



Table 1: Does The Welfare System Do More Good Or More Harm?

Views of American Adults By Political Party Affiliation

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
The welfare system does more harm than good, because it encourages the breakup of the family and discourages work	56%	50%	72%
The welfare system does more good than harm, because it provides assistance and training for those who are without jobs and are poor	33%	43%	22%
Don't know/Refused	11%	7%	7%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 2: Are People Who Receive Welfare Able To Work?

Views of American Adults

More people who receive welfare...	
Are able to work	81%
Have disabilities that keep them from working	9%
Other (vol.)	6%
Don't know	4%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 5: Americans' Views About U.S. Spending On Welfare

Views of American Adults By Political Party Affiliation

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
Spend Too Much	64%	57%	78%
Spend Too Little	12%	14%	5%
Spend About Right Amount	17%	26%	9%
Don't Know	7%	3%	8%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 8: Americans' Views Of Welfare Recipients

Views of American Adults By Political Party Affiliation

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
Most people who receive money from welfare...			
Could get along without it if they tried	46%	40%	56%
Really need this help	44%	50%	34%
Don't know/Refused	10%	10%	10%
Most welfare recipients...			
Do not really want to work	47%	46%	58%
Really want to work	40%	44%	30%
Don't know/Refused	12%	10%	13%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 9: Americans' Views About The Availability Of Jobs For Welfare Recipients

Views of American Adults By Political Party Affiliation

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
There are jobs available for most welfare recipients who really want to work	72%	62%	85%
Among all of those who responded to the question:			
And most of these jobs pay enough to support a family	22%	16%	31%
But most of these jobs do not pay enough to support a family	37%	35%	40%
But don't know if they pay enough or depends on family size	12%	11%	14%
Jobs are not available	24%	36%	12%
Don't know if jobs are available	4%	2%	3%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 10: Americans' Views Of Welfare Mothers Of Young Children

Views of American Adults

It's important for a mother with young children to stay at home even if it means having to provide her with welfare	42%
We should not pay welfare to mothers with young children because it's so important that people work	35%
Other (vol.)	14%
Don't know/Refused	10%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 11: Americans' Values Concerning The Welfare System

Views of American Adults By Political Affiliation

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
We shouldn't let people who can't get or hold a job go hungry or homeless, and we need to continue welfare payments to these people	44%	44%	45%
We should have a firm limit on how long people can stay on welfare, regardless of the consequences, in order to get them to work	43%	43%	44%
Other (vol.)	7%	6%	6%
Don't know/Refused	5%	7%	5%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 12: Americans' Views Of Who Should Be Primarily Responsible For Making Sure That Non-Working Low-Income People Have A Minimum Standard Of Living

Views of American Adults

Responsibility should be shared	57%
People themselves, friends, and voluntary agencies should be primarily responsible	26%
Government should be primarily responsible	14%
Don't know	3%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 13: Public Knowledge About The Welfare System

- 90% know that more women and children are on welfare than men
- A majority (57%) knows that responsibility for running welfare is shared between federal and state governments
- A plurality (32%) knows how much public assistance mothers are receiving each month
- 71% say they know what Medicaid is and 43% know it pays not only for hospital and doctor services for poor adults and children, but also for services for the elderly in nursing homes and for the blind and disabled
- A majority (57%) know that most people on welfare are minorities

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 14: Americans' Views About Which Government Programs Are Welfare Programs

Views of American Adults (from a list of 9 programs)

	% saying each of the following is a welfare program
Food stamps	93%
AFDC, or Aid to Families With Dependent Children	85%
Public housing	85%
WIC, or the Women, Infants, and Children program	72%
The school lunch program	62%
Medicaid	60%
SSI, or Supplemental Security Income	43%
Medicare	30%
Social Security	15%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 15: What Public Views As Welfare*

(from a list of 9 programs)

Programs	Billions of dollars as of FY 1993
Medicaid	\$76
Food Stamps	\$25
AFDC (Family Support)	\$16
Child Nutrition Programs/WIC	\$ 7
Public Housing Assistance	\$20
Total Federal Spending on These Programs	\$144
Total Federal Outlays	\$1,408
Public's Definition of Welfare as Percentage of Total Federal Outlays	10.2%

Source: Congressional Budget Office, 1994 and House Committee on Ways and Means, 1993

*Based on the majority of responses provided in the Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995 and correlated to the federal budget FY 1993. Most survey respondents did not identify Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the federal cash assistance program for the aged, blind, and disabled, as welfare. SSI spending for FY 1993 was \$21 billion.

Table 16: Americans' Views Of The Two Largest Areas Of Federal Government Spending

Views of American Adults (from a list of six programs)

	% selecting area as one of two of the largest areas of federal spending
Foreign aid	41%
Welfare	40%
Interest on the federal debt	40%
Defense	37% *
Social Security	14% *
Health	8%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy

Survey, January 1995

*Actual largest areas of FY 1993 federal budget: defense (21%) and Social Security (21%).

Table 17: Americans' Views Of Ending Welfare Payments To Able-Bodied Recipients After Two Years

Views of American Adults

Favor ending welfare payments to able-bodied welfare recipients, including women with pre-school children, after two years, and requiring them to take a job	68%
Would continue to favor even if the job the person takes pays a low wage that would make it difficult to support a family	26%
Would continue to favor even if the person is unable to get a job	16%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 18: Americans' Views On What Should Happen If Welfare Recipients Are Cut Off After A Specified Period Of Time And After Education, Training, And Health And Child Benefits Have Been Provided

Views of American Adults

Favor requiring welfare recipients to do community service work in exchange for continued benefits	56%
Favor cutting off benefits and guaranteeing jobs to recipients	25%
Favor cutting off benefits	10%
Don't know/Refused	10%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 19: The Principal Goal Of Welfare Reform

Views of American Adults By Political Affiliation

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
Get people off welfare, but only if we can get them decent jobs by providing job training and education	63%	66%	60%
Get people off welfare even if it means they have to take a low-paying job	27%	22%	33%
Get people off welfare regardless of the consequences	6%	7%	5%
Provide people on welfare with more money so that they have a higher standard of living	2%	5%	2%
Other (vol.)	2%	1%	1%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 20: Public Support For Proposals To Change The Welfare System

Views of American Adults

I. Government Should Provide Training & Support

	Favor	Oppose	Don't Know/ Refused
Government should provide job training for people on welfare	87%	10%	3%
Government should provide child care to low-income mothers who are on welfare who take jobs or are in job training	85%	13%	2%
Government should provide public sector jobs for people on welfare	74%	21%	5%

II. Government Should Get Tough

	Favor	Oppose	Don't Know/ Refused
Government should require each mother to report the name of a child's father before she can receive welfare	81%	16%	3%
Government should limit or deny welfare aid to non-citizens. This would include most legal immigrants as well as all illegal immigrants	64%	27%	9%
Women who have additional children while on welfare should not receive additional benefits for those children	59%	34%	8%
Government should set a limit on how fast the cost of welfare programs can grow, regardless of how many people may need them	57%	31%	13%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 21: Americans' Willingness To Pay More In Taxes Or See Other Programs Cut To Provide Job Training And Public Sector Jobs So People Can Get Off Welfare

Views of American Adults

	Willing	Unwilling	Don't Know/ Refused
Job training	53%	40%	7%
Public service jobs	47%	45%	8%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy

Survey, January 1995

Table 22: Americans' Views About Ending Welfare Benefits To Unmarried Mothers And Their Children And About Care In Group Homes And Orphanages

Views of American Adults

	Favor	Oppose	Don't Know/Refused
A proposal that would end all welfare benefits for unmarried mothers and their children, even if it means that some of the children would have to be cared for in group homes or orphanages	25%	66%	9%

If such a proposal were enacted, which one of the following three things would you prefer that government do for unmarried mothers with children who cannot support themselves?

The government pays for group homes where mothers and their children live together	56%
The government provides orphanages for the children	8%
The government does nothing	8%
None of the above	23%
Don't know	5%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995

Table 23: Americans' Views Of Who Should Be Primarily Responsible For Making Sure That Non-Working Low-Income People Have A Minimum Standard Of Living

Views of American Adults

	Total	Dem.	Rep.
Government should be primarily responsible	14%	20%	7%
People themselves, friends, and voluntary agencies should be primarily responsible	26%	22%	27%
Responsibility should be shared	57%	54%	62%
Among those who believe the responsibility should be shared:			
With government role lasting only for a limited time	71%	63%	77%
With government role lasting as long as it takes for the individual to get a job	25%	33%	17%
But don't know how long government role should last	4%	2%	5%
Don't know who should be primarily responsible	3%	4%	4%

Source: Kaiser/Harvard Program on the Public and Health/Social Policy Survey, January 1995