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WELFARE REFORM AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN MAINE: A SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

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In the September 2005 issue of the Journal, Charles Price authored an article entitled "Reforming Welfare Reform Postsecondary Education Policy: Two State Case Studies in Political Culture, Organizing, and Advocacy" (Volume XXXII, Number 3: 81-106). It is a timely article; the issue of access to postsecondary education for women on welfare is a crucial one. Not only did the 1996 welfare "reform" law heighten the already harsh and punitive attitudes toward poor women raising children on their own, newly incorporated restrictive elements severely hampered, and in some cases eliminated, these women's ability to move off welfare and into stable, well-paying jobs and careers. And while higher education is clearly a key element in attaining those stable, well-paying jobs and careers, it is precisely this pathway, access to and participation in postsecondary education, which was drastically restricted by the 1996 law and subsequent modifications.

Dr. Price's article focuses on the experiences of two states – Maine and Kentucky – as they come to terms with "shaping welfare policy," specifically as it relates to access to postsecondary education. While Dr. Price's article contributes to the literature developing in this field, and for this I am grateful, I would like to supplement his references with primary source citations which will prove useful to other scholars pursuing this area of study. First, is Stephanie Seguino's *Living on the Edge: Women*

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Working and Providing for Families in the Maine Economy, 1979-1993 (Orono, Maine: Margaret Chase Smith Center, University of Maine). Hers was the first report to describe who in Maine was receiving welfare and why; it was a seminal work that armed advocates with data and information necessary to approach and persuade legislators to attend to postsecondary education opportunities.

After Maine created the *Parents as Scholars* Program in 1997, colleagues and I began to document the Maine experience, intending to provide a model for other states to replicate. The articles that emerged provided a vivid picture of Maine organizing, advocacy, and political work that occurred prior to, and enabled the passage of, the *Parents as Scholars* program. These articles, in addition to private communications with Dr. Price and a previous co-author, provide much of the foundation upon which his explanation of the development of the Maine program is built. They include: "The Miseducation of Welfare Reform: Denying the Promise of Postsecondary Education," R. Smith, L.S. Deprez, S. S. Butler (2003) *Maine Law Review* 55:1: 212-240; "Something Worth Fighting For: Higher Education for Women on Welfare," S. S. Butler, L.S. Deprez (2002) *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 17:1: 30-54; *Parents as Scholars: Education Works*, R. Smith, L.S. Deprez, S.S. Butler (2002) Maine Equal Justice Partners, Augusta, Maine; "Higher Education: A Route out of Poverty for Women" and "Parents as Scholars: A Model Higher Education Program," L.S. Deprez, S. S. Butler (2001) *On Campus with Women*, American Association of Colleges and Universities, Winter: 7-8; "In Defense of Women's Economic Security: Securing Access to Higher Education Under Welfare Reform," L.S. Deprez, S.S. Butler (2001) *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 8: 2: 210-227; and "Parents as Scholars: A Model Program for Low-Income Women in the New Welfare Landscape," L.S. Deprez, C. Hastedt, M.T. Henderson (1998) In *Women's Progress: Perspectives on the Past, Blueprint for the Future – Proceedings of the Fifth Women's Policy Research Conference*, Institute for Women's Policy Research (ed), Washington, DC: 195-198.

Additional references which Dr. Price would not have had timely access to include *SHUT OUT: Low-Income Women and Higher Education in Post Welfare America*, V. Polakow, S.

S. Butler, L.S. Deprez, P. Kahn, eds. (2004) SUNY Press; and "Education: 'The one factor that can keep me from sliding into hopeless poverty,'" S.S. Butler, L.S. Deprez (2004) *Journal of Poverty: Innovations on Social, Political, and Economic Inequalities* 8:2: 1-24.

Higher education is a promising route out of poverty for some women on welfare: it can make a substantial difference in their lives and the lives of their children as well as address deep-rooted issues of poverty. Increasing the number of scholars working in this area, and working together on this issue will give us greater ability to influence policy and policy-makers as they begin to debate welfare "reform" once again.

