

Do we have an issues file —
let's talk about this

Child care: A key to work

Issue plays into heart of welfare debate

By Leslie Phillips
USA TODAY

Yvette Robinson, 25, and the mother of four, has been on and off welfare since her first child was born seven years ago. Problems finding and paying for child care, she says, forced her to quit three of the five jobs she's had.

Now, as a clerical worker for the Baltimore city government, a job she got as part of Maryland's welfare-related jobs program, her child care is paid for by the state.

And that, she says, is what it takes for her to hang onto a job.

"There are a lot of parents paying a lot of money for child care," she says. "I know I couldn't afford it without the help of the program I'm in."

The link between child care and work will be the focus for the Senate today as it enters its second week of floor debate on welfare reform.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., under pressure from moderate Republicans, has agreed to include a work exemption for parents of young children if they're unable to find child care.

But Democrats want more money added so if GOP work requirements are approved, they'll be reinforced with dollars to provide care for the children of welfare parents.

"The lack of unaffordability of child care is the greatest barrier to employment for most welfare recipients," says Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine. "It's probably the most significant issue that will make welfare reform work or not work."

House and Senate reform proposals require recipients to work after two years of collecting aid. By the year 2000, half the population must be off the dole and working.

Many barriers, such as availability of jobs and training, could impede those goals. So could lack of child care since over 73% of children in single parent welfare families are under the age of 5.

Many Republicans balk at guaranteeing more child care, complaining reforms should reduce, not increase costs. "The typical Democrat answer," says Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., "is always spend more money."

But Anna Kondratas of the GOP Hudson Institute think tank says, "You can't end welfare overnight unless you put in more money."

Both the House and Senate proposals would trim dollars over five years and eliminate a federal guarantee to care for the kids of welfare mothers working or training.

Snowe's solution, agreed to by Dole, is to give parents breathing room: States would be barred from reducing aid to parents who can't find care for kids 5 and under.

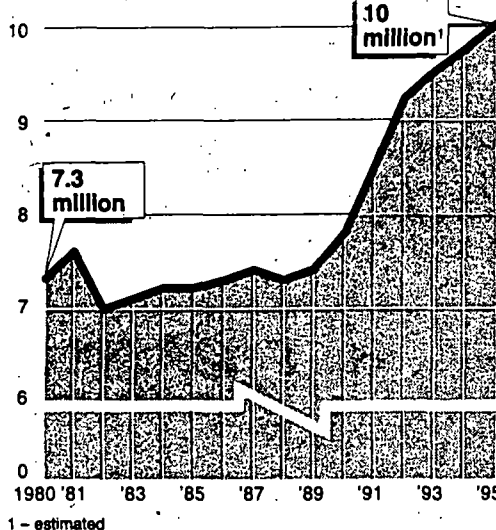
The non-partisan Congressional

Care of children complicates the welfare debate

Funding of child care for welfare recipients going to work is a hotly contested point as the Senate enters its second week of debate over welfare reform. Proposals in the Senate and House require recipients to work after two years of collecting benefits. The number of children in families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children has reached about 10 million.

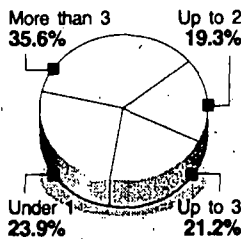
Children in AFDC

Annual average number of children in AFDC families:



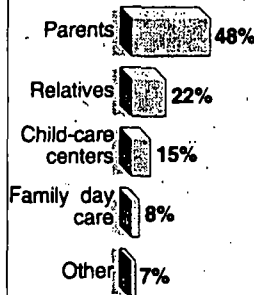
Years on welfare

Number of years AFDC recipients were continuously on welfare:



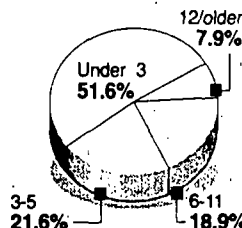
Child-care providers

Child-care providers for low-income families:



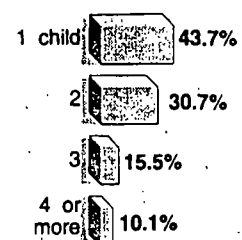
Age of children

Most welfare families have very young children. Average age of youngest child in AFDC families with an unmarried, single parent:



Number of children

Number of children in AFDC families:



Sources: American Public Welfare Association, Child Welfare League of America, House Ways and Means Committee

By Kevin Rechin, USA TODAY

GOP factions face crucial votes on welfare

By Leslie Phillips
USA TODAY

Controversy continues to divide Senate Republicans, as they return to the debate over welfare reform this week.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole says he hopes for a final vote on the measure by the end of the week. Dole and other GOP leaders are calling on members to compromise so the bill can go on to a conference committee with the House.

"We can't afford to get hung up on one or two or three of the details and decide to be purist," House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., said on NBC's Meet the Press. "We've got to be flexible on the detail but we've got to be absolutely firm on the big goals."

But votes this week are on politically volatile subjects:

► Cash aid to unmarried teen

mothers. Conservatives say no aid will reduce out-of-wedlock births. Moderates say it's punitive.

► State spending. Conservatives object to tying states' hands. Moderates say without state contributions, spending on other anti-poverty programs will skyrocket.

► Child-care resources. Conservatives say there's no money available. Moderates say work goals will be meaningless without provisions for children.

Dole's bill sends \$16 billion to states to run their own programs. Recipients must work after two years and receive five years of benefits over a lifetime.

The House bill, passed in March, also bars cash aid to teen moms, and increases to women who give birth while on welfare.

Dole has made several concessions to warring GOP factions. For conservatives, he agreed to bar

more cash to women who give birth while on welfare. For moderates, he'll exempt welfare parents with kids under five from work if they can't find child care.

As the GOP presidential front-runner, Dole is under pressure to produce since he's running on a record of getting things done.

The pressure increased last week with the resignation of his ally Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., who faced expulsion after accusations of official misconduct. Now Dole now must shepherd welfare, as well as tax cuts and Medicare changes, through the Senate without him.

To get welfare reform passed, Dole says he may tie it into a final budget package.

"It's not the speeches we make, it's not the promises we make, it's the record," he told the Christian Coalition.

Budget Office says states would have to spend about 30% of their federal welfare funds on child care and job training to meet GOP work goals. That would reduce the amount of money a state could spend on direct cash assistance, unless the state spent its own money.

Congressional Republicans often point to Wisconsin, where Gov. Tommy Thompson has reduced the rolls, as a welfare model.

But Wisconsin's reforms called for

more upfront spending. In the last eight years, the state boosted child care dollars for welfare recipients from \$12 million to \$64 million.

An additional \$100 million will be needed, officials estimate, as the state moves to shift almost its entire case load off welfare and into jobs.

"We can't require people to work if they don't have child care available," says Wisconsin Secretary Health and Social Services Joe Lelan.

The Clinton administration estimates states will need an additional \$11 billion over five years to meet the proposed GOP work standards. Over 665,200 children of welfare parents who will be expected to work will need care, in addition to the 408,000 kids now being served.

Says Bruce Herschfield, director of child day care services for the Child Welfare League of America: "If they don't add money to the pot, someone is going to lose out."

Women Less Optimistic About Work, Poll Says

84% Cite Limits Related to Their Sex

By JUDITH H. DOBRZYNSKI

When it comes to the world of work, the mood of America's women appears to have taken a pessimistic turn. They believe overwhelmingly that while women are better off than they used to be, they continue to face restrictions and discrimination, according to a new poll to be made public today.

Of the 3,000 women polled, 84 percent agreed that "regardless of changes that may have occurred, women still face more restrictions in life than men do." A total of 77 percent said that sexual discrimination, although more subtle and less open than it used to be, "remains a serious problem."

And 76 percent said that there was a lot or some sexual harassment in the workplace.

Even though those results suggest that women believe there is room for improvement, the poll also shows that women do not have as much hope as they once had. Only 56 percent see the role of women as continuing to change, down from 73 percent in 1990.

Men agreed. Of 1,000 polled, 57 percent believe women's roles will keep changing, down from 76 percent in 1990.

Sheila Wellington, the president of

Catalyst, a nonprofit women's research and advocacy group, said she was not entirely surprised by those results. "Women believe, and Catalyst believes, that there is much that remains to be done before the workplace is prepared to take advantage of the talent women have to offer," she said.

But realism seems to have set in. "There was a kind of buoyant optimism 10 years ago and certainly 20 years ago," Ms. Wellington said. "But I don't think this means that women will leave the work force. It does mean that they will be very careful about where they choose to work and how they choose to work."

The poll, which is done every five years, was conducted by Roper, Starch Worldwide Inc. for the Virginia Slims brand of Philip Morris USA.

The poll shows that women believe that several factors keep them back, ranging from an old boys' network to the lack of role models.

Those feelings, coupled with the stress of balancing work and family, are taking a toll on how women feel about their jobs. Only 31 percent said that aside from money they got "great personal satisfaction" from their jobs, compared with 37 percent in 1990.

Men, however, are more satisfied with their work life now, with 40

What's Holding Women Back?

Major reasons cited in 1995 Roper Starch opinion poll.*

- 45% Women are mostly given low or mid-level jobs, while men hold the real power.
- 44% Women face the "old-boy network" in major corporations.
- 44% Women are held to higher standards than men.
- 38% The doors have not been open long enough for many to have made it to the top.
- 37% Women are discriminated against in life, and business is no exception.
- 34% There are few women in high corporate positions to inspire others.
- 34% The business world lags behind the rest of society when it comes to equality.
- 25% Young girls are not encouraged to aspire to careers as managers.

*Conducted for the Virginia Slims brand of Philip Morris. The margin of error is plus or minus two percentage points.

The New York Times

percent getting great satisfaction in 1995, compared with 35 percent in 1990.

To make their jobs more satisfying, 58 percent of the women and 59 percent of the men polled cited incentive or bonus-pay programs to reward higher productivity; 53 percent of the women and 51 percent of the men cited better health benefits as a means to greater job satisfaction.

More women than men — 38 per-

cent versus 27 percent — wanted more opportunity to work at home. And 32 percent of the women and 31 percent of the men wanted company-run, on-site day care for their children.

The poll indicates that women work because they must: 73 percent said they worked to support their families or themselves, compared with 55 percent in 1990 and 46 percent in 1980. Only 23 percent said they worked to bring in extra money,

down from 32 percent in 1990 and 43 percent in 1980.

The poll, which has a margin of error of plus or minus two percentage points, also asked some questions about women's personal lives.

But the area in which women most desired change was the workplace. When shown a list of items and asked whether major change, some change or no real change was needed, 94 percent of women said that major change or some change was needed in the salaries paid to women; 87 percent believed that women needed more opportunities for leadership positions.

"Women thought it would take less time to see progress at the top of corporations than it has," said Adele Scheele, a career strategist hired by Philip Morris to interpret the study. "They've been welcomed in, but the rewards, both financial and psychic, are lagging. If corporations want to keep women, they must promise to take them more seriously and make them more visible."