

A Note to Pre-Post Conservatives: You Are Not Fooling Anyone – Except Maybe Yourself (and Some Politicians)

Peter Germanis¹
September 2, 2017

Most conservatives believe the 1996 welfare reform, particularly the creation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant has been a success and is a model for reforming other safety net programs. For example, writing in 2013 for the *Wall Street Journal*, Speaker Ryan said:

After the welfare reforms of 1996, child poverty fell by double digits. This budget extends those reforms to other federal aid programs.²

In his December 3, 2015, speech at the Library of Congress, he reiterated this message:

In 1996, we created a work requirement for welfare. But that was just one program. We have to fix all the others now.³

The idea that TANF created a “work requirement” and “fixed” a welfare program is, by any objective analysis, wrong. While the law sent a symbolic message about the importance of work requirements and time limits, in practice, neither of these elements have been implemented in the way Congress intended. In fact, TANF is not “welfare reform” at all, but a flexible funding stream that has failed to provide an adequate safety net or an effective welfare-to-work program. In many states, it has become a slush fund used to supplant state spending and fill budget holes.

Speaker Ryan and other politicians have been fooled by “pre-post conservatives.” This paper describes what is meant by the term “pre-post conservative,” gives examples of statements about welfare reform from the “pre-post conservative” perspective, and describes the dangers of “pre-post conservatism.”

What is a “pre-post conservative”?

A “pre-post conservative,” as I use the term, is someone who makes cause-and-effect statements about welfare reform based on a simple comparison of outcomes at a point before the 1996 welfare reform law and a point afterwards. Any difference in outcomes, according to the “pre-post conservative,” is due to welfare reform. As described below, a simplistic pre-post approach to assessing welfare reform does not produce credible findings.

Two notable “pre-post conservatives” who believe TANF is a success are Robert Doar of the American Enterprise Institute and Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation. The following statements are representative of the claims they make about TANF.

- Robert Doar (2015): “TANF is a bright spot: Few programs have generated such strong gains in poverty reduction and employment. The program’s robust work requirement, accountability of state performance, and expanded administrative flexibility all helped raise the labor force participation of never-married mothers from 59.5 percent in 1995 to

73.8 percent in 2001 and reduce their poverty rate from 51 percent to 38.5 percent over the same time period.”⁴

- Robert Rector (2014): “The 1996 welfare reform is a rare example of a policy that actually reduced welfare dependence and poverty while cutting welfare costs. ... Within about five years, welfare rolls dropped by half, child poverty plummeted, and employment among low-income individuals jumped. This was an important first step in decreasing poverty and dependence, and one that should be replicated in other programs like food stamps and public housing.”⁵

Why are “Pre-Post Conservatives” Wrong?

In making their claims about TANF’s putative success, “pre-post conservatives” make faulty causal inferences, cherry-pick timeframes to exaggerate their claims, confuse TANF with real welfare reform, and ignore a number of other factors in coming to their conclusions.

#1: Pre-post conservatives make faulty causal inferences, ignoring multiple threats to the causal validity of their findings. Instead of looking for a credible counterfactual, the “pre-post conservative” bases claims of TANF’s putative success on simplistic comparisons in outcomes over time. This is an extremely weak approach to establishing causality. Obviously, there are many other economic, demographic, and policy-related changes that influence poverty and employment rates. In particular, TANF was enacted in the midst of a period of strong economic growth and increased aid to the working poor, most notably expansions in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care subsidies, and Medicaid and related health care coverage. And, states were already experimenting with “welfare reform” through waivers; they didn’t need the 1996 law to test new welfare policies. While some “pre-post conservatives” acknowledge that these factors may have had an influence, few try to disentangle the relative importance of each and are happy to leave the impression that reductions in poverty and employment gains were *caused* by TANF.

#2: Pre-post conservatives use selective time periods to exaggerate their findings. Both Doar and Rector made their statements in the past few years, but instead of using current data, they limit their follow-up to the first four or five years after TANF was enacted. Doar even goes back to 1995, about two years before TANF was implemented by states and could have had any influence on employment and poverty. The problem with such cherry-picking is that after around 2000, the favorable trends reversed themselves. Indeed, the number of poor families with children in 2015 was greater than it was in 1996. If TANF was such a great success, this number should have declined.

#3: Pre-post conservatives confuse TANF with “welfare reform.” TANF is not “welfare reform,” but a fixed and flexible funding stream. In a nutshell, the enactment of TANF set in motion changes that would: (1) initially provide a large windfall of federal funds for states, but also put in place a funding structure that in the longer-term would provide insufficient resources due to inflation and demographic changes; (2) allow states to convert TANF (over time) to a giant slush fund with minimal reporting and accountability provisions, including the ability to use federal funds to simply supplant existing state expenditures; and (3) give states excessive

flexibility to avoid or evade virtually all of the federal requirements in the law, most notably work requirements. TANF replaced real welfare reform (i.e., an evidence-based waiver approach) with a blank check to states with no meaningful accountability provisions.

#4: *Pre-post conservatives fail to provide a causal connection that would provide a plausible explanation for their findings.* If one believes TANF reduced poverty and increased employment, what is the plausible causal mechanism? States already had flexibility with cash assistance and TANF added little to this (except for removing the entitlement altogether) and work requirements were weakened as 20 to 30 states had a 0 percent target for the period between FY 1998 and FY 2011. And, other states have taken advantage of various loopholes created by conservatives themselves. This leaves the big increase in federal funding and jawboning as potential factors in the early years. Over the long-term, all of the aforementioned problems have remained, but the initial windfall has disappeared and is now a large deficit (as inflation eroded the value of the block grant) and states have become far more adept at using TANF like a slush fund and gaming its work requirements.

#5: *Pre-post conservatives fail to reconcile their findings with rigorous research.* Researchers at RAND prepared a comprehensive synthesis of the impact of dozens of state welfare reform programs on welfare caseloads, child poverty, and a range of other outcomes.⁶ The evaluations they reviewed examined programs in the very period when caseloads and poverty fell rapidly nationally. While most reform programs showed declines in welfare receipt and increases in employment, and some showed reductions in poverty, the magnitude of the impacts was considerably smaller than suggested by the simple trends in national data. This is because the control group also benefitted from a strong economy and increased aid to the working poor.

#6: *Pre-post conservatives fail to place their findings into proper perspective.* Even in years when employment rates are higher and/or poverty rates are lower, and even if one assumes that the entire improvement is due to TANF, the gains pale in comparison to the caseload declines that have occurred since 1996. For example, when TANF was implemented, the employment rate of single mothers was about 64.5 percent; in 2014, it was 67.5 percent. Given that there were about 11 million single mothers in 2014, that suggests (using the pre-post approach for establishing causality) that about 300,000 more are single mothers are working *because* of TANF. Meanwhile, the TANF caseload fell from about 4.4 million when TANF was enacted to about 1.7 million in 2014 – a drop of 2.7 million. In other words, the caseload decline was about nine times larger than the increase in employment – even giving TANF credit for far more of an employment impact than is likely. TANF's employment effects by any calculation are small relative to the caseload declines; it has undoubtedly pushed millions of families deeper into poverty.

#7: *Pre-post conservatives ignore the complete collapse of the safety net in many states.* Given the vast flexibility states were provided and the enormous variation in resources stemming from the funding formula, TANF's effects would also be expected to vary considerably across states. The seven states listed in Table 1 represent states where members of Congress are active in the welfare reform debate; they account for about one-quarter of the nation's poor families with children. Between 1996 and 2015, these seven states saw a significant increase in the number of poor families with children – 447,300 (37 percent). Meanwhile, the cash assistance

caseload in the states plummeted by 600,000 (-81 percent). Whereas TANF served 61 families for every 100 poor families with children in 1996 in these seven states, it served just 8 per 100 in 2015. Certainly, TANF’s direct effect in reducing poverty was diminished, as few families in these states now receive cash assistance, despite the increase in poverty.⁷ And, these states spend very little on work activities that might provide a “hand up.”

Table 1: Number of Poor Families with Children vs. TANF Caseloads (1996 and 2015) (Selected States)			
	1996	2015	Change (1996-2015)
GA - # Poor	161,500	284,600	123,100 (76%)
GA - TANF Caseload	131,900	13,900	-118,000 (-89%)
IN - # Poor	92,900	144,700	51,800 (56%)
IN - TANF Caseload	56,400	9,500	-46,900 (-83%)
NC - # Poor	157,800	257,100	99,300 (63%)
NC - TANF Caseload	116,400	17,700	-98,700 (-85%)
TN - # Poor	147,400	164,800	17,400 (12%)
TN - TANF Caseload	98,600	40,600	-58,000 (-59%)
TX - # Poor	552,200	664,700	112,500 (20%)
TX - TANF Caseload	257,800	29,800	-228,000 (-88%)
UT - # Poor	25,700	46,100	20,400 (79%)
UT - TANF Caseload	15,200	4,200	-11,000 (-72%)
WI - # Poor	77,500	100,300	22,800 (29%)
WI - TANF Caseload	63,100	23,700	-39,400 (-62%)
7-State Total - # Poor	1,215,000	1,662,300	447,300 (37%)
7-State Total - TANF Caseload	739,400	139,400	-600,000 (-81%)
7-State Total – TANF-to-Poverty Ratio	61	8	-53 (-87%)

Politicians Fooled by the “Pre-Post Conservative” Claims

Welfare reform is now being considered by Congress. It should be informed by a careful examination of the TANF experience and rigorous research on policy interventions. Sadly, many of the politicians leading the debate today have taken their talking points from the “pre-post conservative” claims about TANF’s “success.” If they only took a closer look at their own states, even using a simplistic pre-post approach, it should be obvious that their perceptions about the “success” of welfare reform are wrong. The following are some examples of politicians that have been fooled by “pre-post conservatism.”

Georgia Representative Rob Woodall: “Mirroring the lessons and the great successes from welfare reform in 1996, the new Food Stamp bill will have strict work requirements, eliminate loopholes for asset and income tests, and reduce the number of jobless, able-bodied adults without children receiving Food Stamps. I know that this is going to be a difficult reform for some in Congress to accept, but in this era of fiscal austerity, we need to make sure that the most needy are receiving assistance, while those who can work do work.”⁸

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in Georgia grew 76 percent, while the TANF caseload fell 89 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 82 to 5.⁹ If there is a lesson from 1996, it is that TANF is NOT a model for reforming other welfare programs.

Indiana Senator Todd Young: “We may not realize it, but a crucial step in building a healthy economy is helping people move from welfare to work.”¹⁰

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in Indiana grew 56 percent, while the welfare caseload fell 83 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 61 to 7.¹¹ It appears that instead of moving people into work, TANF just pushed tens of thousands of families deeper into poverty.

North Carolina Representative Mark Meadows; Chairman of the House Freedom Caucus: “Since 1996, work requirements for welfare recipients have given Americans a hand up rather than a handout. Devised under the Clinton administration, the work requirements in the heavily bipartisan welfare reform law have incentivized people to escape from poverty and a life of government dependence.”¹²

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in North Carolina grew 63 percent, while the welfare caseload fell 85 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 74 to 7.¹³ It doesn’t appear that there is either a “hand out” or a “hand up” in North Carolina.

Tennessee Representative Diane Black; Chairman of the House Budget Committee: “Welfare reforms in the 1990s led to substantial declines in poverty, increases in work, and decreases in government dependency. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] program was a central feature of these reforms.”¹⁴

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in Tennessee grew 12 percent, while the welfare caseload fell 59 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 67 to 25.¹⁵ Is this really a model the House Budget Committee should be advocating?

Texas Representative Kevin Brady; Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee: “The 1996 welfare reform law focused on the shared goal of lifting single mothers and their children out of poverty, but change did not come easy. Opponents were fierce in their disagreement and their rhetoric, claiming the reform would dismantle America’s safety net and increase child poverty.”¹⁶

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in Texas grew 20 percent, while the welfare caseload fell 88 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 47 to 4.¹⁷ It certainly seems like the “opponents” were right about how “welfare reform” would unfold in Texas.

Utah Senator Mike Lee; co-sponsor of the “Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act”: “Successful welfare programs are those that make poverty more temporary, not more tolerable, and we need to move current policy in that direction.”¹⁸

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in Utah grew 79 percent, while the TANF caseload fell 72 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 59 to 9.¹⁹ Clearly, a 79 percent increase in the number of poor families with children suggests that TANF may not be as successful as the Senator believes; and the 72 percent decline in the caseload means thousands of families have been pushed deeper into poverty. The “Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act” would compound the mistakes of TANF; indeed, it is a conservative plan to eviscerate the safety net.²⁰

Wisconsin Representative Paul Ryan; Speaker of the House: “The creation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program is widely seen as the most successful reform of a welfare program.”²¹

Between 1996 and 2015, the number of poor families with children in Wisconsin grew 29 percent, while the welfare caseload fell 62 percent; the TANF-to-poverty ratio fell from 81 to 24.²² Meanwhile, the state has failed to meet TANF’s work requirements four consecutive years (2012-2015). Is this really success Speaker Ryan?

An Emerging Danger: The “Pre-Post Conservative Evaluator”

In fairness to “pre-post conservatives,” TANF cannot be evaluated using conventional methods because it is not a “program,” just a funding stream. There is no counterfactual that could be constructed in any rigorous way, because the funds are now used for hundreds of different activities in a range of programs. And, it is impossible to tell which activities are possible because of TANF and which represent supplantation. Clearly, the simplistic short-term before-and-after comparisons of outcomes that “pre-post conservatives” rely on are wrong, particularly when focused solely on welfare caseloads. To assess TANF, it is not only important to examine trends in key outcomes, but also to examine how the law is written, how the policies are implemented, data and trends, and apply a good dose of common sense. The “pre-post conservative” does none of this; it is what I try to do in my paper “TANF is Broken! It’s Time to Reform ‘Welfare Reform,’” available [here](#).

Traditional “pre-post conservatives” are dangerous enough, but a new and bigger threat is emerging – the “pre-post conservative evaluator.” TANF as a whole cannot be evaluated using conventional evaluation methods, but specific components like work requirements and time limits can and should be evaluated using rigorous methods like random assignment. Indeed, this was the standard practice before the 1996 law. Now, a growing and dangerous trend is reliance on weak evaluation methods, like the simplistic pre-post evaluation, to make misleading and irresponsible claims about the effects of a policy.

For example, Nic Horton, Jonathan Ingram, and Josh Archambault of the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) recently touted the findings of a “study” – one they characterize as “the first of its kind” – that examined the effects of a “work requirement” in Kansas for able-bodied adults without dependents receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).²³ Some of the specific “findings” reported in the study include:

- “Nearly 60 percent found employment within a year of leaving food stamps.”
- “After leaving food stamps, incomes increased 127 percent.”
- “Within a year of leaving food stamps, the number of able-bodied adults living in poverty dropped significantly and roughly half of those working climbed out of poverty entirely.”

What made this study the “first of its kind”? Apparently, the authors believe that tracking the employment and earnings outcomes of those affected by the policy is something new. They explain:

The Brownback administration also set in motion a first-of-its-kind tracking system to monitor the state’s success in moving Kansans from welfare to work. Over the course of two years, the state’s Department of Labor and its Department for Children and Families tracked earnings and employment for nearly 41,000 able-bodied adults leaving food stamps after the work requirements went into effect.

There are hundreds of evaluations that track the employment and earnings of those subject to various welfare reforms – what makes the FGA’s study somewhat unique (though unfortunately not the first of its kind)? The FGA has no comparison or control group that could serve as a counterfactual! As a result, its findings are not credible – at all! The FGA confuses data collection with evaluation. The authors of the study simply assume that any change in the outcomes they observed were the direct result of the “work requirement.”

Pre-post studies are subject to a number of threats to internal validity, including maturation (i.e., where changes in the outcomes of individuals are caused by the normal passage of time), history (i.e., where events unrelated to an intervention affect the outcome of interest), secular trends (i.e., where outcomes are the result of a societal trends, such as changing economic conditions); and regression to the mean (i.e., the initial observation in a pre-post study may be at an extreme point relative to an individual’s or group’s normal trajectory). In this particular study, regression to the mean is likely to be the most serious, as there is considerable turnover in the SNAP caseload. The study is plagued not only by a weak evaluation approach, but misleading comparisons and irresponsible generalizations. For a more detailed discussion of the problems in this study see:

- Peter Germanis, “The FGA’s ‘First of Its Kind Study’ Should Have Been the Last: An Evaluation Note for Pre-Post Conservatives,” July 4, 2017, available [here](#).

The best way to rule out this threat to validity is a randomized control trial, whereby able-bodied adults without dependents are randomly assigned to the “work requirement” group or to a control group that is not subject to the requirement. The findings from random assignment experiments are considered the most credible, because the program and control groups are alike and subject to the same external conditions, with the only difference being the intervention itself. Thus, any difference in outcomes between the groups can be attributed to the intervention – the SNAP “work requirement.” In particular, the threat from regression to the mean would be overcome because both program and control groups would be alike in terms of their employment and earnings histories.

Politicians and Others Fooled by the “Pre-Post Conservative Evaluator”

A number of politicians and pundits have already been fooled by the FGA. For example, the House Budget Committee recently enunciated support for a work requirement in Medicaid by referencing the seriously flawed FGA study of the SNAP work requirement. The House Budget Committee's Concurrent Resolution stated:

Forbes reported last year on a first-of-its-kind study conducted by the Foundation for Government Accountability. It analyzed data from the State of Kansas, which demonstrates that work requirements have led to greater employment, higher incomes, and less poverty.²⁴

Representative Jim Jordan has used the FGA's report to support his "Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act"²⁵ and various conservative think tanks, such as the American Enterprise Institute and The Heritage Foundation have given the FGA a platform to promote findings that no serious social scientist would consider remotely credible.²⁶

Now, states are submitting waiver requests to implement work requirements under Medicaid, with evaluation plans based on this same pre-post methodology. For example, Maine's section 1115 waiver application to impose work requirements indicates the state would assess the impact as follows:

Maine will conduct an analysis of the wage and employment experiences of the impacted population.²⁷

This is the FGA approach; it is not credible without a counterfactual, preferably a randomly assigned control group.

Conclusion

Evaluation can be an important tool for policymakers when done right. Indeed, this was a central element in President Reagan's "waiver-based" approach to "welfare reform. In 1987, he started encouraging states to use existing authority to conduct welfare reform experiments – through waivers of AFDC's rigid rules (and, to a lesser extent, food stamp and Medicaid rules due to more limited waiver authorities for those programs). This approach had strict accountability provisions, most notably cost neutrality (not block grants) and a requirement for a rigorous evaluation.

During the early years of this waiver process, there was an ongoing debate about what constitutes a "rigorous" evaluation and a range of approaches was considered, including statistical models and various comparison group designs.²⁸ A simple pre-post model, like the one used in the FGA report, was rejected outright, because it was deemed to be unreliable. The early experiences in several states using comparison groups and statistical models suggested that even these approaches were imperfect, even though in practice they captured many more factors than a simple pre-post study. In the end, we looked to the "gold standard" of evaluation – random assignment. As noted above, the findings from random assignment experiments are considered

the most credible, because the experimental and control groups are alike and subject to the same external conditions, with the only difference being the intervention itself.

President Reagan's evidence-based approach was continued by President Bush and President Clinton. It provided rigorous evidence, including many examples of state experiments that increased employment and earnings, and also reduced welfare dependency and poverty.²⁹ TANF ended this approach to welfare reform and now there is little credible evidence about the effects of state welfare reform efforts. In recent years, conservatives have increasingly relied on simplistic pre-post comparisons to make claims about the effectiveness of various welfare reform efforts and justify their policy prescriptions. This approach is not a reliable basis for making policy – conservatives must again recommit themselves to rigorous evaluations to find out what really works and what doesn't.

¹ The views in this document reflect my own as a citizen and do not reflect the views of any organization I am now or have ever been affiliated with. By way of background, I consider myself a conservative and have worked on welfare issues for the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, and the White House under both President Reagan and President George H.W. Bush. This paper assumes the reader has a basic understanding of the TANF program, but for those readers who want more context and background, see Peter Germanis, *TANF is Broken! It's Time to Reform "Welfare Reform" (And Fix the Problems, Not Treat their Symptoms)*, July 25, 2015 draft, available at: <http://mlwiseman.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TANF-is-Broken.072515.pdf>.

² Paul Ryan, "The GOP Plan to Balance the Budget by 2023," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 12, 2013, available at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323826704578353902612840488>.

³ Speaker Paul Ryan, "#ConfidentAmerica: Full Text of Speaker Ryan's Remarks at the Library of Congress," December 3, 2015, available at: <http://www.speaker.gov/press-release/full-text-speaker-ryans-remarks-library-congress>.

⁴ Robert Doar, "TANF has been a success – Let's make it better," American Enterprise Institute, September 29, 2015, available at: <https://www.aei.org/publication/tanf-has-been-a-success-lets-make-it-better/>; for a contrary view, see: Peter Germanis, "TANF has been a massive policy failure – Let's start over: A Response to Robert Doar," October 22, 2015, available at: <http://mlwiseman.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/TANF-has-been-a-massive-policy-failure.A-response-to-Robert-Doar.pdf>.

⁵ Rachel Sheffield and Robert Rector, "Paul Ryan's New Anti-Poverty Plan Should Take Work and Marriage Seriously," July 25, 2014, available at: <http://dailysignal.com/2014/07/25/paul-ryans-new-anti-poverty-plan-take-work-marriage-seriously/>; for a contrary view, see: Peter Germanis, *TANF is Broken! It's Time to Reform "Welfare Reform" (And Fix the Problems, Not Treat their Symptoms)*, July 25, 2015 draft, available at: <http://mlwiseman.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TANF-is-Broken.072515.pdf>.

⁶ Jeffrey Groger, Lynn A. Karoly, and Jacob Alex Klerman, *Consequences of Welfare Reform: A Research Synthesis* (Santa Monica, CA: July 2002), http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/res_synthesis/reports/consequences_of_wr/rand_report.pdf.

⁷ For many of these families, the expansions in other parts of the safety net didn't help because those expansions generally benefitted those with earnings (e.g., EITC and CTC) and higher incomes (expansions in Medicaid and CHIP).

⁸ Representative Rob Woodall, "Washington Watch," September 16, 2013, available at: <https://woodall.house.gov/media-center/e-newsletter-archive/washington-watch-91613>.

⁹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Georgia's TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families," available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_ga.pdf.

¹⁰ Representative Todd Young, "Needed: A Safety Net That Works," *National Review*, March 18, 2015, available at: <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/415556/needed-safety-net-works-todd-young>.

¹¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Indiana's TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families," available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_in.pdf.

¹² Representative Mark Meadows, "Meadows Supports Welfare to Work Legislation," Press release, March 13, 2013, available at: <https://meadows.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/meadows-supports-welfare-to-work-legislation>.

¹³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "North Carolina's TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families," available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_nc.pdf.

¹⁴ House Budget Committee, *Building a Better America: A Plan for Fiscal Responsibility*, July 2017, available at: <https://budget.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Building-a-Better-America-PDF-2.pdf>.

¹⁵ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Tennessee's TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families," available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_tn.pdf.

¹⁶ Representative Kevin Brady, "Twenty years after welfare reform, the path ahead," *The Hill*, August 22, 2016, available at: <https://waysandmeans.house.gov/icymi-chairman-brady-op-ed-hill-20th-anniversary-welfare-reform/>.

¹⁷ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Texas' TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families," available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_tx.pdf.

¹⁸ The Association of Mature American Citizens, "Senator Mike Lee Introduces Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act," February 12, 2014, available at: <https://amac.us/lee-introduces-welfare-reform-upward-mobility-act/>.

¹⁹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Utah's TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families," available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_ut.pdf.

-
- ²⁰ Peter Germanis, “The Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act: A Conservative Plan to Eviscerate the Safety Net (An Update),” June 11, 2017, available at: <http://mlwiseman.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WRandUMA.2017.pdf>.
- ²¹ See Greg Kaufmann, “Heat and eat’ loophole was a lifeline,” March 14, 2014, available at: <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/economy-budget/200719-heat-and-eat-loophole-was-a-lifeline>.
- ²² Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Wisconsin’s TANF Cash Assistance Is Disappearing for Poor Families,” available at: https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_wi.pdf.
- ²³ Nic Horton, Jonathan Ingram, and Josh Archambault, “First-Of-Its-Kind Study Shows The Power Of Work,” *Forbes*, February 19, 2016, available at: <https://thefga.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Forbes-First-Of-Its-Kind-Study-Shows-The-Power-Of-Work.pdf>. The study they refer to is: Jonathan Ingram and Nic Horton, *The Power of Work: How Kansas’ Welfare Reform Is Lifting Americans Out of Poverty* (The Foundation for Government Accountability, February 16, 2016), available at: <https://thefga.org/download/PowerOfWork-KansasWelfareReform.pdf>.
- ²⁴ House Budget Committee, Concurrent Resolution, p. 108, available at: https://budget.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/7-18-17-225-FY2018_Budget_Resolution_xml.pdf.
- ²⁵ Tara Golshan, “Conservative lawmakers think cuts to food stamps won’t hurt anyone. Evidence says that’s wrong.” *Vox*, July 7, 2017, available at: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/7/7/15894168/conservative-cut-food-stamp-evidence>.
- ²⁶ Marc Thiessen, “No, Trump does not want to force poor Americans to hunt squirrels for food,” American Enterprise Institute, May 26, 2017, available at: <https://www.aei.org/publication/trump-does-not-want-poor-americans-work-requirements/>; and Rachel Sheffield, “Kansas Required Work for Food Stamps. Here’s What Happened,” *The Daily Signal*, April 25, 2016, available at: <http://dailysignal.com/2016/04/25/kansas-required-work-for-food-stamps-heres-what-happened/>.
- ²⁷ “1115 Waiver Application, Department of Health and Human Services, State of Maine,” available at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oms/documents/Draft_MaineCare_1115_application.pdf.
- ²⁸ See Judith M. Gueron and Howard Rolston, *Fighting for Reliable Evidence* (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, June 2013) and Michael E. Fishman and Daniel H. Weinberg, “The Role of Evaluation in State Welfare Reform Waiver Demonstrations,” in *Evaluating Welfare and Training Programs*, edited by Charles Manski and Irv Garfinkel, (Harvard University Press, January 1992), pp. 115-142.
- ²⁹ Jeffrey Grogger, Lynn A. Karoly, and Jacob Alex Klerman, *Consequences of Welfare Reform: A Research Synthesis* (Santa Monica, CA: July 2002), http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/res_synthsis/reports/consequences_of_wr/rand_report.pdf.