



# Why every woman in America should beware of welfare cuts.

Welfare is the ultimate security policy for every woman in America. Like accident or life insurance, you hope you'll never need it. But for yourself and your family, sisters, daughters and friends, you need to know it's there. Without it, we have no real escape from brutal relationships or any protection in a job market hostile to women with children. Why is Congress trying to take it away?

**Imagine the worst.** You're laid off from your job. You lose your health insurance. Your marriage falls apart. Your young children need child care. And you have no family close enough to help.

This is the kind of thing that "happens to someone else." Someone we like to think is "different." And to underline the difference, we usually figure the woman is somehow at fault.

"Why did she have kids if she can't support them?" we ask. "What's the matter with her?"

But, at heart, we know how uncomfortably close we are, ourselves, to being without support, without savings. All it takes is a few strokes of hard luck. Hard luck so common, it strikes millions of women with children every year. Women with no job security, in unstable or abusive relationships, with nowhere to turn but welfare (see stories at right).

Would you let your employer take away your health insurance? Would you let the government cancel your social security? Of course not. But the public program that benefits struggling women most—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—is now considered fair game in Washington. And women are supposed to be quiet about it.

## What myths underlie the attack on welfare?

The welfare "reform" proposal in Congress is based on myths about women and about welfare.

Even the phrase describing the bill—the "Personal Responsibility Act," taken from Newt Gingrich's Contract with America—exploits these myths.

It implies that impoverished women with children, unlike people who get WA benefits or retirees on Social Security, are responsible for their own troubles and need a whack from a morality paddle to get back in line.

This is not only insulting, but dangerous.

Those who want to cut welfare assume the American job market is hungry for untrained, unskilled workers. It's not. Mothers shovled off welfare will not find jobs waiting. And even if a mother finds a job available, chances are it won't pay a living wage that's enough to cover child care, let alone include health insurance.

## Does welfare support failure or enable success? Two true stories:

**JULIESUE WESTWOOD**, married for twenty years, had five kids, a house, a savings account. Then a serious car accident and divorce left her with nothing but a \$498 check from AFDC and \$250 a month in food stamps.

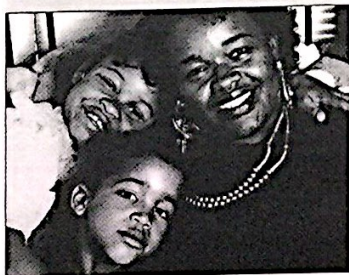
"I would wake up at 4 a.m., get up, get dressed, and pay whatever bills had to be paid, care for the children, go to school for eight hours, come home, do the laundry, meals, housekeeping, meet the kids' needs—and study late into the night after they fell asleep. In spite of all the trauma, homelessness, and illness, I graduated with a B.A. this year.

"Things are going to change for us."

**GLORIA WILSON** raised her children on AFDC for two years until she could leave them with family and work two mental jobs to survive.

"The scariest part about getting off welfare was not having health insurance for the kids. I'd have to go to the emergency room an hour away and then we'd usually wait four hours more."

Working for the past 24 years, she remembers her AFDC experience vividly. "It infuriates me to hear the politicians talking about kicking mothers off of welfare. Without skills, without education, without medical insurance, without family support, what are these women supposed to do?"



this attack on women's security. Mail the coupon to us, and we'll speed it along with thousands of others to the White House. And call or write your Senators and Representatives today.

This fight is for all of us. Make sure help is there when women need it most.

Everybody agrees that the current welfare system is flawed. But these reckless and irresponsible cuts do nothing to fix anything. They only make it harder for a woman raising her children to recover from life's hard knocks—which today's system, even with all its flaws, actually manages to do.

That's why we say that welfare isn't supporting failure. In most cases, it's enabling success.

The fact that most women who must resort to welfare find a way off within two years by their own efforts, while keeping their children fed and clothed, says a great deal about them. It certainly demonstrates their "personal responsibility." And it should make the rest of us ask why they're being maligned, threatened and lectured.

## How defending poor women protects us all.

The assault on poor women aims to divide American women, leaving all of us more vulnerable than ever.

Legislation now pending in Congress would end Aid to Families with Dependent Children and critical nutrition programs.

It would free states to reduce their own level of support far below the poverty line.

Most inexcusable of all, it would allow the richest society on Earth to break its most fundamental pledge to women:

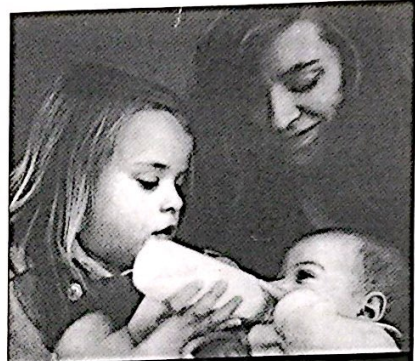
That if the worst happens, a woman can keep her children with her, with food on the table and a roof over their heads.

These punitive provisions have no offsetting benefits.

They won't save money, speed women into jobs, improve health care, or provide more child care. They won't do anything but complete the humiliation of women who have no other choice and jeopardize the well-being of our poorest children.

No American woman has anything to gain from this so-called "welfare reform." Each one of us has everything to lose. That's why we ask you to act quickly.

President Clinton must stop this attack on women's security. Mail the coupon to us, and we'll speed it along with thousands of others to the White House. And call or write your Senators and Representatives today.



A typical woman on welfare is in her late 20's, has two kids, and needs help for two years. Surprised?

## 10 facts most Americans don't know about welfare.

1. Only 8% of welfare mothers are teenagers. Less than 3% of poor families are headed by women younger than 19.
2. The typical welfare family includes a mother and two children, about the same as the average American family.
3. Welfare mothers on average receive \$367 a month. Even with food stamps worth \$295, this is still 31% below the poverty line for a family of three. Benefits have lost about a third of their value since 1979.
4. Welfare to single mothers makes up just 1% of the federal budget—3% if food stamps are included.
5. Thirty-eight percent of AFDC parents are white, 37% are African-American, and 18% are Latino.
6. Over 70% of women applying for welfare receive benefits for less than two years; only 8% remain over eight years.
7. More than 60% of AFDC families have a child younger than six. Forty percent have a child younger than two.
8. Full-time, year-round work at minimum wage puts a woman and two children \$3,000 below the poverty line—with no health care coverage.
9. Unemployment has steadily increased since World War II, while unemployment benefits have decreased.
10. Carefully conducted research has found that AFDC benefits do not influence a never-married mother's decision to have a child; nor do they influence mothers already on welfare to have additional children.

## Stop the attack on women's security!

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON  
The White House

Dear President Clinton

The so-called "Welfare Reform" bill removes the only assurance women have that they will always be able to provide for their children. You must put a stop to it now!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

## Send my urgent message to President Clinton immediately.

Yes, I want more women to learn how much is at stake. I'm enclosing my contribution to your vital educational campaign: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$200 or \_\_\_\_\_  
(Contributions are not tax-deductible.)

I can't contribute now, but please convey my urgent protest to President Clinton.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

For immediate effect in Washington, please mail entire coupon to:  
**Women's Committee of One Hundred**  
750 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 (202) 336-8345

The Women's Committee of One Hundred represents a new mobilization of informed women—including prominent scholars, activists, elected officials, professionals and artists—pledged to defend women's security.

# A war against poor women is a war against all women.

This ad was co-sponsored by 1199 National Health and Human Services Employees Union, National Association of Social Workers, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Catholics for a Free Choice, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO Welfare Reform Network of New York, Ms. Foundation for Women, Feminist Majority, Wider Opportunities for Women/Women and Poverty Project, Communications Workers of America, Democratic Socialists of America, Women's Actions for New Directions (WAN!), National Committee on Pay Equity, United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO Center for Women Policy Studies, National Council for Research on Women, National Jobs for All Coalition, National Coalition for the Homeless, NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. A copy of NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund's latest financial report is available from the New York Department of State Office of Charities Registration, Albany, NY 12231.

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