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Legislators' Perceptions about Poverty: Views from the Georgia General Assembly

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This study sought to explore legislators perspectives about causes of poverty. Members of the Georgia General Assembly rated the importance of 10 behavioral and structural explanations of poverty, and indicated whether they thought poor women and children would be better served under AFDC or TANF. Whereas all groups of legislators found behavioral explanations moderately important, there was significant variation by race, gender, and political party about the importance of structural explanations of poverty. Support for several structural explanations of poverty correlated with a preference for AFDC, but no correlations were found with behavioral explanations. This study holds implications for affecting future debates about TANF.

What causes poverty? What is the best way to address it? Those two interlinked, historically debated questions have been ever present. Currently, poverty and welfare policy are also interlinked. With the 1990 campaign promise to "... end welfare as we know it ..." candidate Bill Clinton forced the issue of poverty onto the national agenda where congressional members and other federal policy-makers grappled with the question of causes and remedies. The passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PL 104-193) the legislation that replaced the cash assistance entitlement program Aid to Families

With Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), shifted control of cash assistance from the federal government to the states. Thus authority to address poverty currently rests with State Assemblies and state policy makers, and it is within these entities that a wide range of welfare policy is being developed and implemented under the auspice of TANF (Katz, 1994; Personal Responsibility Act of 1995).

Philosophically and from a policy standpoint, TANF is most significant for having changed family welfare policy from an entitlement to a contract with time limits. While there was little popular public support for maintaining the policy of entitlement, there were some policy makers, social scientists, and social service providers who vociferously sought to maintain aspects of an entitlement policy (for example, consider the resignations of Mary Jo Bane, Peter Edelman, and Wendell Primus in response to Clinton's signing of the bill). Despite some prominent expressions for entitlements, maintenance of entitlements did not find its way into the policy debate. Instead what emerged were federal mandates for time-limited assistance and devolution of welfare policy to the states.

Given the recent importance of state General Assemblies' members in influencing and effecting welfare policy, it is the premise of this study that insight into General Assembly members' orientation about the causes and remedies of poverty is important to social workers, those involved in implementing welfare initiatives, as well as recipients and others. Moreover, it is very likely that for the next several years TANF regulations will be actively debated in General Assemblies across the country and that insight into elected officials' views about causes and remedies may be helpful in affecting those debates. During the fall of 1998 members of the Georgia General Assembly were queried about their views of poverty and their positions on TANF regulations.

Currently, little formal data are available that explores state legislators' orientation about poverty and their views about entitlements. Yet there is evidence that one's orientation about the causes of poverty is related to support for social service initiatives. For example, Feagin (1972), as well as Zucker and Weiner (1993) found a positive relationship between individuals who held structural orientations about poverty and support for social

services. Additionally, querying the general public about causes of homelessness, Toro (1992) found a positive relationship between structural orientations and support for people who are homeless. Hewstone's (1989) work on attribution theory, which explores the relationship between perceptions of social problems and support for solutions, provides a theoretical underpinning for the relationships found by Feagin, Zucker and Weiner, and Toro.

PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY AND POLICY

Behavioral and Structural Orientations

Opinions about the causes of poverty and ways to address it are grounded in behavioral and structural positions. Behavioral explanations of poverty focus on the personal characteristics of the impoverished person. Historically, shiftlessness and laziness were common behaviors cited. Remedies included forced work and the development of policies designed to eliminate almsgiving (Boyer, 1978; Katz, 1986; Trattner, 1989). Current characterizations of the behavioral explanation include sexual promiscuity, dependence, irresponsible behavior, and deviance (Gilder, 1980; Murray, 1984; Sanger, 1990; Sidel, 1996). With the passage of the 1988 Family Support Act and the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, states have been able to develop strategies that seek to affect participants' behavior.

Structural explanations of poverty focus on broad social, political, and economic conditions. Historically, war, the growth of the market economy, industrialization, and urbanization were some of the conditions that have been cited as structural explanations (Katz, 1994; Sinclair, 1906; Trattner, 1989). In the present context, structural explanations have tended to be delineated in two ways. The first delineation addresses the economy and includes loss of manufacturing, the growing gap between rich and poor, and discrimination (Danzinger and Lehman, 1996; Philips, 1994; Wilson, 1996). Despite persuasive arguments that suggest a strong relationship between the nature of the economy and poverty (see for example, Danziger and Lehman, 1996; Jencks, 1997; Sidel, 1996; and Wilson, 1997), this view has tended not to be found

in prescribed remedies (Thayer, 1995). The second structural delineation involves lack of access to work because of inadequate education and lack of transportation and child care. Presently, structurally oriented remedies tend to focus on lack of access to work (Gueron, 1995).

Setting the Stage for TANF

Explanations of poverty in the 1980's set the stage for the present debate. In the 1980's three views merged to create an expressed negative view toward the poor and the nation's largest income transfer system, AFDC (Moynihan, 1997). The first was frustration with the explosion of the welfare rolls in the 1970's (Patterson, 1986). The second view was the ascendancy of neo-conservative ideology, an ideology that considered the state as the cause, not the solution, to social problems (Karger & Stoesz, 1997). The third was the wide dissemination of the neo-conservative views of George Gilder (1980), Charles Murray (1984), and Lawrence Mead (1990), views that suggested that welfare was the cause of increases in out-of-wedlock births, crime, and violence, as well as a poor work ethic. These views were echoed by President Reagan with anecdotal stories. By the 1980's, the mood of the country was well poised to accept Ronald Reagan's assertion that "we had a war on poverty and that poverty won." This assertion suggested that state intervention, vis-a-vis income transfer and the type of activities associated with the War on Poverty, such as training and education, were ill-conceived and ineffective (Mills, 1996; Rank, 1994). As a result of the ascendancy of such views, the 1980's has been characterized as the time in which welfare policy was no longer viewed as the politics of income, but as the politics of behavior.

Although the Reagan administration sought to dismantle War on Poverty programs and agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Office of Economic Opportunity, as well as crack down on welfare fraud, it was subsequent congressional candidates and leaders who worked to design legislation from a behavioral explanation exclusively. The desire to eliminate welfare as an entitlement because it fostered dependency and consequently poverty was brought to the legislative arena by many Republican leaders who rallied around

the 1994 *Contract With America*. The *Contract With America* called for elimination of the American welfare system. In 1996 the ideas associated with the supporters of the *Contract With America* had merged with Clinton's campaign promise to "end welfare as we know it" to create TANF.

The enabling TANF legislation was constructed so that families who fulfilled contractual obligations, primarily in the areas of work and training, received temporary cash assistance for up to five years. In addition, TANF provided states with some resources to participate in transitional services such as child care, health care, and transportation. According to President Clinton, TANF seeks to "reward work [and] demand responsibility." The legislation can be viewed as accommodating behavioral and structural explanations about poverty, enabling state legislatures to incorporate aspects of each orientation into their TANF policies.

PRESENT RESEARCH

Since it is likely that states' TANF provisions will be revisited in future legislative sessions, it is believed that an objective examination of legislators' attitudes and beliefs about welfare can be useful in affecting the debate. The present research had the following objectives: to determine the saliency of specific orientations about causes of poverty with legislators; and explore differences legislators held about causes of poverty, based on their own race, gender, and party. Additionally the study predicted that correlated relationships would be found between structural and behavioral explanations of poverty and a belief that poor women and children will be better off under AFDC or TANF.

GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

During the 1997 legislative session, members of the Georgia Legislature crafted and voted on the state's version of TANF. Introduced by Governor Zell Miller's office, Senate Bill 104 (SB104) the Georgia TANF was signed into law in April, 1997. This was the only bill about welfare reform actively debated in the State Legislature.

Senate Bill 104 reflected the ideas expressed by Governor Miller in his 1997 State of the State address: "We are going to stop

the decades-old practice of simply putting checks in the mail, month after month, year after year, and in some cases generation after generation. Instead, we are going to focus on . . . helping people get the skills for the jobs they need to become self-sufficient and support their families" (Miller, 1997).

There were three major components of SB104 that addressed behavior. First, SB104 established a life-time benefit of four years. Second, it continued to implement a family cap (family caps refer to lack of additional cash assistance for additional children). Third, it initiated a sanctioning rule so that families' cash grants can be reduced by 25 percent upon initial failure to meet program requirements, and termination of benefits upon a second failure.

With regard to the structural explanations of poverty, SB 104 provided services to help clients prepare for work. The purpose of these supports was to remove potential barriers for TANF recipients to workforce participation. The support services included transitional child care and Medicaid for one year. SB104 is written so the subsidized child care and Medicaid for children may continue after one year. In addition, the state may provide assistance in the areas of transportation, job training and education, work, clothes, work-related equipment, and emergency assistance. In theory, SB 104 provides considerable flexibility to the local Department of Families and Children Services' offices to help TANF recipients overcome the structural obstacles to employment.

It is important to note that substantively Georgia's TANF can be considered a moderate TANF. For example, the four year time limit is less restrictive than those states who have implemented shorter time limits and more restrictive than those states that have extended benefits for the five years allowed. While the two-strike provision without an opportunity for remediation can be considered harsh, the support services provided, specifically the educational support, can be considered particularly generous (National Conference of State Legislators Database, 1997).

METHOD

Procedure

A five page survey consisting of 30 questions was mailed to the district offices of all members of the Georgia House and Senate. With the exception of a place for additional comments

and responses to demographic data, all of the questions involved responding to a five point Likert-type scale.

In the first section of the survey, Georgia legislators read 10 explanations of poverty derived from the work of Littrell and Diwan (1998). In response legislators indicated on a one to five point scale whether they viewed the explanation as not at all important as indicated by a score of one, to very important. Specifically, legislators indicated how important six behaviorally-based explanations of poverty were, and four structurally-based explanations. The six behaviorally-based explanations included statements regarding "lack of effort," "lack of ambition," "lack of talent," and "lack of thrift" as well as "low IQ" and "loose morals," as causes of poverty. An example of the wording found in a behavioral based question is, "There are poor people in this country because lack of effort by the poor themselves."

The four structurally-based explanations included statements regarding "lack of jobs," "low wages," "prejudice and discrimination against minority groups," and "poor schools," as causes of poverty. Examples of the wording found in structurally based explanations are, "There are poor people in this country because failure of society to provide good schools for many Americans." The 10 explanations for poverty used by Littrell and Diwan were informed by the work of Feagin (1972), Iyengar (1990), and MacDonald (1972).

Next, respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale their level of agreement with the following statement "Poor women and children will be better off receiving public assistance under Georgia's new welfare system where recipients receive cash assistance for a maximum of 4 years, than receiving public assistance under the old (AFDC) system." Responses to this question were coded as "AFDC viewed as better," "TANF viewed as better," or "neutral."

RESULTS

Sample

Of the 236 surveys mailed to Georgia legislators, 74 or 31% were returned. Of the 74 legislators who did return the questionnaire, nine respondents did not report any demographic information and an additional five respondents did not complete

portions of the demographic information. Thirty four (46%) of the respondents were Democrats, 26 (35%), were Republican, and 14 (9%) did not report. Forty nine (66%) of the respondents were Caucasian, 11 (15%) were People of Color, and 14 (9%) did not report. Fifty two (70%) of the respondents were male, 13 (18%) women, and 9 (12%) did not report. Of this sample there were five Republican women, seven Democratic women, one Republican of color, and 10 Democrats of color. There is an impressive correspondence between the composition of those respondents who completed demographic information and the composition of the Georgia Legislature. For example, in the Georgia Legislature, 57% of the members are Democrats and 43% are Republican which are the same percentages in the sample. In the Georgia Legislature, 15% of the members are women, while in the sample, 17% of the respondents were women. In the Georgia Legislature, 19% of the members are people of color, while in the sample, 22% of the respondents were people of color. Even though generalizations must be made cautiously, the demographic profiles of the sample and the Georgia Legislature are quite similar.

Causes of Poverty

As indicated earlier legislators responded to ten causes of poverty. The data were analyzed to determine which causes were most salient with legislators. In addition, the data were examined to determine differences that existed as a result of party affiliation, race, and gender. Specifically three comparisons were done in which Republicans and Democrats were compared with each other for between group differences. The same comparisons were done for race and gender.

Behaviorally-based explanations. Seventy one respondents indicated their level of agreement about the importance of each explanation of poverty by responding to a five point Likert scale in which a score of one was not at all important and a score of five very important. Table 1 presents the mean scores, and standard deviations about the behavioral-based causes of poverty. In general the six-behaviorally based causes seemed to cluster around the median of 3.2. The largest mean was 3.62 and 2.24 was the smallest. Lack of effort was the behavioral cause viewed as most salient among all members of the legislature. In descending order

Table 1
Views About Causes of Poverty Explored By Party, Race, and Gender

	Democrat	Republican	People of Color	Caucasian	Female	Male	Total
Lack of Effort	M 3.66 SD 1.03	3.77 .95	3.30 .99	3.70 .92	3.58 1.08	3.70 .94	3.62 1.03
Lack of Ambition	M 3.37 SD 1.07	3.80 1.13	3.10 1.13	3.67 1.03	3.58 1.44	3.55 1.01	3.51 1.13
Lack of Thrift	M 3.39 SD 1.20	3.73 1.00	3.20 1.32	3.57 1.01	3.42 1.16	3.50 1.11	3.50 1.13
Lack of Talent	M 2.88 SD 1.17	2.58 1.10	3.10 1.10	3.22 4.50	2.75 1.40	3.29 4.33	3.15 3.74
Lack of Morals	M 2.90 SD 1.13	3.24 1.16	2.30 1.57	3.20 1.10	3.00 1.14	3.12 1.18	3.03 1.20
Low IQ	M 2.27 SD 1.19	2.17 1.05	2.20 1.13	2.17 1.05	2.00 1.28	2.24 1.00	2.21 1.15
Lack of Jobs	M 3.64** SD 1.68	3.64** 1.68	3.64** 1.68	3.02** 1.20	3.91** 1.64	3.00** 1.25	3.25** 1.24
Lack of Wages	M 3.67** SD .85	1.68** .85	3.67** .85	3.18** 1.01	4.33** .78	3.04** 1.00	3.26** 1.07
Discrimination	M 3.30** SD 1.31	2.24** .97	4.30** 1.10	2.52** 1.15	3.75** 1.14	2.52** 1.22	2.76** 1.21
Poor Schools	M 2.81* SD 1.26	2.65 1.32	4.10* 1.10	2.37* 1.11	3.58* 1.24	2.46* 1.20	2.81 1.31

** p < .01

* p < .05

the other causes were: "lack of ambition," "lack of thrift," "lack of talent," "loose morals," and "low I.Q."

In addition to looking at the overall means, several analysis of variance were preformed that explored differences based on party affiliation, race, and gender about the saliency of each of the behavioral explanations of poverty. Using an one way ANOVA, Republicans and Democrats, Caucasians and People of Color, and males and females were compared with each other. None of these comparisons resulted in a significant difference at the $p < .05$ level, suggesting that Republicans, and Democrats, Caucasians and People of Color, and males and females tended to view each of the six behavioral explanations with a similar degree of moderation.

Structurally-based explanations. The same procedures conducted for the behavioral explanations were conducted for the structural explanations. Again Table 1 presents the data. The obtained mean scores ranged from 3.25 to 2.76. "Lack of jobs" was seen as the most salient of the structural explanations followed by, in descending order "low wages," "failure of American society to provide adequate schools," and "prejudice and discrimination against minority groups." As with behavioral explanations, the structural explanations also tended to cluster around the median of 3.0.

In contrast to the behavioral explanations, however, significant relationships between groups were found. On the factors of "low wages," and "discrimination and prejudice against minority groups," significant relationships at the $p < .01$ were found within party, race, and gender. Specifically, Democrats, People of Color, and women viewed discrimination and low wages as more important causes of poverty than their counterparts. On the question of "failure of American society to provide adequate schools" as a cause of poverty a significant difference at the $p < .01$ level was found within race and gender with People of Color and women perceiving this explanation as more important. On the question of "lack of jobs," a relationship was found at the $p < .10$ level, between all groups, again, Democrats, People of Color, and women viewed lack of jobs as a more important predictor.

Support for TANF

Overview of Legislators' views about SB104. With a score of five meaning strong agreement, legislators were asked to indicate

their level of agreement to the statement, "I would prefer if welfare remained a federal entitlement program," on a five-point Likert scale. The 72 responses to the statement were divided into three groups: those who viewed TANF as better were respondents who indicated a one or two ($N=46$), those who viewed AFDC as better were respondents who indicated a four and five ($N=11$), and those who were neutral were respondents who indicated a three ($N=15$). The overall mean response for the question was 2.2 ($s.d.=1.13$). Table 4 shows respondents' preferences and their demographics.

Views About Poverty and Preferences for TANF. As indicated earlier, it was predicted that relationships between viewing TANF as better and support of behavioral explanations for poverty would be found and that a relationship between viewing AFDC as better and support for structural explanations of poverty would also be found. In order to determine whether the relationships existed, Sperman's rho correlations were preformed ($N=70$). There were no significant correlation coefficients for behavioral explanations of poverty, and in fact the highest rho was .188 (significance at the $P<.05$ is $\rho>2.20$). Each of the structural explanations yielded significance ($P<.05$). "Lack of jobs" ($\rho=.274$), "prejudice and discrimination against minority groups" ($\rho=.247$), "lack of wages" ($\rho=.245$), "failure of society to provide good schools" ($\rho=.220$).

On the behavioral explanations of poverty, significant relationships were not found, that is, responses found on any of the behavioral explanations of poverty did not correlate with a preference for TANF or AFDC. However, there were significant correlations found on each of the structural explanations. At the $p<.05$, for a one-tailed test, there were significant correlations with

Table 2

Demographic Information on Respondents Preference

Preference	Total	Democrat	Republican	People			
				of Color	Caucasian	Male	Female
TANF	46	13	21	4	31	34	11
Neutral	15	10	1	6	7	10	3
AFDC	11	6	1	0	8	6	3

believing that AFDC or TANF was better and belief in some of the different perspectives about the causes of poverty. Specifically significant correlations were found with the following explanations of poverty: "lack of jobs," "lack of wages," "prejudice and discrimination against minority groups," "failure of society to provide good schools for many Americans." Therefore those legislators who believed that the structural explanations presented were an important cause of poverty were likely to prefer AFDC, while legislators who believed that behavioral explanations for poverty were important were not likely to prefer TANF.

DISCUSSION

Although the present study only explored one state's general assembly there are several reasons why the data may be cautiously used to provide hints regarding legislators' views about causes of poverty and support for TANF. The study's findings may hold relevance beyond the Georgia Legislature as the data examined individuals' views within a state legislature and that the sample of individuals was demographically and ideologically diverse. Additionally the Georgia legislator might prove instructive in that the Georgia TANF is viewed as moderate TANF; this may suggest that the debates and issues raised in the Georgia legislature may echo those raised in other state legislatures.

The findings from this study hold relevance in two areas. The first area relates to views that policy-makers hold, and the second relates to effecting change in welfare policy.

Views of Policy Makers

In general it is believed that conservatives support behavioral explanations of poverty and that liberals support structural explanations, and that Democrats, African Americans', and women overall tend to be more liberal than their counterparts (Katz, 1994). Our findings suggested that this generalization held true for structural explanations of poverty, but not for behavioral. There appeared to be consensus, among all members of the Georgia legislature, that the poor do exhibit behaviors that, if not directly attributable to their poverty, perpetuate their poverty. These behaviors include a lack of effort, ambition, thrift, talent and morals.

The across-the-board moderate acceptance of behavioral explanations of poverty by legislators can be viewed as holding implications for program planners as they seek to develop service objectives for TANF and other state funded anti-poverty programs. It can be suggested that legislators may provide assistance to those services that directly address the behaviors that legislators indicated as salient and conversely, barring a financial incentive, it is likely that efforts to reduce services in these areas may meet with legislative resistance.

The data also speak to the issue of differences between the views of Democrats, women, and African Americans with Republicans, men and Caucasians. It is not surprising that differences exist among these groups on structural views about poverty. It is, however, important that a review of means suggests that African American and women legislators do in fact view causes of poverty differently than their white male counterparts, but given their low numbers in the legislator, their prospective is muted.

Moreover, the data might be viewed as supporting the argument that elected officials form a portion of their views based on their own experiences with social issues. Specifically, on questions related to low wages, lack of jobs, and discriminations it might be inferred from the data that African American's and women's perspectives may relate to their experiences. For example with respect to wages, presently in Georgia women receive 75.3 cents to men's \$1.00, (this differential is about average across the country) and nationally African American men receive 80 cents to Caucasian men's \$1.00 (White House Documents, 1996; The Wage Gap, 1996). Thus it may not be considered surprising that African Americans and women may be more sensitive to questions involving wages, jobs, and discrimination. Additionally, this same argument could hold true for the question regarding school failure, as African Americans tend to be clustered in schools with less measures of success. In some cases expectations for girls in K-12 are lower than expectations for boys (Cazden, 1990; Kozol, 1991). It is data such as this which is being used to support arguments for proportional representation, campaign finance reform, and local voting by district.

It is additionally interesting that the 10 respondents of color, indicated that they did not believe that recipients would be better

off with AFDC. Six respondents were neutral and four thought TANF would provide better support as showed by a score of two, none of the respondents indicating strong agreement by marking a score of one. Each of these respondents, also expressed a great deal of support for structural explanations for poverty. It might be inferred that frustration with AFDC, not wholehearted support, was the most salient factor in effecting the views of legislators of color.

Influencing Legislators

While there was support for many of the concepts found in TANF, support for SB104 and the federal enabling legislation for TANF was divided and the early evaluations have produced mixed results (see for example DeParle, August, 1977; DeParle, December, 1977). Thus, advocates, social workers, recipients and others will have opportunities to affect both the future of TANF regulations, and perhaps the longevity of TANF. Examples of legislators' divergent views and some of the future issues to be addressed follow.

The new system is an overreaction . . . many of the recipients are going to be in jeopardy in four years

We got a strong bill (though somewhat weaker than many of us wanted) . . . Government is not the solution to poverty and unemployment. More times than not, it is a crutch that perpetuates the poverty, generation after generation.

Given the relationships between causes of poverty and preference for TANF and the disparity found in how legislators viewed structural causes of poverty, the data presented here can be viewed as most salient in shaping future advocacy efforts. It is important to note that a great deal of the public debate and advocacy efforts about TANF, both nationally and in Georgia, focused on behavioral issues while according to the present data behavioral issues had less influence in affecting support of TANF than structural ones. Therefore, it might be advisable for advocates to educate elected officials about local structural issues, rather than concentrating on behavioral issues and seeking to affect those aspects of the legislation (i.e. family caps and sanctions).

In terms of addressing structural issues the data suggest two strategies for advocacy. First that unflattering behaviors are acknowledged and that the explanations for some of these behaviors are placed in a structural context. An example is to address the behavioral explanation of lack of thrift with a discussion about the day to day costs of the poor. One such example of cost is that the poor tend to pay upwards of fifty percent of their pretax income on housing (DeParle, 1996). Second it might be useful for advocates to gain detailed information on employment rates by region and median wage range, types of jobs available and access to work services such as education, training, transportation, and child care needs for recipients. Advocates in Minnesota, for example, participated in a study that may be useful for other areas. Specifically, the number of "help wanted" signs and the number of people looking for work were counted, and it was found that the latter outweighed the former (Beck, 1996) .

By using and collecting structural data, advocates may be able to support the use of discretionary funds for addressing issues related to access to work as well as influence the tenor of TANF in future legislative sessions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study has several limitations that could be addressed in future studies. One limitation is that members of only one legislature were surveyed. It would be useful to see if these findings are replicable among another moderate legislatures, and whether they are different for legislative bodies that produced significantly more or less restrictive TANFs.

Another limitation of the present study relates to the narrowness of the question involving support for the Georgia TANF over AFDC. The study could be enhanced by the addition of questions that queried members of the General Assemblies view about a wide range of issues found within the implementation of state wide TANF programs.

CONCLUSION

It is important that social workers and others are engaged in the policy process. It is also important that discussions with policy

makers center on issues that are most salient to them. While the popular media and the like, focused discussions on behavioral explanations of poverty such explanations did not seem to influence elected officials responses to welfare related legislation. Therefore it might be useful that those seeking to engage in TANF oriented debates have a clear understanding of the employment statistics for their area, the wage scales that exists for former AFDC recipients, the local cost of living, and data regarding the ways in which former AFDC recipients and others have experienced discrimination within the workforce (see for example, Wilson 1996). It might also be useful to provide specific examples regarding supportive services that TANF recipients might need. Examples might include specific and detailed information on commuting routes, the availability of day care services and the hours that they function, and ways in which employment and training have made a difference in the lives of TANF recipients. This type of discourse with elected officials might result in TANF policies that provide former AFDC recipients with greater chances for independent lives.

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