

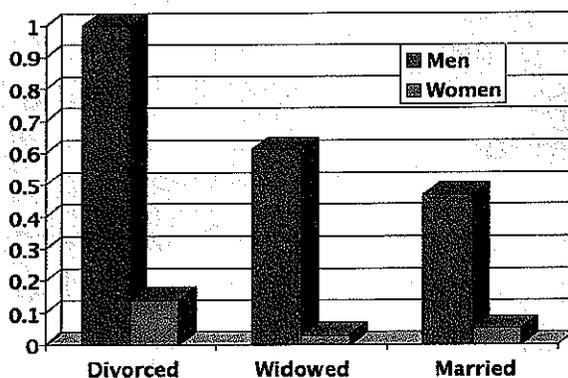
Marriage as Public Policy

Why Public Officials Should Support Marriage

Prepared by: Judge James E. Sheridan
425 N. Main St., Adrian, MI, 49221
517-264-4655

1

Number of Alcohol-Related Problems



SOURCE: Umberson (1987)
Figure 5. Reports of Problem Drinking in the Past Year, by Marital Status and Sex
(Copied from: *Does Marriage Matter*, by Linda Waite)

2

Single Man ↔ Married Men

Single men heading toward marriage reduce their drinking up to a year before the ceremony.

By the time they marry they drink much less than they did a year earlier....

Meanwhile, **the drinking patterns of their friends who stay single, stay the same.**

This evidence says ... that **marriage causes these changes** in men's behavior.

3

And, it's not just alcohol

» Both young men and women **smoked less, and snorted less cocaine,** during the year before marriage.

» **Marijuana use drops 2 to 3 times** more rapidly for those who marry compared to those who do not.

4

Single vs. Married Men

“Young men who were light drinkers, moderate drinkers and heavy drinkers prior to marrying, *all* drink less after they marry than they did before.

(Bachman, Wadsworth, O'Malley, Honson, and Schulenberg, 1997; Miller-Tutzauer et al., 1991).

5

Single vs. Married Men

“This evidence says...that *marriage causes these changes in men's behavior*. Getting married moves men away from destructive and unhealthy drinking behavior and towards moderation or abstinence.”

(Slides 3, 4, 5 & 6: The Case For Marriage, Waite and Gallagher)

6

**Married and Engaged Couples
are
Less Likely to be Violent**

3-4% of married couples

11-12% of engaged cohabitators

**13-15% of “disengaged”
cohabitators**

Tabulations from the National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-88

7

Dr. Linda Waite:

“The research clearly shows that, outside of getting thee to a nunnery, the safest place for a woman is inside marriage.”

Single and divorced women:

- o 4-5 times more likely to be victims of crimes of violence.
- o 10 times more likely to be raped
- o 3 times more likely to be victims of aggravated assault than wives.

The Case For Marriage, page 152

8

Neglected Children

“Neglect of children...is **twice as high** among separated and divorced parents.”

(The Heritage Foundation, *The Backgrounder*, No. 1373, June 5, 2000)

9

Families in the U.S. Where the **Father is Absent** make up:

63% of youth suicides

71% of all high school dropouts

75% of all adolescent substance abuse patients

70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions

10

**Families in the U.S.
Where the Father is Absent
make up:**

85% of all persons incarcerated in prisons

85% of children exhibiting behavior disorders

90% of all homeless and runaway children

*Slide 14 & 15: The Critical Importance Of Responsible Fatherhood, presented by Murray Davis,
Chairman of Dad's of Michigan to the Joint House Committee Hearings, November 5, 2001, Detroit,
Michigan*

11

Impact on Daughters

**“Daughters raised outside of intact marriages
are approximately three times more likely to
end up young, unwed mothers than are
children whose parents married and stayed
married.”**

*Why Marriage Matters, page 3
See also: The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce, p. 189*

12

Children with Married Parents Do Better

- Half as likely to drop out of high school
- More likely to go to college & to graduate
- Half as likely to have a teen birth
- Less likely to have emotional problems

13

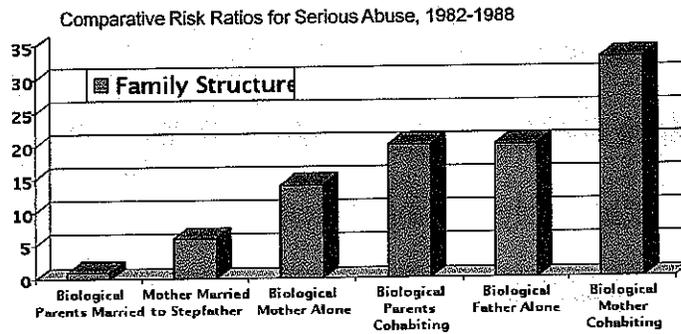
Stability in Children's Lives By Family Makeup

For children living with both biological parents at birth: The percent of those children who will not be living with both biological parents after...

	<u>1 Year</u>	<u>5 Years</u>	<u>10 Years</u>
Cohabiting Parents	15%	50%	66%
Married Parents	4%	15%	33%

14

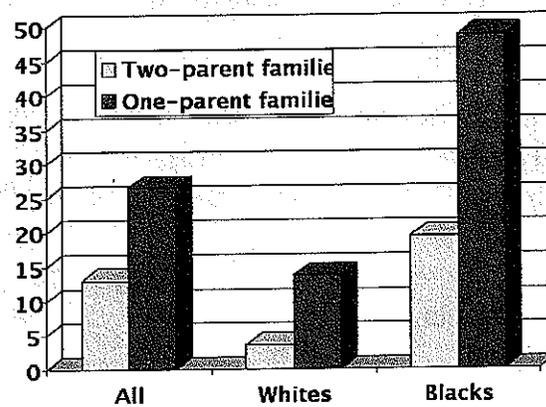
In Britain, the Serious Abuse of Children in Stepfamilies Was Six Times More Likely than for Children of Intact Married Families



Note: No U.S. data by family structure available
 Source: Robert Whelan, *Broken Homes and Battered Children*, 1994.

15

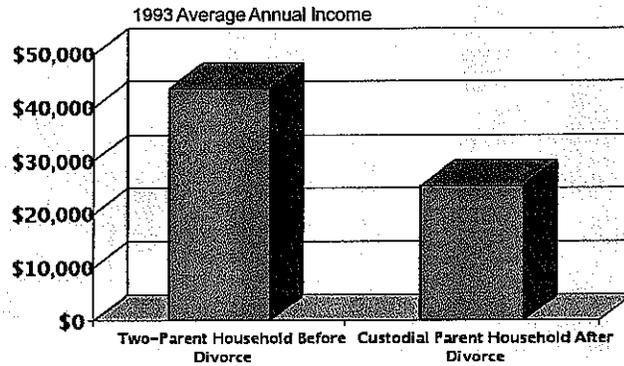
Poverty Rates



SOURCE: McLanahan and Sandefur (1994:82)
 Figure 14. Percentages of Children in Poverty at Age 16, by Race and Family Structure

16

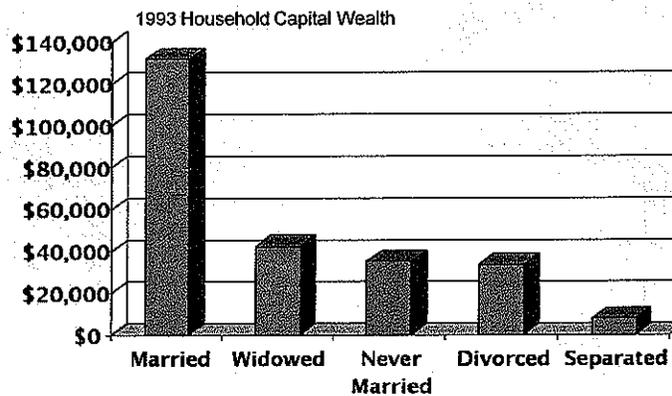
Impact of Divorce on Income of Families with Children



Source: Mary E. Corcoran and Ajay Chaudray, "The Dynamics of Childhood Poverty," *Future of Children*, 1997.

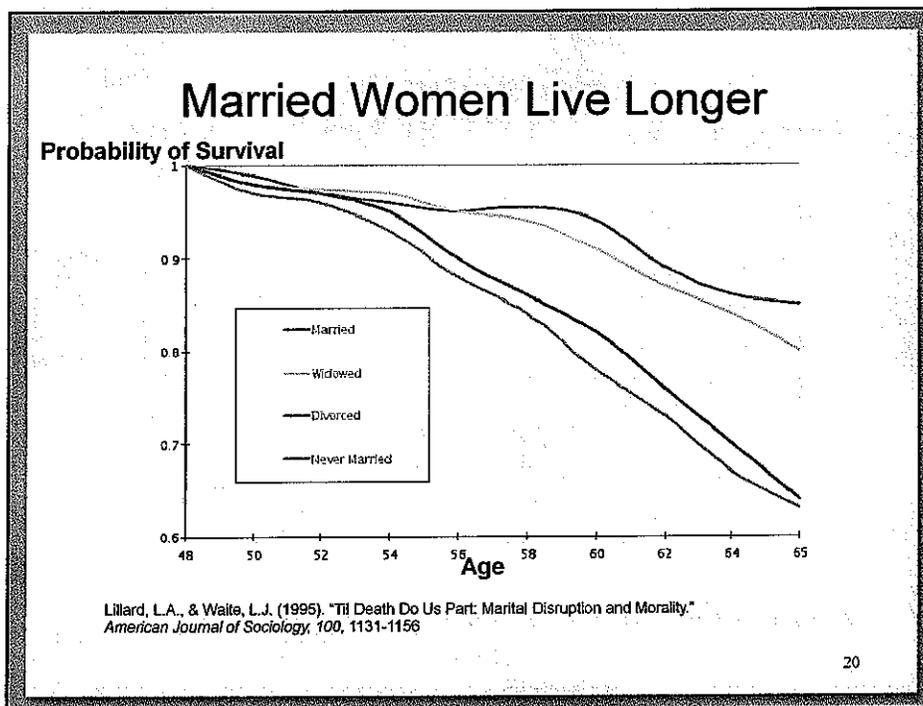
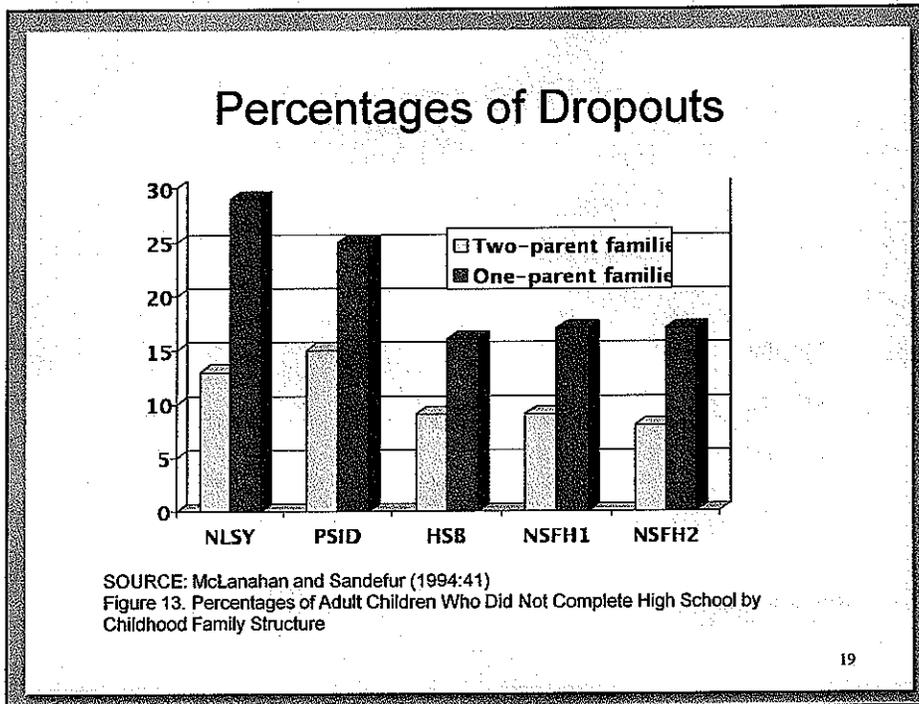
17

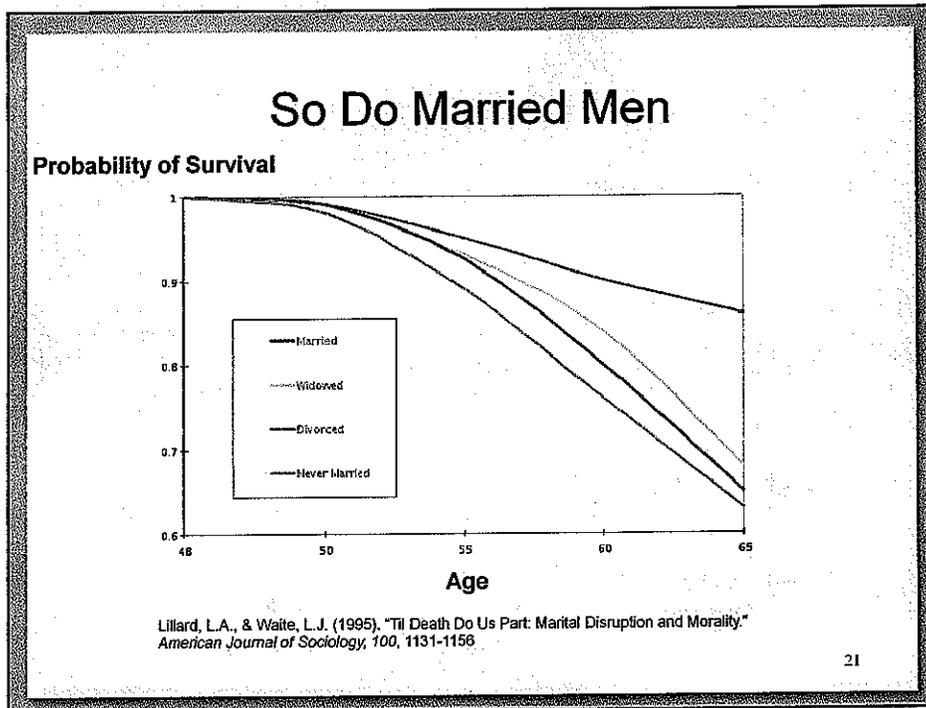
Median Household Wealth of Persons Aged 51-61, by Marital Status



Source: James P. Smith, *Marriage, Assets and Savings*, Rand Corporation, 1995.

18





Marriage and The Cost to Business

Business and the Divorce Expense

Employee Divorce Results In Higher Employer Costs

Slides 43 – 51 are based on: *Marriage & Family Wellness: Corporate America's Business?* Matthew Turvey, Psy. D. and David Olson, PhD, A Marriage CoMission Report, 2006.

22

1-Year of Divorce Expenses

Pre Divorce (13 week period)
During Divorce (26 week period)
Post Divorce (13 week period)

The Problems

- **Lost productivity**
Employee performance at 50% to 70% . This does not begin to recover until the Post Divorce period.
Time spent dealing with personal issues (emotional and financial)
- **Lost productivity of peer / office staff**
Gossip time and / or covering for divorcing co-worker
- **Lost productivity for Supervisor**
Time spent dealing with issues created by the divorce

23

The Divorce Expense

What does this mean in Dollars?

Assume:
A Mid-Level Employee
(\$20 per hour,
with supervisor making \$25.50 per hour)
Cost to Employer of Every Divorce on average:

\$8,465

24

The Divorce Expense

What does this mean in Dollars?

Assume:
A Front Line Hourly Worker
(\$8 per hour,
with supervisor making \$20 per hour)
Cost to Employer of Every Divorce on average:

\$3,770

25

A Thousand Here, A Thousand There

The cost is not just to business. Other costs to the community (a/k/a "taxpayers"):

**"Every divorce costs society
about
\$25,000 to \$30,000"**

Marriage & Family Wellness: Corporate America's Business? Matthew Turvey, Psy. D. and David Olson, PhD,
A Marriage CoMission Report, 2006, Page 6.

26

Marriage and The Cost of Prisons

Three ways to cut tax dollars going to prisons

1. Reduce the cost of running prisons (increased technology, lower wages, etc.)
2. Reduce the number of people entering prisons.
3. Reduce the number of people returning to prisons after release (recidivism).

27

Recidivism

Within 2 years of release
59% Re-arrested
39% Re-convicted

Source: "Doing Time: PREP Inside and Out," Howard Markman, PhD, Jo Anne Eason, OK Marriage Initiative, on Grant, OK Department of Corrections., Smart Marriage Conference, 2005

28

A Thousand Here A Thousand There

The cost of housing 1 prisoner for 1
year in Michigan is:

\$25,000 to \$30,000

29

Recidivism

- “Being in relationship decreases chances of recidivism.”
- “Research shows that **marriage is a pathway out of crime** for men with histories of delinquency.”
- “**Not just marriage, but healthy marriage is the ‘antidote to crime.’**”

Source: “Doing Time: PREP Inside and Out,” Howard Markman, PhD, JoAnne Eason, OK Marriage Initiative, on Grant, OK Department of Corrections., Smart Marriage Conference, 2005

30

Michigan Prisoner Reentry

- Michigan released 13,541 prisoners in 2009
- Re-incarceration: 4,104, about 30%
- 4,104 X \$25,000 (to \$30,000) per year
- Cost to MDOC (i.e. taxpayers) of recidivism:

\$102,600,000 - \$123,120,000

per year

31

US Department of Health and Human Services Research Brief, January, 2009

“Former prisoners who were married or living as married had **half the odds** of self-reporting a new crime and / or drug use as did those in casual, unmarried relationships.”

32

Relationship Skills Education: Effect on Recidivism & the DOC Budget

Reduction in Recidivism	Savings to DOC Budget*
1% (41 fewer Recidivists)	\$ 1,025,000 -- \$ 1,230,000
10% (410 fewer)	\$10,250,000 -- \$12,300,000
50% (2,052 fewer)**	\$51,300,000 -- \$ 61,560,000

- Budget savings based on annual cost of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year per prisoner

** The reduction in recidivism shown by the US Dept. of H & H S, Jan., 2009. This seems unlikely, however, since it assumes all released prisoners enter marriage

As with other areas of public interest: Cohabitation is **NOT** Marriage

“Former prisoners in casual, non-married relationships experienced outcomes similar to those with no intimate partner.”

Why are Premarital & Early Marriage Education Crucial?

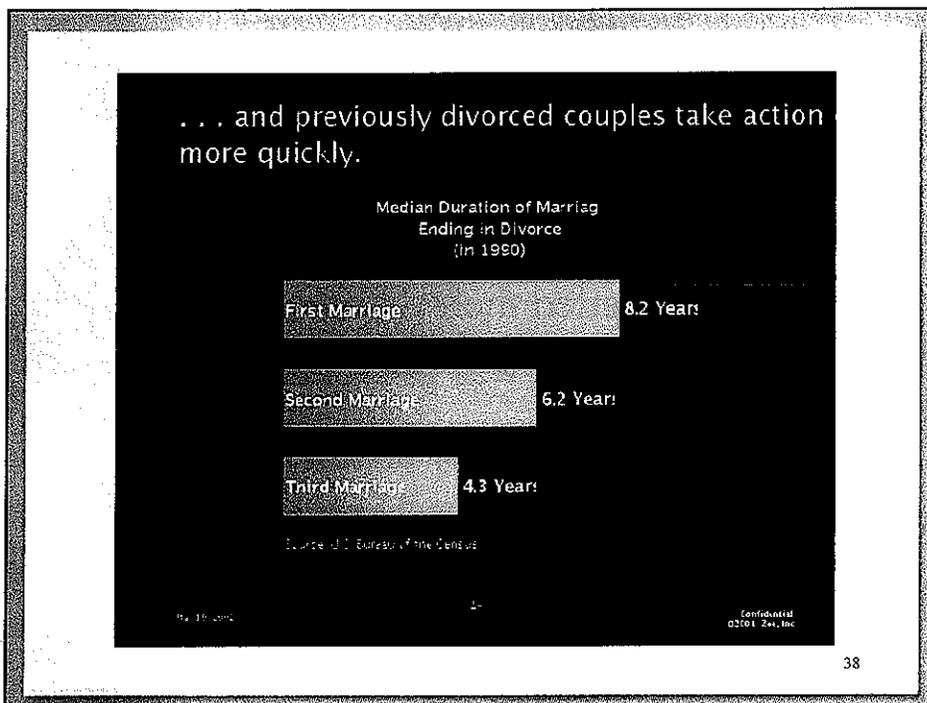
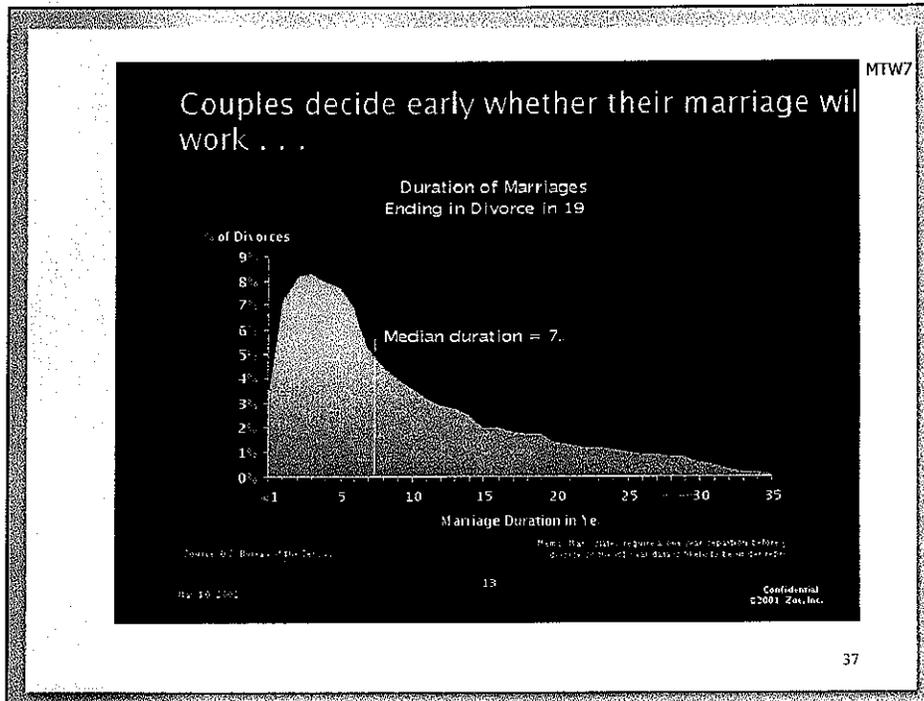
- ▶ That's when most marital failures occur.
- ▶ That's where marriage education gets it's biggest bang for the buck.

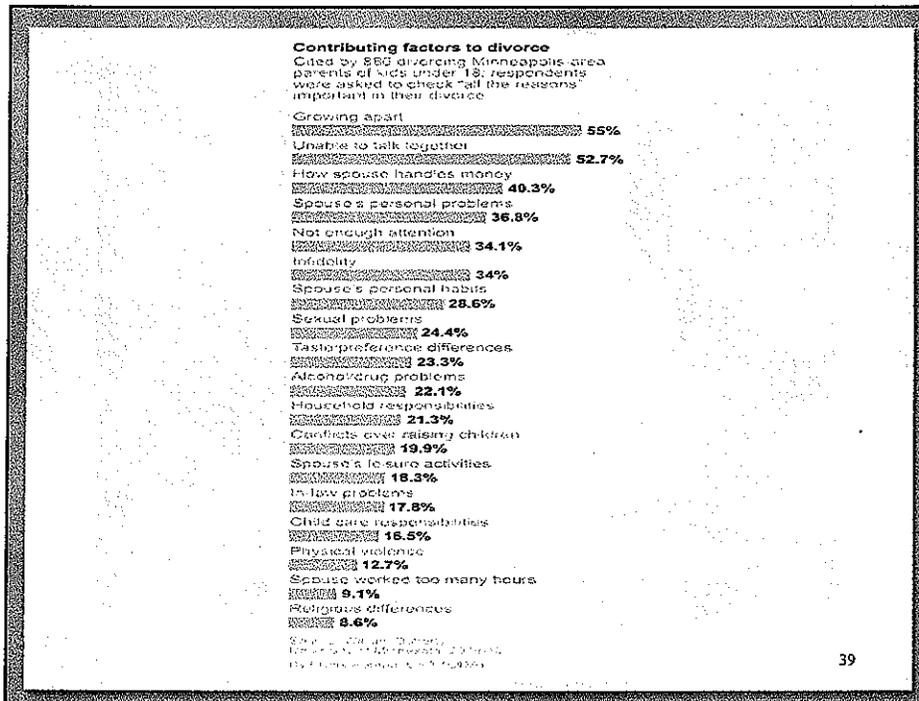
35

And, Because Pre-Marital Ed. Works!

- Couples taking PREP©, a communications / conflict resolution skills program, as part of a premarital education have been shown to a **divorce rate of 4%** after 5 years of marriage, **compared to 24%** for couples who do not.
- Couples using the **PREPARE Inventory** have been found to reduce the divorce rate by **14%** due to “pre-marital divorce”, i.e. they don't get married at all.

36





Why Tell People the Truth about Divorce?

40% of divorced people regretted their divorce and thought it was preventable.*

People should learn that divorce brings its own set of problems BEFORE it's too late?

* (Australian and New Jersey studies. (William J. Doherty, PhD, Family Social Science Dept., University of Minnesota, Bdoherty@che2.che.umn.edu)



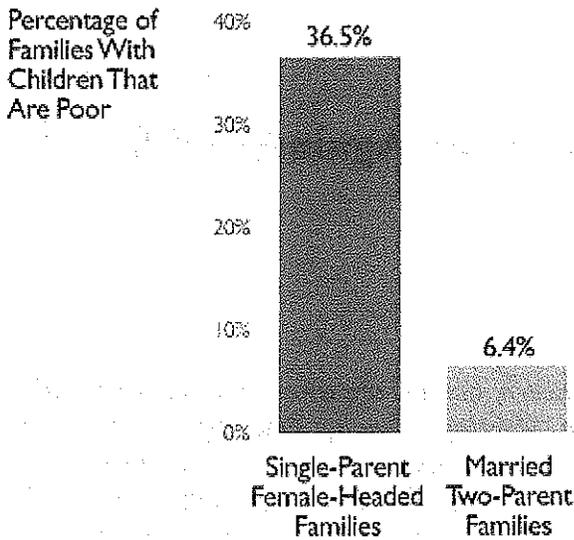
Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

By Robert Rector
September 16, 2010

Abstract: *Child poverty is an ongoing national concern, but few are aware that its principal cause is the absence of married fathers in the home. Marriage remains America's strongest anti-poverty weapon, yet it continues to decline. As husbands disappear from the home, poverty and welfare dependence will increase, and children and parents will suffer as a result. Since marital decline drives up child poverty and welfare dependence, and since the poor aspire to healthy marriage but lack the norms, understanding, and skills to achieve it, it is reasonable for government to take active steps to strengthen marriage. Just as government discourages youth from dropping out of school, it should provide information that will help people to form and maintain healthy marriages and delay childbearing until they are married and economically stable. In particular, clarifying the severe shortcomings of the "child first, marriage later" philosophy to potential parents in lower-income communities should be a priority.*

Child poverty is an ongoing national concern, but few are aware of its principal cause: the absence of married fathers in the home. According to the U.S. Census, the poverty rate for single parents with children in the United States in 2008 was 36.5 percent. The rate for married couples with children was 6.4 percent. Being raised in a married family reduced a child's probability of living in poverty by about 80 percent.[1] (See Chart 1.)

Marriage Drops the Probability of Child Poverty by 82 Percent



Source: Author's calculations based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006-2008 data at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/Data?_lang=en (September 13, 2010).

Chart 1 • B 2465 heritage.org

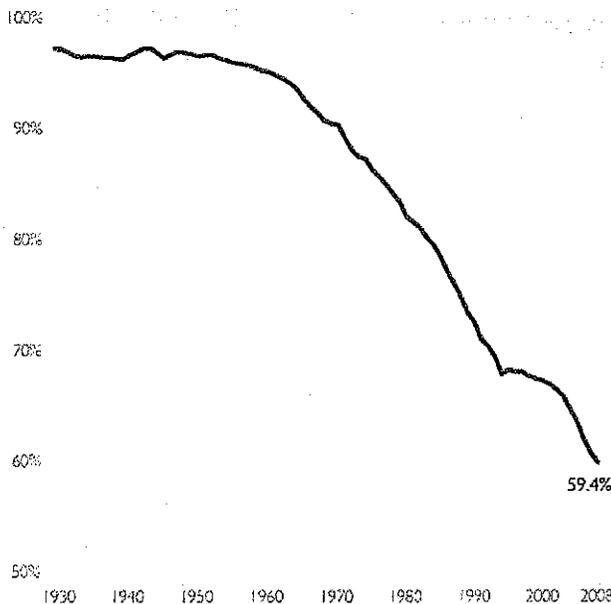
Some of this difference in poverty is due to the fact that single parents tend to have less education than married couples, but even when married couples are compared to single parents with the same level of education, the married poverty rate will still be more than 75 percent lower. Marriage is a powerful weapon in fighting poverty. In fact, being married has the same effect in reducing poverty that adding five to six years to a parent's level of education has.^[2]

Decline in Marriage and Growth in Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing

Regrettably, marriage is declining rapidly in the U.S. The current decline is unusual. As Chart 2 shows, throughout most of the 20th century, marital childbearing was the overwhelming norm in the United States. Nearly all children were born to married couples.

Death of Marriage in the U.S., 1929-2008

Percentage of Children Born to Married Mothers



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and the National Center for Health Statistics.

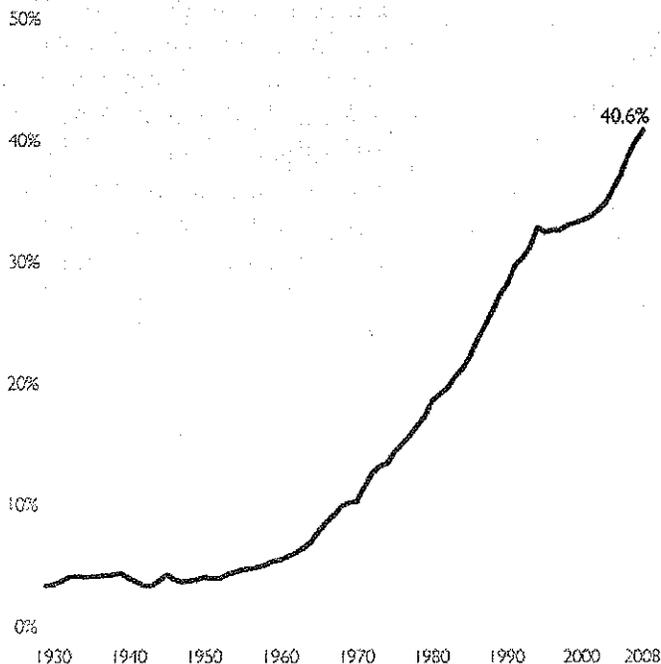
Chart 2 • B 2465 heritage.org

For example, when President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty in 1964, 93 percent of children born in the United States were born to married parents. Since that time, births within marriage have declined sharply. In 2007, only 59 percent of all births in the nation occurred to married couples.

The flip side of the decline in marriage is the growth in the out-of-wedlock childbearing birth rate, meaning the percentage of births that occur to women who are not married when the child is born.^[3] As Chart 3 shows, throughout most of U.S. history, out-of-wedlock childbearing was rare. When the War on Poverty began in the mid-1960s, only 6 percent of children were born out of wedlock. Over the next four and a half decades, the number rose rapidly. In 2008, 40.6 percent of all children born in the U.S. were born outside of marriage.^[4]

Growth of Unwed Childbearing, 1929–2008

Percentage of Children Born Out of Wedlock



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and the National Center for Health Statistics.

Chart 3 • B 2465 heritage.org

A Two-Caste Society

In 2008, 1.72 million children were born outside of marriage in the United States.[6] Most of these births occurred to women who will have the hardest time going it alone as parents: young adult women with a high school degree or less. As Chart 5 shows, more than two-thirds of births to women who were high school dropouts occurred outside of marriage. Among women who had only a high school degree, slightly more than half of all births were out of wedlock. By contrast, among women with at least a college degree, only 8 percent of births were out of wedlock, and 92 percent of births occurred to married couples.[7]

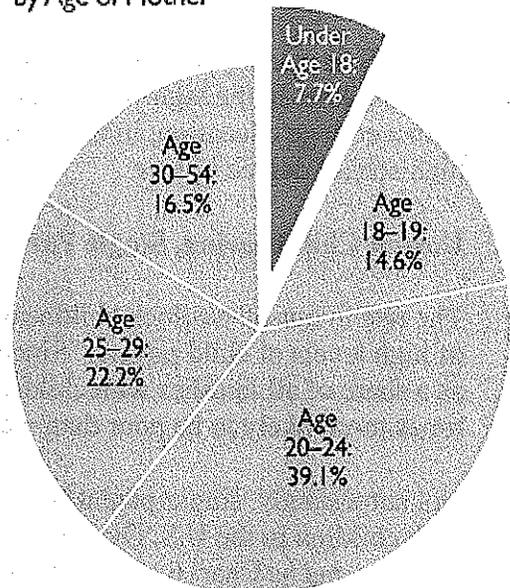
In 2008, 1.72 million children were born outside of marriage in the United States.[6] Most of these births occurred to women who will have the hardest time going it alone as parents: young adult women with a high school degree or less.

Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing Not the Same as Teen Pregnancy

Out-of-wedlock births are often confused with teen pregnancy and births. In fact, few out-of-wedlock births occur to teenagers. As Chart 4 shows, of all out-of-wedlock births in the United States in 2008, only 7.7 percent occurred to girls under age 18. Three-quarters occurred to young adult women between the ages of 19 and 29.[5] The decline in marriage and growth in out-of-wedlock births is not a teenage issue; it is the result of a breakdown in relationships between young adult men and women.

Few Unwed Births Occur to Teenagers

Percentage of Out-of-Wedlock Births by Age of Mother

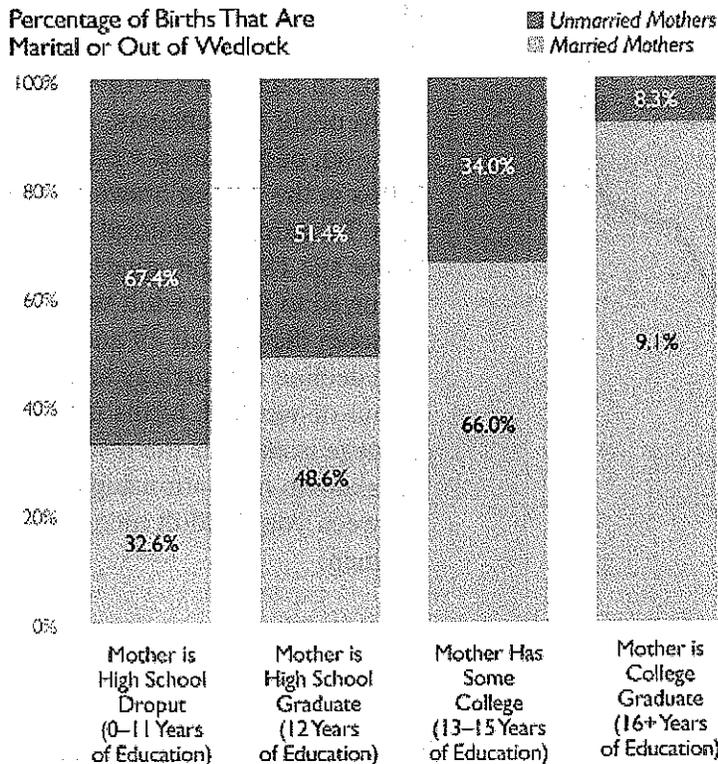


Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics Report, "Births: Preliminary Data for 2008," April 6, 2010, Table 7, at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvdr/nvsr58/nvsr58_16.pdf (September 13, 2010).

Chart 4 • B 2465 heritage.org

Less-Educated Women Are More Likely to Give Birth Outside of Marriage

Percentage of Births That Are Marital or Out of Wedlock



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006 National Health Survey data.

Chart 5 • B 2465 heritage.org

As Chart 5 shows, more than two-thirds of births to women who were high school dropouts occurred outside of marriage. Among women who had only a high school degree, slightly more than half of all births were out of wedlock. By contrast, among women with at least a college degree, only 8 percent of births were out of wedlock, and 92 percent of births occurred to married couples.[7]

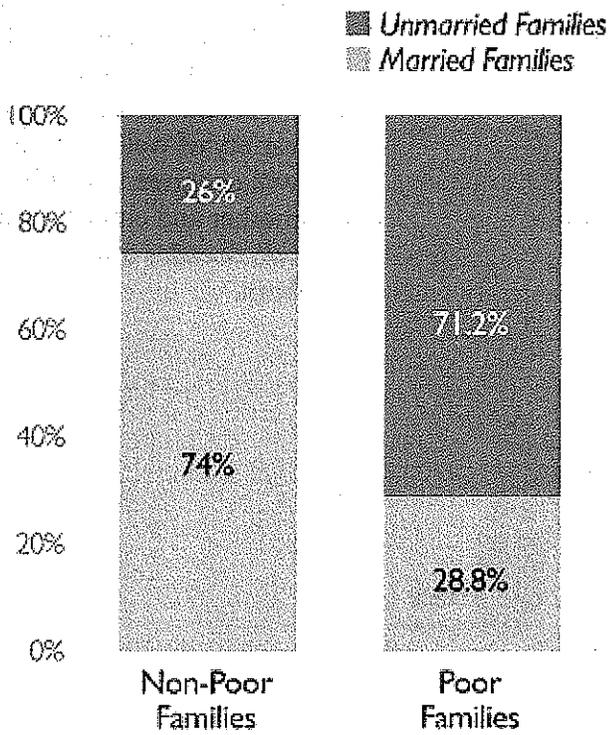
The U.S. is steadily separating into a two-caste system with marriage and education as the dividing line. In the high-income third of the population, children are raised by married parents with a college education; in the bottom-income third, children are raised by single parents with a high school degree or less.

Unwed Childbearing, Single Parenthood, and Child Poverty

The rise in out-of-wedlock childbearing and the increase in single parenthood are major causes of high levels of child poverty. Since the early 1960s, single-parent families have roughly tripled as a share of all families with children. As noted, in the U.S. in 2008, single parents were six times more likely to be poor than were married couples.

Not surprisingly, single-parent families make up the overwhelming majority of all poor families with children in the U.S. Overall, single-parent families comprise one-third of all families with children, but as Chart 6 shows, 71 percent of poor families with children are headed by single parents. By contrast, 74 percent of all non-poor families with children are headed by married couples.[8]

71 Percent of Poor Families With Children Are Not Married



Source: Author's calculations based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006-2008 data, at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/acs.php?acs_topic=Poverty (September 13, 2010).

Chart 6 • B 2465 heritage.org

Both Marriage and Education Reduce Poverty

The poverty rate among married couples is dramatically lower than the poverty rate among single-headed households, even when the married couple is compared to single parents with the same level of education. For example, as Chart 7 shows, the poverty rate for a single mother with only a high school degree is 31.7 percent, but the poverty rate for a married-couple family headed by an individual who is only a high school graduate is 5.6 percent: Marriage drops the odds of being poor by 80 percent.[9]

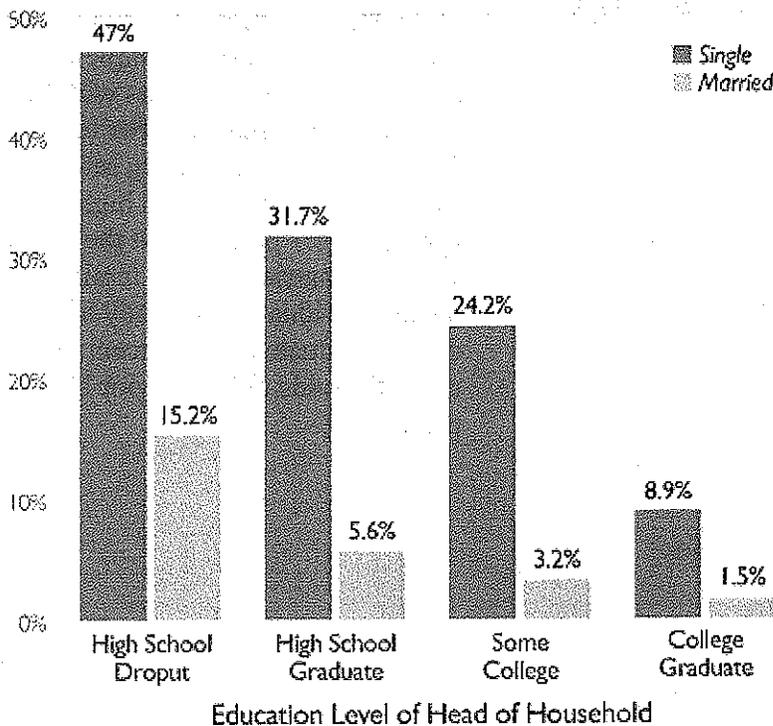
Being married has roughly the same effect in reducing poverty that adding five to six years to a parent's education has. Interestingly, on average, high school dropouts who are married have a far lower poverty rate than do single parents with one or two years of college.

Welfare Costs of Single-Parent Families

The federal government operates over 70 means-tested welfare programs that provide cash, food, housing, medical care, and targeted social services to poor and low-income persons.[10] In fiscal year 2010, federal and state governments spent over \$400 billion on means-tested welfare for low-income families with children

Both Marriage and Education Are Highly Effective in Reducing Child Poverty in the United States

Percentage of Families That Are Poor



Source: Author's calculations based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006-2008 data, at http://www.census.gov/lacs/www/lacs-phi/2006_2008_experienced_users_guide.php?lacs_topic=poverty (September 13, 2010).

Chart 7 • B 2465 heritage.org

Roughly three-quarters of this welfare assistance, or \$300 billion, went to single-parent families. Most non-marital births are currently paid for by the taxpayers through the Medicaid system, and a wide variety of welfare assistance will continue to be given to the mother and child for nearly two decades after the child is born.

Racial Differences in Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing

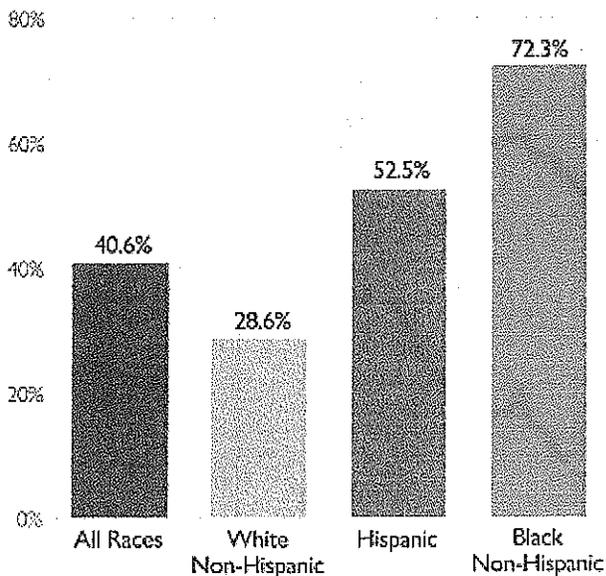
Out-of-wedlock childbearing varies considerably by race and ethnicity. To understand this, it is important to understand the difference between an *out-of-wedlock birth rate* and the *out-of-wedlock birth share* for a particular racial or ethnic group.

The out-of-wedlock birth *rate* for a particular group equals the total number of out-of-wedlock births to mothers of that group divided by all births to the group in the same year. Thus, if 50 babies were born outside of marriage to Hispanic mothers in a given year and total births to all Hispanic mothers (both married and non-married) in the same year were 100, the out-of-wedlock birth rate for Hispanics would be 50 divided by 100, or 50 percent.

Chart 8 shows the out-of-wedlock birth rates for different racial and ethnic groups in 2008. The out-of-wedlock birth rate for the entire population was 40.6 percent. Among white non-Hispanic women, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 28.6 percent; among Hispanics, it was 52.5 percent; and among blacks, it was 72.3 percent.^[11]

Unwed Birth Rates Vary Strongly by Race

Percentage of Births That Are Out of Wedlock



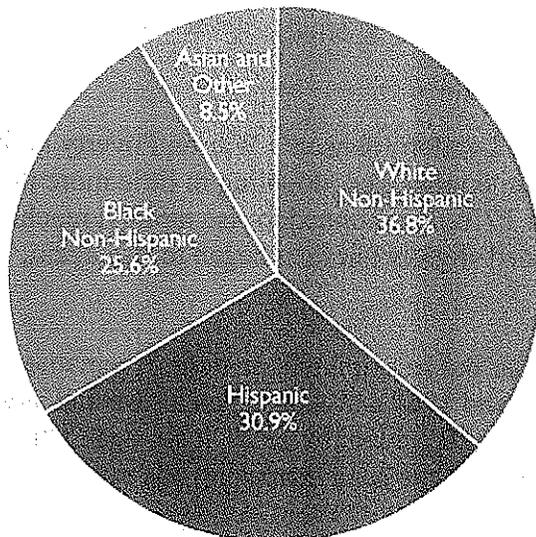
Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics Report, "Births: Preliminary Data for 2008," April 6, 2010, Table 1, at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58_16.pdf (September 13, 2010).

Chart 8 • B 2465 heritage.org

By contrast, the out-of-wedlock birth *share* equals the total number of babies born to non-married mothers of a particular racial or ethnic group divided by the total number of babies born outside of marriage for all racial and ethnic groups. Thus, if 50 babies were born outside of marriage to Hispanic mothers in a given year and total out-of-wedlock births to mothers from all racial and ethnic groups were 150, the out-of-wedlock birth share for Hispanics would be 50 divided by 150, or 33.3 percent.

Chart 9 shows the out-of-wedlock birth shares for different racial and ethnic groups.[12] Although black and Hispanic women are more likely to give birth out of wedlock than are white non-Hispanic women because non-Hispanic whites are far more numerous in the overall population, the greatest number (or plurality) of out-of-wedlock births still occurs to that group. Of all non-marital births in the U.S., some 37 percent were to non-Hispanic whites, 31 percent were to Hispanics, and 26 percent were to black non-Hispanic women.[13]

Non-Marital Birth Shares by Race



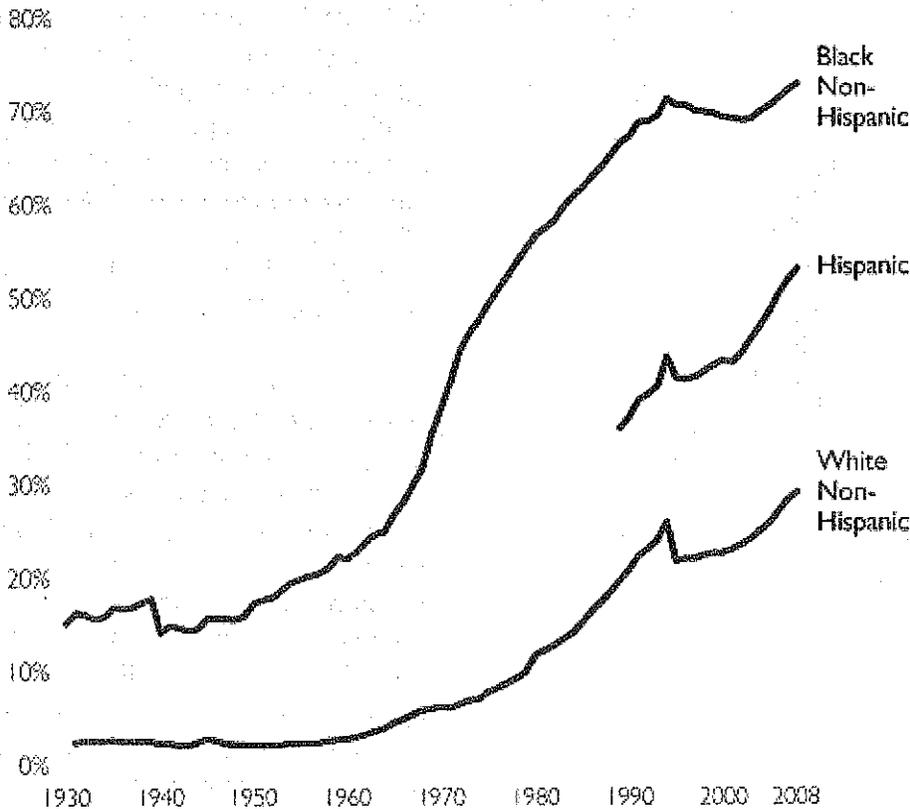
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006 National Health Survey data.

Chart 9 • B 2465 heritage.org

Growth in Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing Among Blacks and Whites. Historically, the black out-of-wedlock childbearing rate has always been somewhat higher than the white rate; however, through much of the 20th century, the rates for both groups were comparatively low. For example, as Chart 10 shows, 2 percent of white children and 14 percent of black children born in 1940 were born out of wedlock.

Growth of Unwed Childbearing by Race, 1930–2008

Percentage of Children Born Out of Wedlock



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and the National Center for Health Statistics.

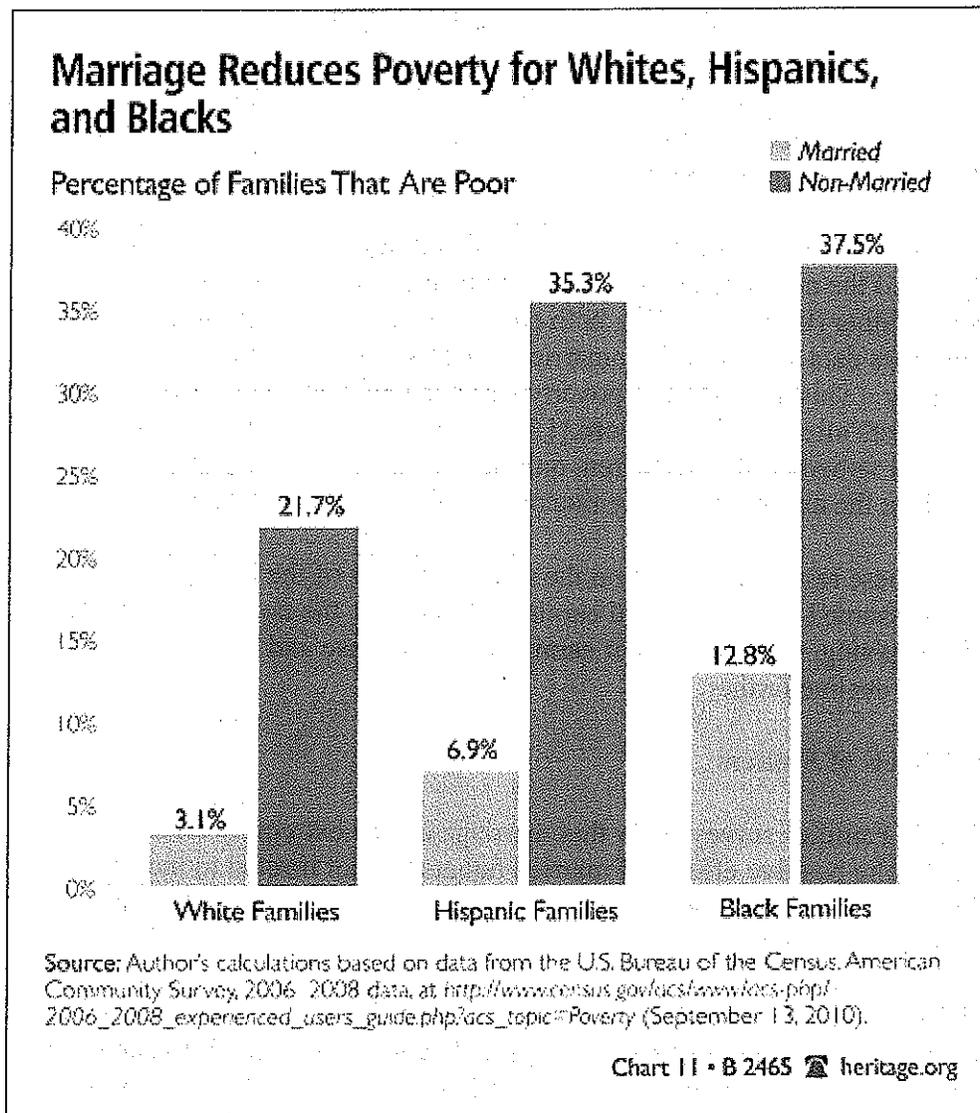
Chart 10 • B 2465 heritage.org

These rates remained relatively low until the onset of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty in the early 1960s. Then the black out-of-wedlock birth rate skyrocketed, doubling in little more than a decade from 24.5 percent in 1964 to 50.3 percent in 1976. It continued to rise rapidly, reaching 70.7 percent in 1994. Over the next decade, it declined slightly but then began to rise again, reaching 72.4 percent in 2008.

The white out-of-wedlock birth rate followed a similar but less dramatic pattern. It remained almost unchanged at around 2 percent between 1930 and 1960 and then began a slow but steady rise in the 1960s that accelerated in the 1980s, reaching 20 percent by 1990. It slowed in the 1990s but then resumed its upward rise. In recent years, it has been increasing at a rate of 1 percent per annum, reaching 28.6 percent in 2008.^[14]

Marriage and Poverty Among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. Marriage is associated with lower rates of poverty separately for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Within each racial and ethnic group, the poverty rate for married couples is substantially lower than the poverty rate for non-married families of the same race or ethnicity. For example, as Chart 11 shows, in 2008:

- Among non-Hispanic white married couples, the poverty rate was 3.1 percent, while the rate for non-married white families was seven times higher at 21.7 percent.
- Among Hispanic married families, the poverty rate was 12.8 percent, while the poverty rate among non-married families was three times higher at 37.5 percent.
- Among black married couples, the poverty rate was 6.9 percent, while the rate for non-married black families was seven times higher at 35.3 percent.[15]



Corroborating Data from the Fragile Families Survey

The Census data presented so far demonstrate that married couples have dramatically lower poverty rates than single parents. These substantial differences in poverty remain even when married couples are compared to single parents of the same race and level of education. The pattern is almost exactly the same in all 50 states.

However, in the Census comparisons, the married couples and single parents are obviously different (albeit similar) persons. It is therefore possible that much of the difference in poverty between married families and single-parent families might be due to hidden differences between

married and single parents as individuals rather than to marriage *per se*. For example, it is possible that unmarried fathers might have substantially lower earnings than married fathers with the same racial and educational backgrounds. If this were the case, then marriage, for these men, would have a reduced anti-poverty effect.

Fortunately, we have other direct data on poverty and unmarried parents that corroborate the Census analysis. These data are provided by the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Survey conducted jointly by Princeton and Columbia universities.[16] The Fragile Families survey is a representative national sample of parents at the time of a child's birth, with a heavy emphasis on lower-income unmarried couples. The survey is unusual in collecting information not only on single mothers, but on non-married fathers as well, including (critically) the actual employment and earnings of the father in the year prior to birth.

Because the Fragile Families Survey reports both the mothers' and fathers' earnings, it is simple to calculate the poverty rate if the non-married mothers remain single and if each unmarried mother married her child's father (thereby pooling both parents' income into a joint family income). The Fragile Families data show that if unmarried mothers remain single, over half (56 percent) of them will be poor. (This high level of poverty will persist for years: Half of all unwed mothers will be poor five years after the child is born.[17]) By contrast, if the single mothers married the actual biological fathers of their children, only 18 percent would remain poor.[18] Thus, marriage would reduce the expected poverty rate of the children by two-thirds.

It is important to note that these results are based on the actual earnings of the biological fathers of the children and not on assumed or hypothetical earnings. Moreover, the non-married fathers in the sample are relatively young. Over time, their earnings will increase and the poverty rate for the married couples will decline farther.

The Lifelong Positive Effects of Fathers

Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.

When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.

The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:

- More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
- Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]

- Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
- A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]

The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]

Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

Understanding the Cultural Context of Non-Marital Pregnancy and Childbearing

Clearly, the rise in unwed childbearing and the decline in marriage play a strong role in promoting child poverty and other social ills. Dealing with these issues will require an understanding of the social context of non-marital pregnancy and childbearing. The best source of information on this topic is *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Mothers Put Motherhood Before Marriage* by Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas.[27]

Edin, professor of public policy at Harvard, is the nation's most distinguished researcher on low-income single mothers; her findings overturn much conventional wisdom about "unintended" pregnancy, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and low-income single parents. In popular perception, out-of-wedlock childbearing occurs as a result of accidental pregnancies among teenage girls who lack access to or knowledge about birth control. This perception is completely inaccurate.

In reality, unwed births rarely involve teenage girls, are almost never caused by a lack of access to birth control, and generally are not the result of purely accidental pregnancies.

- As noted previously, only 8 percent of non-marital births occur to girls under 18. Non-marital births and pregnancies are phenomena that mainly involve young adult men and women.
- Research on lower-income women who have become pregnant outside of marriage (either as minors or adults) reveals that virtually none of these out-of-wedlock pregnancies occurred because of a lack of knowledge about and access to birth control.[28]
- Out-of-wedlock births are generally not the result of purely accidental pregnancies. In fact, most women who become pregnant and give birth out of wedlock strongly desire children. Their pregnancies are partially intended or at least not seriously avoided.[29]

Most Unwed Mothers Strongly Desire Children

Kathryn Edin explains that children born out of wedlock are "seldom conceived by explicit design, yet are rarely a pure accident either." [30] Young single mothers typically "describe their pregnancies as 'not exactly planned' yet 'not exactly avoided' [O]nly a few were using any

form of contraception at all when their 'unplanned' child was conceived.”[31] But this lack of contraceptive use was not due to a lack of knowledge about or access to contraceptives.

The overwhelming majority of lower-income women who have children out of wedlock strongly desire to have children. In fact, having children is generally perceived as the most important and fulfilling thing in their lives, giving their lives purpose and meaning. According to Edin, low-income non-married mothers view “children [as] the best of what life offers.”[32] Whether planned or not, children “are nearly always viewed as a gift, not a liability—a source of both joy and fulfillment.”[33] Low-income single mothers “credit their children for virtually all that they see as positive in their lives”[34] and rely on their children “to bring validation, purpose, companionship, and order to their often chaotic lives.”[35]

Most low-income non-married mothers see children not merely as desirable, but as a “necessity.”[36] Without children, their lives are hollow and chaotic; having children is a “heroic” choice that rescues them from emptiness. For many, parenthood is the point “at which they can really start living.”[37]

Although most of these young women believe they should wait until they are somewhat older before having children, this belief is weak in comparison to the very strong positive feeling about motherhood in general. Given this emotional context, it should not be surprising that any plans to delay pregnancy are carried out haphazardly or not at all.

The Role of Marriage

Critically, almost none of the lower-income women who have a child out of wedlock feel that it is important to be married before having children. Although roughly half of non-married mothers were cohabiting with the father at the time of birth (nearly 75 percent were in some sort of romantic relationship with the father), these relationships are usually of short duration and unstable. Mutual understanding and commitment are lacking, and although the couples usually think and speak favorably about marriage, most tend to drift apart after the child is born.[38]

However, low-income non-married parents are not hostile to marriage as an institution or a life goal. Ironically, most highly esteem marriage and, in fact, tend to overidealize it. Most low-income young women have traditional family goals; they hope to have a husband, children, a minivan, and a house in the suburbs “with a white picket fence.”[39] Tragically, few have a life plan that will enable them to realize their goals.

A major obstacle is that most low-income women plan to marry *after* having children, not before. Their life plan is the exact opposite of the normal sequence in the upper middle class. In the upper middle class, men and women still follow the traditional pattern: A man and woman become attracted to each other; a relationship develops; the couple assess each other and at some point deliberately choose to become lifetime partners; emotional bonds deepen; they marry and after a few years have children.

In the lowest-income third of the U.S. population, this traditional sequence of family formation and childbearing is now explicitly reversed. Women first have children and then seek to find or build a stable relationship that will eventually lead to marriage. Typically, low-income single mothers do not see marriage either as an important part of childrearing or as an important element of financial security or upward social mobility. Instead, marriage is seen as a symbolic

event that should occur later in adult life. Marriage is regarded as an important ceremony that will celebrate one's eventual arrival in the middle class rather than as a vital pathway that leads upward to the attainment of middle-class status.

Low-income single mothers "believe that marriage, not children, is what requires the years of careful planning and preparation and [that] childbearing is something that happens along the way."^[40] While conceiving a child with a man you have known only a few months is not a problem, most non-married mothers believe they should get to know a man steadily for four or five years before marrying him.^[41] The idea that you should carefully select a suitable partner and diligently build a successful relationship with him before conceiving a child is a foreign concept.

In many communities, the pattern of children first and (hopefully) marriage later is so entrenched that couples have difficulty understanding an alternative; but as a means for building long-term loving relationships and nurturing homes for children, this pattern is a disaster. While low-income young women earnestly dream of having children, a husband, and a house in the suburbs with a white picket fence, they have no practical plan to make this dream a reality. Sadly, their choice to have children before marriage and before forming a stable committed relationship with the child's father usually leads to the opposite outcome, dooming mothers and children to lives of poverty and struggle.^[42]

In summary, the strong desire to have children coupled with the belief that it is not important to be married before having children explains the dramatic rise in out-of-wedlock childbearing in lower-income communities. While most non-marital pregnancies are not deliberately planned, they are also not seriously avoided. The unfortunate reality is that children are usually born haphazardly to couples in unstable, uncommitted relationships that fall apart a within a few years after their children are born.

Unwed Parents Drift Apart

Although most non-married parents aspire to remain together and eventually to marry, they generally lack the skill and understanding that are needed to build enduring relationships. Often, a woman will conceive a child with a man well before she has determined whether she regards him as a suitable lifetime partner and before the couple has made serious commitments to one another.

Trying to decide whether you want to spend the rest of your life with a partner after you have had a baby with him (or her) rather than before is a recipe for disaster. Frequently, couples will seek to resolve fundamental issues such as sexual fidelity only after a child is born. They fail to understand that these issues should have been resolved at the beginning of the relationship, not in the maternity ward.

Even though they aspire to remain together, most unmarried-parent couples also fail to understand the role of commitment to successful relationships. In the real world, all relationships have stressful and troubled periods; successful couples have an enduring commitment to each other that enables them to weather difficult periods and emerge with stronger, happier relationships. In our culture, such strong commitment to a relationship rarely exists outside of marriage. Because they fail to understand the importance of commitment, most unmarried-parent

couples tend to fall apart when they hit the difficult periods that are inevitable in all relationships.

Do Unwed Fathers Lack Earnings?

Some argue that encouraging marriage in lower-income communities is irrelevant because the fathers do not earn enough to contribute significantly to the support of the mother and child. This is not true in most cases. Eight out of 10 unmarried fathers were employed at the time of their child's birth.[43] Ironically, given the degree to which the earnings capacity of non-married fathers is generally maligned, these men actually earn more than the mothers in the period prior to the child's birth. If the fathers are economically unprepared to support a family, the mothers are even less prepared.[44]

Most non-married fathers have sufficient earnings to help their children escape from poverty. As noted, if women who had children out of wedlock were married to the actual father of their child, their probability of living in poverty would be cut by two-thirds.[45]

In fact, over 60 percent of fathers who have children outside of marriage earned enough at the time of their child's birth to support their potential family with an income above the poverty level even if the mother did not work at all. If the unmarried father and mother married and the mother worked part-time, the typical family would have an income above 150 percent of poverty, or roughly \$35,000 per year. In addition, at the time of birth, the fathers are young; their wages can be expected to increase over time and are likely to rise faster if they became married and committed to a family.

Is There a Shortage of Marriageable Men?

A related argument is that single mothers do not marry because the fathers of their children are non-marriageable. This is a stunning argument given the fact that 40 percent of all children are now born outside of marriage. Are policymakers to believe that 40 percent of young adult men in America are non-marriageable? In reality, while some of the fathers are not suitable marriage partners, most would be.

Three-quarters of non-married fathers are still romantically involved with the mother at the time of birth. Among these men, alcohol, drug, and physical abuse are infrequent.[46] While many of the men have potential problems, so do many of the non-married mothers. In most cases, both the men and women would be better off if they were older, more mature, and in a stable, committed marriage before conceiving children.

But, this is an argument for encouraging stronger, more mature relationships before conception, not for writing off the men in general. The decline in marriage in low-income communities stems from changing social norms and from a welfare system that for decades has penalized marriage, not from a lack of millions of marriageable men.

Unwed Fathers and Marriage

Like unwed mothers, most non-married fathers express positive attitudes toward marriage. Many of these young men were raised in fatherless homes and often state that they do not wish the same fate for their own children.

But like unwed mothers, these men also attach little importance to being married before having children. They frequently fantasize about having close, long-term, stable relationships with their children and the child's mother even without marriage. In fact, such an outcome is extremely unlikely. Without marriage, the relationship with the mother is very likely to collapse; over time, the fathers will have little contact with their children and are likely to reach their thirties with lonely and difficult lives.

Although unwed fathers tend to view the idea of marriage positively at the time of their child's birth, they are also aware that marriage will entail restraint and sacrifice. A married husband must relinquish sexual freedom and shoulder heavy financial responsibilities. Becoming a husband means growing up, making a transition from prolonged semi-adolescence to true male adulthood. Like many other men, young unwed fathers view this transition with uncertainty and ambivalence.

Historically, society established strong norms and values that supported and encouraged young men in this transition. The role of married father and breadwinner was seen as essential and important. Men who stepped into the role of husband were esteemed in their communities.

Today, the historic norms and values concerning marriage and fatherhood have all but disappeared in low-income neighborhoods. In the larger society, opinion leaders treat unwed fathers as socially marginal, an unmarriageable residue of little social or economic significance. To the extent that the fathers are remembered at all, they are seen as largely useless, capable of little more than modest child support payments.

The collapse of norms concerning marriage and having children has been a disaster. In marriage, men will usually devote a very large part of their earnings to supporting wives and children; they will be reluctant to make this financial sacrifice unless society tells them it is vital and strongly encourages their embrace of responsibility. Since society no longer demands, expects, or encourages low-income young men to become married fathers, it should be no surprise that these young men experience difficulty in making the transition to married adulthood.

The problem is compounded by the fact that most unwed mothers do not seriously plan to be married to the fathers of their children.^[47] Without social encouragement or positive role models, many unwed fathers drift through disordered and empty lives. This is a tragedy for the fathers, the mothers, and their children.

The Analogy to Dropping Out of School

Since marriage appears to be in the long-term interests of mothers, fathers, and children, why do lower-income parents fail to marry? How has the peculiar ethos of "child first, marriage later" evolved in low-income neighborhoods? These are complex questions. The best analogy is to dropping out of school. Completing high school is clearly in the long-term economic interests of individuals. Despite this, hundreds of thousands drop out each year before obtaining a high school diploma.

People drop out of school and have children without marriage for similar reasons. For many, finishing school is difficult: it involves having a strong future orientation, delaying gratification, forgoing short-term income, and sticking to educational tasks that may seem unpleasant and

boring. Many are unable or unwilling to stick to the difficult path and finish school; they drop out despite the long-term negative consequences.

Similarly, delaying childbearing until marriage entails postponing the pleasures of having a child, carefully selecting a long-term partner, exercising restraint by being sexually faithful to that partner, and developing and maintaining a committed relationship. These are not simple tasks. In low-income communities, having a child without marrying is the common choice, the path of least resistance. Many choose this path while failing to appreciate the long-term negative consequences.

However, dropping out of school and having a child outside of marriage have one crucial difference. Everyone in our society is told incessantly from childhood on that dropping out of school will harm one's future; despite this constant refrain, a great many still drop out each year. In bold contrast, young people in low-income communities are never told that having a child outside of marriage will have negative consequences. They are never told that marriage has beneficial effects. The schools, the welfare system, the health care system, public authorities, and the media all remain scrupulously silent on the subject. In the face of this pervasive social silence, it should be no surprise that out-of-wedlock childbearing has become the norm in so many communities.

Imagine how high the school dropout rate might be if, for 50 years, lower-income youth were never told that failing to finish school would harm their future. Tragically, on the issue of non-marital childbearing, a deliberate social silence has reigned for almost half a century. Low-income youth have never been told that marriage is beneficial; they have never been told that having a child outside of marriage is likely to have harmful consequences. In this context, it should be no surprise that non-marital childbearing has soared.

Foundations of a New Policy

As long as the current social silence concerning the benefits of marriage and the harm of out-of-wedlock childbearing persists, marriage will continue to erode in low-income communities. To combat poverty, it is vital to strengthen marriage; and to strengthen marriage, it is vital that at-risk populations be given a clear factual understanding of the benefits of marriage and the costs and consequences of non-marital childbearing.

To develop this understanding, government and society should establish a broad campaign of public education in low-income areas. This campaign should be similar in scope to current efforts to convince youth of the importance of staying in school or to inform the public about the health risks of smoking. While the costs of such an effort would be small, its impact could be considerable.

If society wishes to slow the growth of non-marital births and pregnancies, then the government must clearly communicate that, on average, having and raising children inside of marriage is more beneficial than having and raising a child outside of marriage. Government should communicate not merely the desirability of delaying childbearing to an older age, but also the advantages of delaying childbearing until one has found a suitable long-term partner, formed a stable and healthy relationship, and, as a couple, made a sincere long-term commitment to each other through marriage.

The new pro-marriage message should address the deepest concerns of lower-income young women. Above all else, these women desire to be mothers, but they also desire to be good mothers. The well-being and life prospects of the children they will bring into the world are very important to them. Thus, government should inform lower-income men and women of the positive effects of healthy marriage on the well-being of children. It could then further address the benefits of healthy marriage for adults and society. While there is a voluminous literature on these topics, such information is utterly unavailable in lower-income communities.

Going further, the new policy should communicate practical skills in planning children's births in a manner to meet long-term life goals. It should teach practical skills in selecting suitable partners, in building stable and healthy relationships, and in understanding the role of commitment in sustaining healthy marriages. Given the high esteem with which low-income women and men regard marriage as an institution, this message should fall on a receptive audience, although the idea of delaying childbearing until after marriage will initially be a real shock.

Even for those on the left whose only concern is that low-income women complete more education before having children out of wedlock, this policy should prove to be advantageous. Urging young women to select partners carefully, build strong relationships, and marry before having children would (if it has any effect) result in a necessary delay in the age of childbearing in lower-income communities.

Policies to Communicate the Truth About Marriage

In order to communicate a new pro-marriage message and strengthen marriage in low-income communities, government should undertake the following specific policies.

- **Encourage public advertising campaigns on the importance of marriage** that are targeted to low-income communities. These campaigns should communicate the value of marriage to adults, children, and society.
- **Provide marriage education programs in high schools with a high proportion of at-risk youth.** As noted, most low-income girls strongly desire to have children. They also wish and intend to be good mothers. These young women will be very receptive to information that shows the positive effects of marriage on long-term child outcomes.
- **Strengthen federal abstinence education programs that provide critical information on the value of marriage to adults, children, and society.** These programs already provide some information on the value of marriage to lower-income youth. This message needs to be expanded, not reduced.
- **Make voluntary marriage education widely available to interested couples in low-income communities.** This could be done by expanding the small "healthy marriage initiative" currently operating in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These programs may also provide job training to participants, but that should not be their primary emphasis.
- **Provide marriage education materials and referrals in Title X birth control clinics.** Government-funded Title X clinics operate in nearly every county in the U.S., providing free or subsidized birth control to over 4 million low-income adult women each year. Many clients of these clinics go on to have children out of wedlock within a short period. With 40 percent of children born outside of marriage, it is obvious that a policy of merely promoting birth control is ineffective in stemming the rise of non-marital births. In

addition to providing birth control, Title X clinics should be required to offer educational materials on the benefits of marriage and referrals to education in relationships and life-planning skills to clients who are interested.

Reducing the Anti-Marriage Penalties in Welfare

Another important public policy to strengthen marriage would be to reduce the penalties against marriage in the welfare system. Welfare programs create disincentives to marriage because benefits are reduced as a family's income rises. A mother will receive far more from welfare if she is single than if she has an employed husband in the home. For many low-income couples, marriage means a reduction in government assistance and an overall decline in the couple's joint income.

Marriage penalties occur in many means-tested programs such as food stamps, public housing, Medicaid, day care, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. The welfare system should be overhauled to reduce such counterproductive incentives.

The simplest way to accomplish this would be to increase the value of the earned income tax credit (EITC) for married couples with children; this could offset the anti-marriage penalties existing in other programs such as food stamps, public housing, and Medicaid. In addition, the appeal of welfare programs as an alternative to work and marriage could be reduced by requiring able-bodied parents to work or prepare for work as a condition of receiving aid.

Conclusion: Strengthening Marriage as an Antidote to Poverty

Marriage remains America's strongest anti-poverty weapon, yet it continues to decline. As husbands disappear from the home, poverty and welfare dependence will increase, and children and parents will suffer as a result.

Since marital decline drives up child poverty and welfare dependence, and since the poor aspire to healthy marriage but lack the norms, understanding, and skills to achieve it, it is reasonable for government to take active steps to strengthen marriage. Just as government discourages youth from dropping out of school, it should clearly and forcefully articulate the value of marriage. It should provide information that will help people to form and maintain healthy marriages and delay childbearing until they are married and economically stable. In particular, clarifying the severe shortcomings of the "child first, marriage later" philosophy to potential parents in lower-income communities should be a priority.

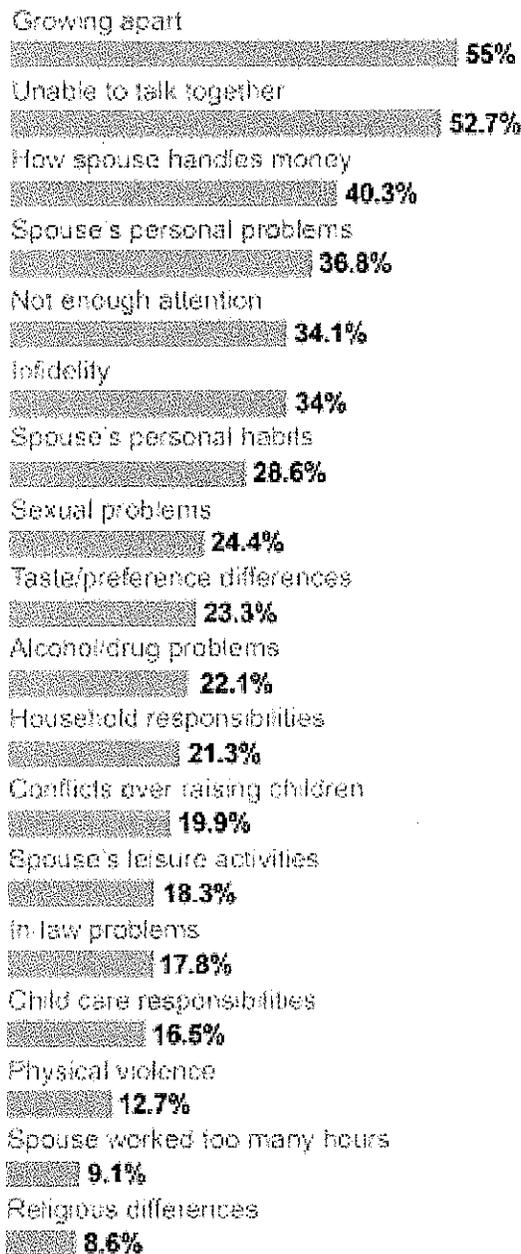
Marriage is highly beneficial to children, adults, and society; it needs to be encouraged and strengthened. Under current government policies, however, marriage is either ignored or undermined. This needs to change.

—Robert Rector is Senior Research Fellow in the Domestic Policy Studies Department at The Heritage Foundation.

Contributing Factors to Divorce
 William Doherty, PhD
 University of Minnesota
 Study of 886 Divorcing Parents with Children*

Contributing factors to divorce

Cited by 886 divorcing Minneapolis-area parents of kids under 18; respondents were asked to check "all the reasons" important in their divorce.



Source: William Doherty
 University of Minnesota, 2009-10
 By Frank Pappalardo, USA TODAY

NOTE:

- The top 3 factors listed as contributing to divorce were growing apart (55%), unable to talk together (52.7%) and how spouse handles money (40.3%). All three are addressed with competent Pre-Marital Education programs.

- 4 of the top 5 (not enough attention [34.1%]) are addressed with competent Pre-Marital Education. The following issues are also addressed: spouse's personal habits (28.6%), sexual problems (24.4%), taste/preference differences (23.3%), household responsibilities (21.3%), spouse's leisure activities (18.3%), in-law problems (17.8%), child care responsibilities (16.5%), and religious differences (8.6%). Thus, 12 of the 18 contributing factors are specifically addressed with competent Pre-Marital education. They are also labeled as "soft" reasons for a divorce by Doherty, i.e. ones easily addressed in counseling.

- Domestic violence is a profoundly serious issue. However, well written Pre-Marital Inventories (for example *Prepare/Enrich*, originally developed by David Olson, PhD,) specifically address the risk of domestic violence as part of the inventory.

- Physical violence was listed by 12.7% respondent (i.e. about 1/8th). Michigan should be creative and insightful enough to have safeguards for domestic violence victims without creating artificial barriers to reconciliation for the 87.3% (about 7/8^{ths}) of the couple who do not have violence as part of their relationship. In private conversations Paul Amato, PhD, and William Doherty have both indicated that such safeguards could be easily and inexpensively set in place.

(Notes prepared by James E. Sheridan, Chief Judge,
 1 2A District Court, Adrian, MI.)

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
RESEARCH REPORT NO. 1000
1955

The following is a summary of the results of the experiments described in this report. The first part of the report describes the synthesis and properties of the new compound, which is a derivative of the well-known compound, C_6H_6 . The second part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents. The third part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents. The fourth part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents.

The following is a summary of the results of the experiments described in this report. The first part of the report describes the synthesis and properties of the new compound, which is a derivative of the well-known compound, C_6H_6 . The second part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents. The third part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents. The fourth part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents.

The following is a summary of the results of the experiments described in this report. The first part of the report describes the synthesis and properties of the new compound, which is a derivative of the well-known compound, C_6H_6 .

The following is a summary of the results of the experiments described in this report. The first part of the report describes the synthesis and properties of the new compound, which is a derivative of the well-known compound, C_6H_6 . The second part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents. The third part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents. The fourth part of the report describes the results of the experiments on the reaction of this compound with various reagents.