child support orders. Moreover, Williams (1994) notes that studies of child support based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) suggest that the average constant-dollar value of orders had increased by 1987 when many states had implemented guidelines. He warns, however, that his results are only suggestive, as this value might be biased upwards by the inclusion of updated awards. Again, this problem is avoided here. The simple scenario developed by the NCSC does not include updated awards, second families, post-secondary educational expenses, or other extraordinary factors that tend to be treated differently by states. All changes in child support orders can be directly attributed to state guidelines.

The 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, and 1999 calculations were computed as of January 1st. In each of these years, responses were received from both the state CSE office and the state court regarding child support levels. Many of the responses by state agencies differed from each other. For the surveys from 1991-1999, correspondence was undertaken with each state to determine the actual amount of the orders as specified by the state's guidelines. The vast majority of the discrepancies were resolved and stemmed from the miscalculation of taxes, computing orders for one rather than two children, and other relatively simple errors. Pirog-Good and Brown (1996) found that such errors are common and tend to be related to the complexity of the guidelines, the training of personnel using the guidelines, and the availability of computer software to assist with the calculations. However, following the lead of the NCSC, whenever differences arose from the use of different procedures that were both consistent with the state guidelines, the higher figure was reported. Data on CSE awards for 1988-1999 by state are presented in Appendix A.

Results

Summary statistics regarding the amount of child support obligations between 1988 and 1999 for Cases A-D are provided in Table 1. Average child support obligations have dropped over the years for Cases A and D. On the other hand, fathers in the two middle-income scenarios, Cases B and C, are paying more on average than they paid in previous years, though the average order for Case B dropped slightly between 1997 and 1999. Cross-state variability in Case A orders is large and has increased consistently from 1988 to 1999. The standard deviation represents 54 percent of the average child support order for case A, compared to 18 percent for the more consistent orders for fathers in Cases B-D. As has been the trend for several years, courts use discretion in setting orders at the income extremes, particularly in high-income cases. In those states, individual judges determine the level of child support that they deem appropriate for the situation. Hence, the award amounts for families in similar economic situations may differ substantially.

TABLE 1. Summary Statistics: Monthly State Child Support Orders, 1988-1999

	Year	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation	Median	Court Discretion
Case A	1999	176.65	95.35	0.54	187.00	CA ^a
	1997	179.12	91.36	0.51	180.00	VT
	1995	193.32	88.78	0.46	201.50	VT
	1993	202.49	80.36	0.40	197.00	CT, DC, MA, VT
	1991	202.71	80.56	0.40	204.50	CT, DC, WV
	1988	202.84	78.06	0.38	191.00	MA, PA
Case B	1999	416.71	68.45	0.16	433.00	None
	1997	424.04	94.66	0.22	433.00	None
	1995	417.47	62.25	0.15	431.00	None
	1993	393.82	65.75	0.17	411.00	DC
	1991	401.43	56.39	0.14	411.00	None
	1988	389.64	61.04	0.16	391.00	PA
Case C	1999	632.81	84.66	0.13	634.00	None
	1997	620.71	92.63	0.15	626.00	None
	1995	627.37	122.08	0.19	616.00	None
	1993	607.98	87.91	0.14	618.00	DC
	1991	616.10	84.51	0.14	617.00	FL
	1988	616.46	125.05	0.20	613.00	PA
Case D	1999	1167.10	206.41	0.18	1094.00	AL, MD, MA, OK, UT ^b
	1997	1170.40	222.71	0.19	1066.00	AL, MA, PA, UT
	1995	1151.67	211.21	0.18	1091.00	DE, ID, MD, MA, NJ, NY, UT, WA
	1993	1126.35	236.59	0.21	1090.00	CT, DC, ID, KS, KY, MD, MA, MO, NC, OH, SC, TX, UT, WA
	1991	1134.38	218.89	0.19	1079.50	AZ, AR, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, ID, IA, KS, KY, LA, MD, MA, MO, NV, NJ, NY, OH, RI, SC, SD, TX, UT, VA
	1988	1222.71	389.20	0.32	1108.00	AZ, FL, ID, IN, MD, MA, NE, NJ, OH, PA, SC, UT, VA

^aCalifornia is court-determined within the range \$124-\$208. We use the average, \$166.

^bUtah is court-determined, but the minimum is \$903.

Summary statistics regarding state legislated child support orders relative to income for 1988-1999 are found in Table 2. In this table, the mean is the percentage of the father's gross income that would be needed to pay the state mandated child support award. First, we assess the impact of child support payments on the income of the noncustodial fathers under each scenario, and then we examine the regressivity of support orders for 1999.

TABLE 2. Summary Statistics: Child Support Orders as a Proportion of Noncustodial Fathers' Income, 1988-1999

	Year	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation	Median
Case A	1999	0.245	0.132	0.540	0.260
	1997	0.249	0.127	0.510	0.250
	1995	0.269	0.123	0.459	0.280
	1993	0.281	0.112	0.397	0.274
	1991	0.282	0.112	0.397	0.284
	1988	0.282	0.108	0.385	0.265
Case B	1999	0.280	0.046	0.163	0.289
	1997	0.283	0.063	0.223	0.289
	1995	0.278	0.042	0.149	0.287
	1993	0.263	0.044	0.167	0.274
	1991	0.268	0.038	0.140	0.274
	1988	0.260	0.041	0.157	0.261
Case C	1999	0.240	0.032	0.134	0.240
	1997	0.235	0.035	0.149	0.237
	1995	0.238	0.046	0.195	0.233
	1993	0.230	0.033	0.145	0.234
	1991	0.233	0.032	0.137	0.234
	1988	0.234	0.047	0.203	0.232
Case D	1999	0.185	0.033	0.177	0.174
	1997	0.186	0.035	0.190	0.169
	1995	0.183	0.034	0.183	0.173
	1993	0.179	0.038	0.210	0.173
	1991	0.180	0.035	0.193	0.171
	1988	0.194	0.062	0.318	0.176

Child Support Orders as a Percentage of Obligor Income

Case A represents the lowest income scenario. In this situation, the nonresident father earns \$720 per month (annual income of \$8,640). This exceeds the 1999 poverty guideline by a mere \$420 per year and is \$2,000 less than full-time minimum-wage pay. The custodial mother has monthly income of \$480. Our data indicate that in 1999, a noncustodial father earning \$720 per month was required to provide, on average, 24.5% of his income as child support. The median amount was 26%. In this case, the mean evidently is biased downward by two orders of \$0 – Connecticut and Oklahoma. The largest order in 1999 was an award of \$302 by South Dakota, which represents 41.9% of the father's income. The mean proportion of 24.5% is slightly less than the highest over time of 28.2% in both 1988 and 1991. Over these eleven years, average Case A child support orders dropped 13.1% (3.7%-points) or by \$26.19 each month (\$314.28 annually). The median proportion dropped slightly (but not linearly) from 26.5% in 1988 to 26% in 1999. It is unlikely that the reductions in mean and median proportions of income required for child support payments significantly affect the financial circumstances of nonresident fathers or lead to salutary compliance effects.

Case B is a modest income scenario with the custodial parent earning \$1,000 per month and the noncustodial parent earning \$1,500 monthly (annual income of \$18,000). In the absence of child support income, the custodial mother's annual income of \$12,000 is less than the \$13,880 poverty guideline for a family of three and would possibly qualify this family for food stamps. However, given asset limitations, we treat the custodial family as though it would not qualify for TANF. According to 1999 calculations, a noncustodial father would provide 28% of his income as child support, on average. The corresponding median figure is 28.9%. In 1999, Pennsylvania set the highest award of \$585 (39% of the father's income) and Mississippi set the lowest order of \$240 (16% of the father's income). The mean proportion of 28% in 1999 is slightly less than the highest of 28.3% in 1997. However, it is 2%-points larger than the smallest of 26% in 1988. This increase has been steady over the eleven years, save the aforementioned differences between 1997 and 1999. In sum, the data indicate that a nonresident father with annual income of \$18,000 has been required to pay an increasing proportion of his earnings as child support over the past eleven years.

Case C is a middle-income scenario in which the custodial and noncustodial parents have monthly incomes of \$1,760 and \$2,640, respectively (annual incomes of \$21,120 and \$31,680, respectively). In 1999, a noncustodial father would be required to pay 24%, on average, of his earnings to child support. The corresponding median amount is also 24%. For Case C, the District of Columbia established the highest award amount of \$821 (31.1% of income) for 1999. The lowest award was set by Oklahoma – \$415.40, which is 15.7% of the nonresident father's income. Over the last decade, the average child support order relative to the noncustodial father's earnings has been rising slightly, but steadily, for this case. The highest average over the decade was the 24% of 1999. The lowest is 23% in 1993, with an initial average of 23.4% in 1988. Again, one finds a pattern of a slight but gradual increase in median child support orders. Hence, the same conclusions can be reached as those drawn from Case B.

Unlike Cases B and C, the highest income scenario in this study, Case D, seems to suggest a small reduction in the proportion of income a father provides for child support from 1988-1999. In this case, the custodial parent earns \$4,200 per month while the noncustodial parent has a monthly income of \$6,300 (annual incomes of \$50,400 and \$75,600, respectively). On average, in 1999, this father would be required to pay 18.5% of his income to meet support orders. For this year, the largest proportion required was 28.5% from a monthly child support order of \$1,796 set by Kansas, while the lowest was 13.7% from Idaho's obligation of \$863. In 1988, the mean proportion was 19.4%. This represents a reduction of 4.6% (0.9 percentage points) from 1988 to 1999.

Regressivity Analysis

Now we consider changes in the regressivity of child support obligations over time. Beginning with the calculations for year 1999, the average child support orders as a percentage of gross income across Cases A-D, respectively, are as follows: 24.5%, 28%, 24%, and 18.5%. The corresponding median figures are: 26%, 28.9%, 24%, and 17.4%. Both sets of calculations indicate that for 1999, child support obligations are indeed regressive. That is, lower income noncustodial fathers (Cases A and B) are required to pay larger portions of their earnings than their higher-income counterparts. Cases A-D, respectively, for 1988 provide these series: 28.2%, 26%, 23.4%, and 19.4% for average proportions; 26.5%, 26.1%, 23.2%, and 17.6% for median proportions. Again, regressivity is evidenced. Over the decade, Cases A and B have borne the greatest burden with Case A's proportions decreasing and Case B's increasing over time as discussed above.

Researchers have put forth several explanations for the regressivity of state child support guidelines (Primus & Castro, 1999; Roberts, 1999a; Sorensen, 1999). First, child support orders must be adequately set in order to meet the needs of children. Child support guidelines are established to address this. While income can be quite variable, the basic needs of children do not necessarily vary as much as income. Also, child support awards are designed to reflect the earnings capacity of the noncustodial parent. Some states have adopted policies that allow courts to assume that the nonresident parent can work a full-time minimum-wage job. Support orders are then based on this level of income. Third, as previously mentioned, many states impose mandatory minimum child support award amounts even when the noncustodial parent has little or no income. Our results suggest that the last two factors have contributed to the regressivity we observe.

Child Support Orders and Welfare Generosity

We conducted a series of bivariate analyses between the child support calculations for Case A and various reasonable measures of welfare generosity. The measures considered for each state are: (1) maximum monthly TANF benefits (for a family of three), (2) allowable months of TANF before time limits terminate or reduce benefits, (3) child support pass-through amount, (4) months of exemption from work requirements, (5) age of youngest child for work requirement exemption, (6) full-family or partial (adult-only) sanctions.⁶ We wanted to determine if support orders and welfare measures are negatively correlated. That is, do states make efforts to offset low child support awards with other sources of income or lengthier periods of assistance? Alternatively, do fiscally conservative states with low welfare benefits try to meet the needs of low-income women and children with high child support orders?

The basic approach taken here is an extension of the work begun in Pirog, Klotz, and Byers (1998). In that article, the authors, also continuing previous analyses (Pirog-Good, 1993), asserted that child support for very low-income women and children often is inadequate to replace cash assistance from their AFDC or TANF programs. However, they claimed states tend to use child support and cash assistance as substitutes for families with very low income. As evidence, they split the 1997 Case A orders and maximum AFDC benefits at their respective medians. Those states with AFDC benefits or Case A orders above the medians were classified as high welfare or child support award states. Those below the medians were classified as low. They found a statistically significant negative relationship between the two variables. Low child support order states were often high welfare states, and high child support order states were often low welfare states.

Replicating the method of high/low classification for the 1999 data, we found a similar polarization. Most states had either high welfare benefits and low child support awards or low welfare benefits and high child support awards. In addition, we correlated Case A orders with our measures of welfare generosity (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. Correlations of Case A Orders and Various Measures of Welfare Generosity

	Correlation	Significance
Maximum TANF Benefit	-.376***	.003
TANF Time Limit	-.004	.488
Pass-Through	.060	.338
# Months of Work Exemption	.082	.285
Age of Youngest Child for Work Exemption	.082	.283
Full-family or Partial Sanction	-.149	.149

Note. N = 51 for all variables in Table 3; Coding for the sanction variable is as follows: full sanctions = 0, sometimes full and sometimes partial = 1, and partial sanctions = 2.

Significance levels: *p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01.

The measure of welfare generosity of most immediate importance to a poor custodial family is the maximum monthly TANF benefit. A moderate negative relationship, statistically significant at the 1% level (Pearson correlation, $-.376$; $p = 0.003$), exists between Case A and TANF benefits. Correlations between Case A and the other measures are small and not statistically significant. These results are not surprising, considering that no relationship originally existed between monthly welfare benefits and child support orders when state guidelines were first legislated in 1988. Over the past decade, however, the two variables have become increasingly correlated (Pirog, Klotz, and Byers, 1998; Pirog-Good and Mullins, 1995). The other measures of welfare generosity may demonstrate a similar pattern of increasing correlation in future years. TANF regulations only went into effect in 1997, and state policies have been phased in since that time. As states modify these policies and conduct mandatory reviews of their guidelines over the coming years, stronger relationships may appear between the measures of TANF generosity and state-mandated child support orders.

Child Support Orders and Compliance Effects

As discussed earlier, it is asserted that a lessening of the regressivity of support obligations would contribute to a reversal of the historical, persistent pattern of low or no payment of child support by poor nonresident fathers. Since our concern is the meeting of obligations by poor noncustodial fathers, who likely are fathers of children receiving TANF, we used the following measures of compliance from FY 1999: (1) per capita distributed collections for current assistance and former assistance cases, (2) per capita distributed collections for current assistance and former assistance cases as a percentage of the Case A child support order, (3) number of families removed from AFDC/TANF with child support collections during 1998, (4) percent of current support owed that was distributed for current assistance and former assistance cases, and (5) cost effectiveness.⁷ As in the prior section, we performed a series of bivariate analyses between child support orders for 1999 and these measures of compliance (See Table 4).

TABLE 4. Correlations of Case A Orders and Various Measures of Child Support Compliance

	Correlation	Significance	N
Per Capita Distributed Collections for Current/Former Assistance Cases	-.153	.154	46
Per Capita Distributed Collections for Current/Former Assistance Cases as a Percentage of Case A Order	-.417***	.002	46
Number of Families Removed from AFDC-TANF/FC with Child Support Collections in 1998	.154	.141	51
% of Current Support Due That Was Distributed for Current and Former Assistance Cases	-.214*	.070	49
Cost Effectiveness	.236**	.048	51

Significance levels: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

The first measures of compliance we used capture the amount of child support that is actually distributed per current or former assistance case. Both per capita distributed collections and the per capita distributed collections as a percentage of the Case A order resulted in a negative relationship, though only the measure of collections as a percentage of the Case A order was significant. This indicates that noncustodial fathers are more likely to comply with child support orders in states with lower state-mandated orders. It is not surprising that only collections as a percentage of the Case A order was significant, since this measure considers the amount the state requests in relation to the amount it distributes. We would expect distributed collections per capita to be higher for high-award states, though that does not mean that they have greater compliance.

The next variable we checked was the number of families removed from TANF/AFDC with child support in 1998. The results showed a small positive correlation but were not significant. This suggests that the amount of the award ordered has little effect on removing the custodial family from welfare. Since we would expect higher-award states to remove more families, the lack of a relationship may indicate low compliance for high-award states. Further, the lack of a negative relationship also reflects the fact that the low-award states have orders too low to affect the custodial families' TANF/AFDC receipt.

To determine the percentage of child support orders that states actually distribute, we created a measure of child support distributed as a percentage of child support due. The results show a negative and modestly significant relationship (Pearson correlation, $-.214$; $p = .07$). This indicates that the higher-award states distribute a smaller percentage of what they hope to collect than low-award states.

Finally, we looked at cost effectiveness and found a significant, positive relationship between the measure and Case A awards. These results show that high-award states are more cost-effective than low-award states. This probably occurs because it takes fewer non-custodial parents who comply to cover the costs of child support enforcement. While these results are positive in terms of using government funds efficiently, it ignores the impact of high awards on children and on noncustodial fathers. In terms of children, high award states can be cost-effective relative to low-award states even when a large percentage of the children receive none of the child support ordered.

Discussion

This article examines changes in child support orders over time. Specifically, it assesses the impact of state-mandated guidelines on noncustodial fathers, assessing the regressivity of the guidelines. Focusing on low-income fathers for the latter part of the analysis, the article also addresses the relationships between child support orders for the low-income scenario and measures of welfare generosity and child support compliance.

Continuing an earlier trend, child support orders for the scenarios at the income extremes have dropped slightly. The average order also dropped for Case B between 1997 and 1999, though fathers under that scenario are paying higher levels of child support than in 1988. Meanwhile, the average order for Case C increased considerably to the highest amount since tracking orders. Case A orders are highly variable across states, highlighting the different ways states balance the needs of the children with noncustodial fathers' ability to pay.

The results of the analysis of welfare generosity suggest that most states have not yet addressed the effect of time limits on TANF receipt on their practice of substituting TANF benefits and child support orders. Now that many welfare recipients have hit state time limits, it will be interesting to see if states respond with changes in state guidelines.

Our analysis of child support compliance measures, though not definitive, indicates that states with lower awards experience greater compliance from noncustodial fathers. Further lowering orders for that group of fathers, while decreasing possible collections, may increase the amount of money actually received.

Finally, the disparate treatment of noncustodial parents across states is indicative of horizontal inequities that exist at all income levels but are most pronounced for low-income parents. That is, a low-income noncustodial parent with the same number of children of the same ages, same personal and ex-spousal incomes, identical child care and income-related expenses is required to pay no child support in Connecticut and 41.9 percent of gross income in South Dakota. For the highest income obligors, the difference between the highest and lowest monthly child support order is \$933 per month. Even casual inspection reveals that such differences cannot be explained by cost of living variation across states. South Dakota is hardly a high cost of living venue in comparison to Alaska, New York and Hawaii, three states with considerably lower than average Case A orders.

In light of these persistent, and in some cases growing, horizontal inequities, we recommend that the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement undertake a serious review of a national child support standard. Many states do not have the research staff to undertake individual studies and yet are faced with legal challenges to their guidelines every time they modify or update their individual standards. A federal standard that would provide some flexibility for regional differences in the costs of raising children would provide some administrative relief for states and greater equity for custodial parents, noncustodial parents, and children.

Footnotes

¹ Pirog, Klotz, and Byers (1998) found over 1500 hits for fathers' rights advocacy groups in a cursory survey of internet web sites. Also, see the recent publication, *Fathers Under Fire*, ed. Garfinkel, McLanahan, Meyer, and Seltzer.

² The GAO report entitled *Child Support an Uncertain Income Supplement for Families Leaving Welfare*, GAO/HEHS 98-168 (August 1998), examined three states that had begun using time-limited welfare programs before the welfare reform of 1996. These states were Connecticut, Florida, and Virginia. Since these states had a significant number of families that had reached their time limits, the GAO conducted their study to determine whether those families had obtained substantial amounts of child support to either supplement their wages or replace the lost public assistance.

³ The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 (H.R. 3130) established five criteria by which state child support programs will be evaluated for federal incentive funds, beginning in FY 2000. They are: (1) paternity establishment percentage, (2) percentage of cases with orders, (3) percentage of cases receiving payments, (4) percentage of cases receiving payments on arrears, and (5) ratio of collections to costs.

⁴ There is evidence that award amounts positively influence the likelihood of compliance with court orders and the amount of support paid (Peterson and Nord, 1990; Beller and Graham, 1993), and, hence, increase the likelihood of keeping off welfare (Meyer, 1993).

⁵ Garfinkel, Meyer, and McLanahan (1998) provide a brief literature review and tabular summary of research attempting to estimate income figures for noncustodial fathers using various data sets.

⁶ The data come from the following sources, respectively: (1) Urban Institute summary of state TANF decisions as of October 1997, Gallagher, Gallagher, Perese, Schreiber, Watson (June 1998), (2) TANF Program Third Annual Report to Congress (August 2000), (3) CLASP article on pass-through and disregards, Roberts (1999b), (4) TANF Program Third Annual Report to Congress (August 2000), (5) TANF Program Third Annual Report to Congress (August 2000), (6) State Policy Documentation Project summary of state sanction policies (April 2000).

⁷ These measures were calculated from data found in the Office of Child Support Enforcement, FY 1999 Preliminary Data Report (2000) and the Child Support Enforcement Twenty-Third Annual Report to Congress (1999).

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POLICY CURRENTS

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APPENDIX A: Child Support Orders by State

Case A: Father's Income=\$720 monthly

State	1988	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Alabama	257.00	259.00	260.00	280.00	280.00	280.00
Alaska	127.00	135.00	137.00	25.00	38.00	38.00
Arizona	310.00	298.00	284.00	281.00	75.00	247.00
Arkansas	160.00	165.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	177.00
California ¹	145.00	241.00	261.00	281.00	278.00	166.00
Colorado	268.00	266.00	260.00	260.00	261.00	261.00
Connecticut	286.00	CD	CD	0.00	0.00	0.00
Delaware ²	219.00	100.00	100.00	91.00	91.00	117.00
DC	224.00	208.00	CD	208.00	208.00	208.00
Florida	280.00	285.00	262.00	306.00	261.00	265.01
Georgia	180.00	184.00	184.00	184.00	210.00	184.00
Hawaii	50.00	60.00	60.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Idaho	173.00	CD	245.00	226.00	166.00	256.00
Illinois	132.00	137.00	136.00	136.00	136.00	10.00
Indiana	325.00	327.00	327.00	292.00	327.00	265.00
Iowa	99.00	176.00	187.00	183.00	189.00	187.00
Kansas	265.00	252.00	225.00	228.00	227.00	270.50
Kentucky	178.00	293.00	293.00	293.00	293.00	290.00
Louisiana	191.00	290.00	265.00	292.00	292.00	292.00
Maine	318.00	294.00	286.00	283.00	290.00	290.11
Maryland	300.00	295.00	295.00	295.00	295.00	295.00
Massachusetts	CD	50.00	CD	137.00	137.00	136.41
Michigan	253.00	210.00	162.00	124.00	141.00	141.18
Minnesota	91.00	97.00	170.00	111.00	84.00	73.00
Mississippi	180.00	133.00	138.00	140.00	124.00	115.20
Missouri ³	306.00	293.00	293.00	265.00	265.00	219.00
Montana	273.00	50.00	15.00	40.00	15.00	16.00
Nebraska	175.00	176.00	54.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Nevada ⁴	180.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	200.00
New Hampshire	191.00	156.00	140.00	227.00	50.00	50.00
New Jersey	191.00	251.00	259.00	260.00	267.00	260.00
New Mexico	287.00	288.00	283.00	288.00	291.00	290.00
New York	27.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
North Carolina	180.00	264.00	272.00	287.00	57.00	50.00
North Dakota	95.00	126.00	126.00	90.00	126.00	126.00
Ohio	259.00	262.00	266.00	258.00	278.00	252.72
Oklahoma ⁵	283.00	258.00	258.00	250.00	171.00	0.00
Oregon	245.00	176.00	165.00	149.00	159.00	230.00
Pennsylvania	CD	201.00	254.00	257.00	257.00	137.00
Rhode Island	281.00	269.00	315.00	315.00	315.00	253.00
South Carolina	258.00	252.00	256.00	202.00	183.00	259.40
South Dakota	108.00	200.00	128.00	286.00	275.00	302.00
Tennessee	189.00	192.00	197.00	199.00	200.00	200.00
Texas	140.00	143.00	147.00	145.00	147.00	148.64
Utah	206.00	253.00	153.00	131.00	131.00	131.00
Vermont	118.00	50.00	CD	CD	CD	50.00
Virginia	299.00	299.00	289.00	289.00	289.00	289.00
Washington	273.00	282.00	287.00	50.00	50.00	281.60
West Virginia	50.00	CD	155.00	136.00	117.00	112.00

1 Case A is court determined, within the range of \$124-\$208. We used the average, \$166.

2 Delaware's guideline assigns single, one deduction tax status to both parents for purposes of the support calculation. No credit is given for visitation that is less than 50%. When a parent is unemployed or under-employed, minimum income of \$1052 is attributed. The minimum child support order for two children is \$117.

3 Missouri law applies a credit for time that the father spends with the children.

4 Nevada law allows courts to make subjective case-by-case deviations for 9 factors, such as day care costs and disparity of income.

5 Case A is imputed to minimum wage.

Case B: Father's Income=\$1,500 monthly

State	1988	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Alabama	412.00	415.00	417.00	433.00	433.00	433.00
Alaska	280.00	298.00	300.00	301.00	312.00	313.00
Arizona	460.00	450.00	453.00	453.00	782.00	481.93
Arkansas	303.00	315.00	305.00	305.00	305.00	372.00
California	301.00	395.00	467.00	485.00	478.00	407.00
Colorado	414.00	417.00	409.00	409.00	409.00	409.00
Connecticut	511.00	523.00	516.00	429.00	404.00	435.00
Delaware ¹	375.00	396.00	397.00	466.00	467.00	367.00
DC	475.00	458.00	CD	458.00	458.00	458.00
Florida	489.00	475.00	460.00	555.00	463.00	457.10
Georgia	375.00	383.00	383.00	383.00	383.00	383.00
Hawaii ²	390.00	380.00	410.00	470.00	470.00	503.00
Idaho	368.00	424.00	424.00	405.00	345.00	435.00
Illinois	278.00	284.00	281.00	282.00	294.00	311.00
Indiana	482.00	485.00	485.00	461.00	692.00	413.00
Iowa	334.00	349.00	355.00	356.00	358.00	362.00
Kansas	441.00	433.00	406.00	390.00	390.00	570.00
Kentucky	367.00	448.00	448.00	445.00	445.00	443.00
Louisiana	398.00	450.00	426.00	451.00	451.00	451.00
Maine	436.00	433.00	425.00	428.00	437.00	433.00
Maryland	449.00	449.00	449.00	449.00	449.00	449.00
Massachusetts	458.00	458.00	458.00	471.00	471.00	470.51
Michigan	402.00	449.00	433.00	459.00	468.00	471.42
Minnesota	320.00	328.00	330.00	380.00	317.00	399.00
Mississippi	375.00	282.00	294.00	530.00	251.00	240.00
Missouri ³	440.00	440.00	440.00	447.00	447.00	408.00
Montana	413.00	417.00	288.00	395.00	261.00	250.00
Nebraska	318.00	329.00	333.00	333.00	390.00	398.07
Nevada ⁴	375.00	375.00	375.00	375.00	375.00	375.00
New Hampshire	392.00	409.00	412.00	426.00	424.00	419.00
New Jersey	338.00	438.00	446.00	446.00	452.00	460.00
New Mexico	433.00	433.00	433.00	433.00	468.00	468.00
New York	352.00	436.00	436.00	436.00	436.00	346.00
North Carolina	375.00	410.00	432.00	463.00	463.00	471.00
North Dakota	335.00	328.00	328.00	328.00	356.00	356.00
Ohio	405.00	414.00	417.00	385.00	465.00	436.28
Oklahoma	410.00	395.00	385.00	438.00	430.00	295.40
Oregon	405.00	328.00	327.00	335.00	343.00	421.00
Pennsylvania	CD	400.00	415.00	420.00	415.00	585.00
Rhode Island	436.00	431.00	480.00	480.00	480.00	481.00
South Carolina	405.00	401.00	400.00	408.00	463.00	437.30
South Dakota	328.00	416.00	328.00	463.00	486.00	456.00
Tennessee	384.00	385.00	391.00	392.00	393.00	393.00
Texas	298.00	294.00	295.00	295.00	298.00	298.34
Utah	264.00	364.00	264.00	447.00	447.00	447.00
Vermont	459.00	411.00	439.00	431.00	428.00	393.00
Virginia	456.00	456.00	443.00	446.00	446.00	446.00
Washington	491.00	503.00	501.00	559.00	641.00	502.82
West Virginia	382.00	372.00	253.00	326.00	364.00	458.30
Wisconsin	375.00	375.00	375.00	375.00	375.00	375.00
Wyoming	320.00	336.00	324.00	355.00	348.00	408.94

¹ Delaware's guideline assigns single, one deduction tax status to both parents for purposes of the support calculation. No credit is given for visitation that is less than 50%. When a parent is unemployed or under-employed, minimum income of \$1052 is attributed. The minimum child support order for two children is \$117.

² A lower figure of \$354 is granted for exceptional circumstances.

³ Missouri law applies a credit for time that the father spends with the children.

⁴ Nevada law allows courts to make subjective case-by-case deviations for 9 factors, such as day care costs and disparity of income.

Case C: Father's Income=\$2,640 monthly

State	1988	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Alabama	614.00	620.00	622.00	634.00	634.00	634.00
Alaska	496.00	516.00	526.00	532.00	546.00	550.00
Arizona	652.00	646.00	658.00	658.00	628.00	628.35
Arkansas	451.00	455.00	475.00	475.00	475.00	529.00
California	305.00	594.00	740.00	758.00	770.00	703.00
Colorado	597.00	601.00	610.00	610.00	610.00	610.00
Connecticut	849.00	887.00	851.00	696.00	703.00	717.00
Delaware ¹	523.00	576.00	587.00	619.00	626.00	655.00
DC	879.00	821.00	CD	821.00	821.00	821.00
Florida	693.00	CD	709.00	1235.00	721.00	733.37
Georgia	660.00	673.00	673.00	673.00	673.00	673.00
Hawaii	560.00	560.00	570.00	610.00	610.00	684.00
Idaho	653.00	646.00	647.00	626.00	566.00	556.00
Illinois	463.00	473.00	477.00	480.00	485.00	539.00
Indiana	688.00	687.00	687.00	660.00	899.00	595.00
Iowa	540.00	539.00	554.00	557.00	566.00	577.00
Kansas	688.00	631.00	609.00	582.00	582.00	812.00
Kentucky	550.00	640.00	640.00	637.00	637.00	635.00
Louisiana	700.00	670.00	645.00	667.00	667.00	667.00
Maine	528.00	614.00	611.00	612.00	619.00	614.86
Maryland	655.00	655.00	655.00	655.00	655.00	655.00
Massachusetts	776.00	776.00	776.00	789.00	789.00	789.06
Michigan	561.00	628.00	616.00	642.00	657.00	667.24
Minnesota	521.00	539.00	556.00	612.00	534.00	635.00
Mississippi	660.00	498.00	522.00	300.00	427.00	422.40
Missouri ²	630.00	620.00	620.00	609.00	609.00	554.00
Montana	585.00	594.00	451.00	611.00	456.00	464.00
Nebraska	474.00	528.00	507.00	508.00	677.00	662.91
Nevada ³	1000.00	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00
New Hampshire	643.00	649.00	656.00	662.00	667.00	670.00
New Jersey	485.00	667.00	702.00	698.00	710.00	724.00
New Mexico	612.00	612.00	612.00	612.00	588.00	588.00
New York	958.00	700.00	700.00	699.00	699.00	630.00
North Carolina	660.00	635.00	638.00	600.00	600.00	634.00
North Dakota	552.00	554.00	554.00	554.00	582.00	582.00
Ohio	530.00	599.00	601.00	505.00	609.00	585.24
Oklahoma	530.00	505.00	505.00	585.00	415.00	415.40
Oregon	592.00	590.00	590.00	582.00	587.00	686.00
Pennsylvania	CD	532.00	553.00	554.00	554.00	809.00
Rhode Island	648.00	645.00	677.00	677.00	677.00	677.00
South Carolina	594.00	592.00	589.00	609.00	574.00	573.80
South Dakota	619.00	595.00	515.00	573.00	652.00	626.00
Tennessee	627.00	640.00	654.00	659.00	665.00	670.00
Texas	496.00	498.00	510.00	509.00	517.00	521.06
Utah	501.00	542.00	442.00	616.00	616.00	616.00
Vermont	640.00	688.00	696.00	702.00	642.00	622.50
Virginia	651.00	651.00	641.00	641.00	641.00	641.00
Washington	749.00	773.00	639.00	719.00	641.00	641.42
West Virginia	546.00	552.00	391.00	523.00	539.00	626.30
Wisconsin	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00
Wyoming	579.00	579.00	620.00	529.00	519.00	631.51

¹ Delaware's guideline assigns single, one deduction tax status to both parents for purposes of the support calculation. No credit is given for visitation that is less than 50%. When a parent is unemployed or under-employed, minimum income of \$1052 is attributed. The minimum child support order for two children is \$117.

² Missouri law applies a credit for time that the father spends with the children.

³ Nevada law allows courts to make subjective case-by-case deviations for 9 factors, such as day care costs and disparity of income.

Case D: Father's Income=\$6,300 monthly

State	1988	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Alabama ¹	997.00	1020.00	997.00	1026.00	CD	CD
Alaska	1359.00	1170.00	1180.00	1184.00	1193.00	1190.00
Arizona	CD	CD	1123.00	1123.00	1061.00	1060.83
Arkansas	855.00	CD	1025.00	1025.00	1025.00	998.00
California	300.00	1069.00	1517.00	1467.00	1457.00	1362.00
Colorado	1002.00	CD	1066.00	1066.00	1066.00	1066.00
Connecticut	1814.00	CD	CD	1122.00	1198.00	1147.00
Delaware ²	1119.00	CD	1152.00	CD	1157.00	1167.00
DC	1533.00	CD	CD	1495.00	1495.00	1495.00
Florida	CD	CD	1139.00	1442.00	1186.00	1189.83
Georgia	1575.00	1607.00	1607.00	1607.00	1607.00	1607.00
Hawaii	1220.00	1220.00	1230.00	1260.00	1260.00	1392.00
Idaho	CD	CD	CD	CD	913.00	863.00
Illinois	1000.00	1099.00	1023.00	1032.00	1020.00	1145.00
Indiana	CD	1203.00	1203.00	1186.00	1462.00	1112.00
Iowa	1097.00	CD	1158.00	1178.00	1047.00	1054.00
Kansas	1317.00	CD	CD	1177.00	1195.00	1796.00
Kentucky	566.00	CD	CD	1017.00	1017.00	1013.00
Louisiana	1670.00	CD	975.00	1091.00	1052.00	1092.00
Maine	940.00	1021.00	939.00	1028.00	1031.00	1026.21
Maryland ¹	CD	CD	CD	CD	1060.00	CD
Massachusetts ¹	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
Michigan	895.00	1026.00	1020.00	1050.00	1078.00	1091.12
Minnesota	1090.00	1180.00	1200.00	1262.00	1292.00	1252.00
Mississippi	1575.00	1194.00	1248.00	1250.00	908.00	1008.50
Missouri ³	1043.00	CD	CD	1032.00	1032.00	935.00
Montana	958.00	985.00	904.00	1371.00	908.00	916.00
Nebraska	CD	616.00	814.00	806.00	1035.00	1087.28
Nevada ⁴	1000.00	CD	1000.00	1575.00	1575.00	1000.00
New Hampshire	1365.00	1464.00	1474.00	1449.00	1473.00	1475.50
New Jersey	CD	CD	1387.00	CD	1389.00	1131.00
New Mexico	1057.00	1057.00	1054.00	1057.00	1095.00	1094.00
New York	2371.00	CD	1590.00	CD	1548.00	1462.00
North Carolina	1575.00	1049.00	CD	1012.00	1012.00	1050.00
North Dakota	1158.00	1202.00	1174.00	1174.00	1231.00	1231.00
Ohio	CD	CD	CD	891.00	1045.00	1026.88
Oklahoma ⁵	916.00	891.00	891.00	1027.00	801.00	CD
Oregon	1078.00	1016.00	1016.00	979.00	1027.00	1115.00
Pennsylvania	CD	974.00	1090.00	1066.00	CD	1536.00
Rhode Island	1026.00	CD	1170.00	1170.00	1170.00	1236.00
South Carolina	CD	CD	CD	648.00	1000.00	999.80
South Dakota	1320.00	CD	582.00	1000.00	1032.00	1071.00
Tennessee	1328.00	1412.00	1417.00	1421.00	1422.00	1417.00
Texas	2130.00	CD	CD	1089.00	1114.00	1114.75
Utah ⁶	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	903.00
Vermont	988.00	1090.00	1080.00	1092.00	1025.00	1007.79
Virginia	CD	CD	1071.00	1071.00	1042.00	1042.00
Washington	1386.00	1386.00	CD	CD	1054.00	1055.54
West Virginia	1037.00	1068.00	684.00	1045.00	1742.00	1051.70
Wisconsin	1575.00	1575.00	1575.00	1575.00	1575.00	1575.00
Wyoming	1228.00	900.00	900.00	884.00	882.00	1192.80

¹ Court-determined for 1999.

² Delaware's guideline assigns single, one deduction tax status to both parents for purposes of the support calculation. No credit is given for visitation that is less than 50%. When a parent is unemployed or under-employed, minimum income of \$1052 is attributed. The minimum child support order for two children is \$117.

³ Missouri law applies a credit for time that the father spends with the children.

⁴ Nevada law allows courts to make subjective case-by-case deviations for 9 factors, such as day care costs and disparity of income.

⁵ The income is outside the standardized schedule.

⁶ Case D is court-determined, but the minimum child support amount is \$903.

Agendas Short Course at 2003 APSA Meeting

It is imperative that political scientists and others interested in policy change rely only on the highest quality data to ensure that false or misleading implications do not slip into analyses. The Policy Agendas Project uses various archived sources to trace changes in the national policy agenda and their effects on public policy outcomes since the Second World War.

The Policy Agendas Project is directed by Bryan Jones and John Wilkerson of the University of Washington and Frank Baumgartner of Pennsylvania State University, with funds from the National Science Foundation, the University of Washington, and Pennsylvania State University. This multi-year project is focused on collecting information on all bills introduced in Congress, all congressional hearings, all statutes passed, all stories in Congressional Quarterly Almanac and a sample of New York Times coverage, as well as detailed breakouts of congressional budget authority since the end of World War II. The data from these sources are coded according to a common policy content code that ensures compatibility across time. The recently-published volume, entitled *Policy Dynamics* (University of Chicago Press), captures some of the most recent research to make use of these data sets. In the past 3 years, many of the existing data sets have been expanded and improved. Several additional data sets are in development for release during the next 2 years.

This proposed short course will offer participants updated information about the status of the existing Policy Agendas data sets, as well as information about the data additions envisioned for each of the next two years. This short course is designed as a hand-on workshop that will make use of computers to provide participants access to the data sets and a new web-based tool for using them. This soon-to-be-released data tool permits researchers at remote sites to conduct web-based analysis of multiple data sets, as well as selective downloading of raw data for subsequent research. Participants will be encouraged to explore the data sets in real time and bring with them questions from their own research that could be addressed using the data sets provided or the online analysis tool. Several project members and interested researchers will be available to lead hands-on sessions and answer any questions about the data and its applicability to a broad range of public policy and legislative affairs research.

Names and Affiliations of Workshop Participants:

Bryan D. Jones, University of Washington
Frank Baumgartner, Pennsylvania State University
John Wilkerson, University of Washington
T. Jens Feeley, University of Washington
Heather Larsen, University of Washington
Erin de la Mare, University of Washington



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Include information that the change applies to the Public Policy Section.

Policy Studies Journal Announcement

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to announce a watershed event for the Public Policy Section. Beginning this fall, the Public Policy Section and the Policy Studies Organization will co-produce the *Policy Studies Journal*. Hank Jenkins-Smith, Professor of Public Policy at the Bush School at Texas A&M and a past president of the Public Policy Section, has agreed to serve as editor-in-chief.

This new arrangement will involve no increase in the membership dues of Public Policy Section members. It was officially approved by the Executive Council of the APSA on April 5, 2003 and has also been approved by the Governing Council of the Public Policy Section.

Under the old regime, the only way to subscribe to the *Policy Studies Journal* was to join the Policy Studies Organization and receive both the *Policy Studies Journal* and the *Review of Policy Research*. Under the new regime, Public Policy Section members may purchase the *Policy Studies Journal* without purchasing the other journal.

Blackwell Publishing has kindly agreed to offer an introductory rate of \$20 per year to encourage you to subscribe to the reconstituted *Policy Studies Journal*. This attractive offer will become effective January 1, 2004, and additional details will be announced in August or September of this year.

The new journal, unlike its predecessor, has an explicit mission: to publish theoretically-oriented, empirically-grounded public policy research of high quality.

With vigorous editorial leadership and the backing of both the APSA's Public Policy Section and the Policy Studies Organization, we expect the *Policy Studies Journal* to become the leading venue for public policy research written by political scientists. But much will depend on you: your willingness to submit your best work to the journal; your willingness to review manuscripts for the journal; and your willingness to subscribe to the new journal.

Professor Jenkins-Smith will assume his responsibilities as editor on September 1, 2003. Until that time, you are welcome to send manuscripts to Professor Harrell Rodgers of the University of Houston, who has kindly agreed to serve as interim editor during the transition period. He can be reached at: Hrod77030@aol.com

In closing, I would like to thank a number of people who helped to make this co-production arrangement possible: Paul Rich, president, and Harrell Rodgers, vice-president of the Policy Studies Organization; Malcolm Crystal, senior journals editor for Blackwell Publishing; Mark Schneider of SUNY-Stony Brook, who chaired the committee to find a new editor, and the hard-working members of his committee; Michael Brintnall, executive director of the APSA; and members of the Public Policy Section Governing Council, who offered good advice and support. Most of all, I would like to thank Hank Jenkins-Smith for his leap of faith, which I hope will be matched by smaller leaps of faith by each and every one of us.

Best,

Bill Gormley, President
Public Policy Section, APSA

