

Kathleen Sylvester

Kathleen Sylvester is director of the Social Policy Action Network, a non-profit intermediary that she founded in 1997. SPAN promotes effective social policy by transforming the findings of research and the insights of front-line practitioners into concrete action agendas for policymakers. SPAN then builds public will for these ideas with clear messages for the public and the news media.

Previously, Ms. Sylvester was vice president for domestic policy of the Progressive Policy Institute, where she directed the Institute's work in a variety of domestic policy areas with particular emphasis on family policy, education, and governance.

She is the author of *Preventable Calamity: Rolling Back Teen Pregnancy* (1994), *Second Chance Homes: Breaking the Cycle of Teen Pregnancy* (1995) and *Reducing Teen Pregnancy, A Handbook for Action* (1996). Most recently, she wrote *Seeking Supervision: Second Chance Homes and the TANF Minor Teen Parent Living Arrangement Rule* (1999). She was co-author (with Lisbeth B. Schorr and Margaret Dunkle), of *Strategies to Achieve a Common Purpose* (1999), and co-author (with Kathy Reich and Heather McGhee) of *The Fatherhood Movement: Some Next Steps*. (1999)

Ms. Sylvester served as a consultant to Vice President Gore's National Performance Review and advises federal, state, and local officials on a variety of domestic social issues. She serves on the Board of Visitors of Georgetown University's Graduate Public Policy Institute and is a founder and past president of Jobs for Homeless People of Washington, D.C.

She began her professional career teaching in the inner city of New Haven, Connecticut and also worked as a community organizer on a South Dakota Indian reservation. Ms. Sylvester spent the next two decades as an award-winning journalist. She was a senior writer at *Governing*, the leading national magazine of state and local public policy, which she helped found in 1987. She also reported for NBC News, National Public Radio, and *The Washington Star* and has contributed to numerous publications including *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, and *Policy and Practice*.

Ms. Sylvester earned an undergraduate degree from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and a master's degree from Wesleyan University. She also studied at the Yale Law School and spent a year at Stanford University as the recipient of a John S. Knight Fellowship.

The Washington Post

AUGUST 7, 1995

Kathleen Sylvester

Welfare Reform: For Mothers, Second Homes ...

As the welfare debate begins in the Senate, politicians are still deeply divided about what to do with teenage welfare mothers. Many Republicans, whose goal for welfare reform is to punish illegitimacy, want to teach teenage mothers a lesson. They have a point.

We should teach these young women a lesson. We should teach them to be good mothers, and good workers and good citizens. And we should send a strong message that government no longer offers unconditional support for young women who bear children out of wedlock.

But for welfare reform to accomplish its most appropriate goal—helping young mothers become self-sufficient—can't be based on stereotypes.

Who are teenage mothers? Most come from homes strained by poverty and dysfunction. Most teenage mothers are badly in school; many drop out before they become pregnant. They have been poorly nurtured. Many have been subjected to neglect or physical violence. Recent studies show that as many as one-third were victims of rape or sexual abuse at an early age—crimes often committed by males living in the same household. As a result, many of these young women suffer from mental and emotional problems.

They are easy prey for older men; they are women who have been victims of

early sexual abuse often develop emotional patterns that make them vulnerable to the attentions of older men. A study released last week by the Alan Guttmacher Institute suggests that almost two-thirds of teenage mothers have babies fathered by men who are 20 or older.

Teenage mothers' life prospects are severely limited by their lack of socialization: They learn how to treat their own children from the parents who raised them; they model social behavior after peers from the same neighborhoods. They have few models for any other life. With so many obstacles and so few skills, these very young welfare mothers are the wrong candidates for a thoughtless experiment in welfare reform.

So if Congress is serious about imposing such obligations, it's time to revive an old institution—the maternity home—in a new form. Congress should adopt the proposal, offered by Sens. Daschle, Breaux and Mikulski, or a similar proposal by Sen. Kent Conrad to use federal funds to help communities create a national network of "second-chance homes." These would be homes in which mothers under age 18 would live with adult supervision, while learning to be good parents and good citizens.

The solution to welfare reform is not to cut off the welfare checks of teenage

mothers. Nor, for a large percentage of these young women, is the answer to insist that they continue to live in the homes where they grew up. Politicians who offer such simplistic solutions are ignoring the reality of teenage mothers' lives. Politicians who suggest that they should live at home "or in an adult-supervised setting" are hypocrites unless they guarantee young mothers safe and stable alternatives.

Prototypes for such "second-chance homes" already exist in communities as varied as Washington, New Albany, Ind., Albuquerque and Wheeling, W. Va. These vary widely. But all offer the three elements that teenage welfare mothers need to change their lives: socialization, nurturing and support, structure and discipline.

And they all offer a genuine social contract. The mothers who live in these homes must stay in school or job training. They must stay drug-free and abide by curfews. They learn to cook and clean, to manage money, to get along with each other and resolve conflicts. In return, they get protection from violent family members and abusive boyfriends. They get help with day care and health care and schoolwork. Most important, they learn to nurture their children well.

Not every young woman who gets a "second chance" in one of these homes

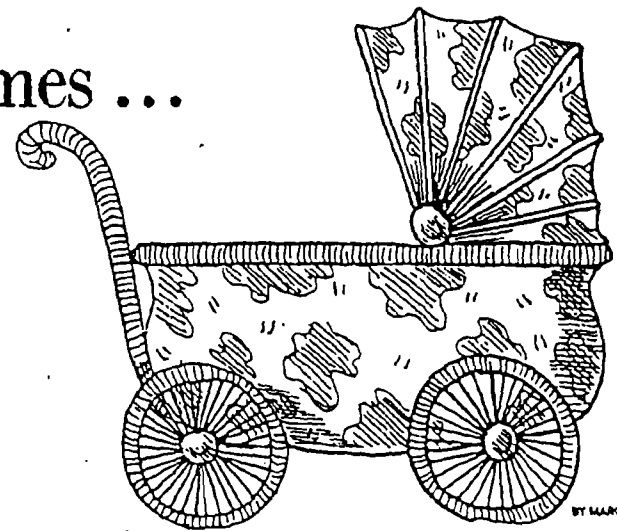
succeeds. But these homes have produced notable and promising results: fewer second pregnancies, slightly higher adoption rates, less child abuse, better maternal and child health, dramatically increased school completion rates for mothers, higher employment rates and reduced welfare dependency.

Thus the homes offer a critical element now missing in most efforts to help welfare mothers: connection to community and community standards. Most of the homes are shoestring operations, reliant on community support. The churches and civic organizations and local businesses become engaged in the lives of the young mothers and children.

This idea may not be bold enough for those politicians who want to make teenage mothers a "moral" issue. But it is the moral choice to make because it will help their children—those whom the welfare system was designed to protect.

The goal is far from impossible. In 1993 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that about 67,000 welfare mothers were under age 18. Surely a nation as large as ours can find a way to take in 67,000 mothers and their babies.

The writer is vice president for domestic policy at the Progressive Policy Institute.



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One of the most important of these problems is teenage pregnancy. Every year about a million teenagers become pregnant. In fact, nearly a third of all the babies born each year are to women under the age of eighteen, and not surprisingly, nearly 70 percent of these teens are unmarried. Teen pregnancy is not simply foolish and costly, it is destructive to children, to families, to our society. It is *wrong*. It is also an express ticket to poverty for the teenage mother. Nearly half of today's long-term welfare caseload are women who had their first child before the age of seventeen.

We cannot end the related cycles of welfare dependency and teen pregnancy unless we confront the issue of responsibility—the responsibility of young women not to get pregnant, the responsibility of men not to get them pregnant, the responsibility of fathers to support their children, the responsibility of parents to provide their children a safe home and teach them responsible sexual behavior and encourage abstinence, the responsibility of churches to support those teachings, the responsibility of community organizations to develop programs to help teen

BETWEEN HOPE AND HISTORY

mothers and their children get a start in life, and the responsibility of public officials to understand that teen pregnancy is part of a complex web of social issues.

In the last three and a half years, we have done our part. I have challenged the states to require teen mothers to live at home or with a responsible adult. We now require teen mothers to stay in school and sign a personal responsibility contract to continue living at home—unless, of course, their home environment is abusive. For teens who can't go home, I have proposed seed money for "Second-Chance Homes," like those already established in several American communities, that provide safe and supportive community-organized and -operated residences for teen mothers and their children.

BETWEEN
HOPE AND HISTORY

*Meeting America's Challenges
for the 21st Century*

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1999

THE ENHANCING FAMILY LIFE ACT OF 1999

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Enhancing Family Life Act of 1999, a bill inspired by an extraordinary set of proposals by one of our nation's most eminent social scientists, Professor James Q. Wilson. On December 4, 1997, I had the honor of hearing Professor Wilson — who is an old and dear friend — deliver the Francis Boyer Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). The Boyer Lecture is delivered at AEI's annual dinner by a thinker who has 'made notable intellectual or practical contributions to improved public policy and social welfare.' Previous Boyer lecturers have included Irving Kristol, Alan Greenspan, and Henry Kissinger. In his lecture, Professor Wilson argued that 'two nations' now exist within the United States. He said:

In one nation, a child, raised by two parents, acquires an education, a job, a spouse, and a home kept separate from crime and disorder by distance, fences, or guards. In the other nation, a child is raised by an unwed girl, lives in a neighborhood filled with many sexual men but few committed fathers, and finds gang life to be necessary for self-protection and valuable for self-advancement.

Sadly, this is an all-too-accurate portrait of the American underclass, the problems of which have been the focus of decades of unsuccessful welfare reform and crime control efforts. We have tried a great many 'solutions,' as Professor Wilson notes:

Congress has devised community action, built public housing, created a Job Corps, distributed Food Stamps, given federal funds to low-income schools, supported job training, and provided cash grants to working families .

Yet still we are faced with two nations. Professor Wilson explains why: '[t]he family problem lies at the heart of the emergence of two nations.' He notes that as our families become weaker — as more and more American children are born outside of marriage and raised by one, not two, parents -- the foundation of our society becomes weaker. This deterioration helps to explain why, as reported by the Census Bureau today, the poverty rate for American children is almost twice that for adults aged 18 to 64 (19.9 percent for children versus 10.9 percent for adults). And it grows increasingly difficult for government to address the problems of that 'second nation.' Professor Wilson even quotes the Senator from New York to this effect: 'If you expect a government program to change families , you know more about government than I do.'

Even so, Jim Wilson, quite characteristically, has fresh ideas about what might help. On the basis of recent scholarly research, and common sense, he urged in the Boyer Lecture that we refocus our attention on the vital period of early childhood. I was so impressed with his Lecture that afterward I set about writing a bill to put his recommendations into effect.

The Enhancing Family Life Act of 1999 contains four key elements, all of which are related to families . First, it supports 'second chance' maternity homes for unwed teenage mothers. These are group homes where young women would live with their children under strict adult supervision and have the support necessary to become productive members of society. The bill provides \$45 million a year to create such homes or expand existing ones.

Second, it promotes adoption. The bill expands the number of children in foster care eligible for federal adoption incentives. Too many children drift in foster care; we should do more to find them permanent homes. The bill also encourages states to experiment with 'per capita' approaches to finding these permanent homes for foster children, a strategy Kansas has used with success.

Third, it funds collaborative early childhood development programs. Recent research has reminded us of the critical importance of the first few years of a child's life. States would have great flexibility in the use of these funds; for example, the money could be used for pre-school programs for poor children or home visits of parents of young children. It provides \$3.75 billion over five years for this purpose.

Finally, the legislation creates a new education assistance program to enable more parents to remain home with young children. A parent who temporarily leaves the workforce to raise a child would be eligible for an educational grant, similar to the Pell Grant, to help parent enter, or re-enter, the labor market with skills and credentials necessary for success in today's economy once the child is older.

Mr. President, this bill is a starting point. It is what Professor James Q. Wilson and I believe just might make a difference. We would certainly welcome the comments of others. I first introduced this legislation last September and have received several helpful suggestions. I look forward to further such conversations and comments.

And I would commend to the attention of Senators and other interested persons the full text of Professor Wilson's lecture 'Two Nations,' which is available from my office or from the American Enterprise Institute. I ask unanimous consent that a summary of the legislation and the full text of the bill be included in the Record.

There being no objection, the materials were ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

S. 208

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) Short Title: This Act may be cited as the 'Enhancing Family Life Act of 1999'.

(b) Table of Contents: The table of Contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings.

TITLE I -- ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN

Sec. 101. Second chance homes.

Sec. 102. Adoption promotion.

Sec. 103. Early childhood development.

The Dallas Morning News

Monday, January 12, 1998

EDITORIALS

Welfare to Work

Second-chance homes help break cycle

Breaking out of poverty is often difficult. But the work especially challenges teenagers who have children. Through complex circumstances, about 43 percent of teenage mothers become long-term welfare recipients.

That's one reason Texas Gov. George W. Bush proposes that the state invest money in group homes for teenage mothers. He believes such homes can equip teenage mothers with the skills and nurturing to escape poverty.

Several states already help fund group homes, sometimes known as "second-chance homes." Massachusetts has put state money into 23 homes for teenage mothers. New Mexico, Michigan and Maryland also have financed group houses.

The Housing and Urban Development Department likewise invests money in such homes. That includes Dallas' Promise House, which serves 12 teenage mothers and their children in Oak Cliff.

Although not a cure-all, these homes create considerable advantages. Residents develop better parenting skills. Mothers pick up nutrition tips. Participants get trained for jobs and finish their educations. Children receive staff attention.

Social Policy Action Network director Kate

Sylvester points out even more advantages. She claims that teenage residents often delay having second children. And group home staffs guide young parents away from abusing their children, helping them learn new behavior. Promise House director Lee Schimmel says that most teens enrolled in her residence have been abused themselves.

Gov. Bush is right to push this idea for Texas, which has very few group homes. A stigma has existed in Texas about teenage mothers. While some mothers have been reckless, many others have been impregnated by older men or have been victims of sexual abuse.

Removing them from bad histories can help both the young mothers and the state. Instead of going on welfare, they can become self-sufficient.

Of course, group homes cost money. Some homes can operate on \$2,000 per child. But most others cost more. The governor's staff and legislators will need to finalize a price tag for this project. But the state should help fund group homes for teenage mothers. Done properly, they can redirect young lives.

(Welfare to Work is a series of editorials devoted to examining the best ways communities can help move families from public assistance to self-sufficiency.)

The New York Times

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NEW YORK, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1996

\$1 beyond the greater New York metropol...

Home for Teen-Age Mothers Tries to Break Welfare Cycle

By PETER T. KILBORN

SOMERVILLE, Mass. — Katie Cameron, a mother at 18, and her toddler son, Shaun, sleep under the glow of the stars that she pasted on the ceiling of their tiny bedroom. From the wall over the head of her bed, she took a framed document, a high school diploma dated July 28, 1996.

"This is my second pride and joy, after Shaun," she said.

A year ago, Ms. Cameron was living in an apartment with her mother, younger sister and brother, fending off the blows of a heroin-addicted boyfriend. Shaun, now 20 months old, was in the hands of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, which had taken him from his mother, she said, to protect him from domestic violence.

Mother and son found structure and refuge here at the Just a Start home for teen-age mothers, one of 18 in Massachusetts that serve as national models for adult-supervised homes that the new Federal welfare law asks states to establish.

These "second-chance" homes, an

updated version of the Victorian homes for unwed mothers, ride 24-hour herd on their charges, providing child care while teaching the mothers homemaking and child-rearing skills and seeing that they finish high school.

"As a society," the State Secretary for Health and Human Services, Joseph Gallant, said, "we say we've got to take control of these kids who are out there on their own. If there isn't a family there, we're providing the family."

About a half-dozen states are operating such homes or considering them, and several hundred additional conventional maternity homes across the nation could be redesigned to meet the terms of the law.

But the homes are expensive: Massachusetts pays \$40,000 a year to support each mother, three to four times the cost of food stamps and welfare checks. And many states are likely to find that this is another program in the sweeping new wel-

Continued on Page A14, Column 4



Katie Cameron with her toddler son, Shaun, at the Just a Start home for teen-age mothers in Somerville, Mass. The state-run home provides structure and training and insures that the women finish high school.

Ed Quinn for The New York Times

Home Tries to Break Welfare Cycle

Continued From Page A1

fare law that they will be hard-pressed to afford.

The number of mothers under 18, like Ms. Cameron, may be minuscule, put at 67,000 of the 4.1 million women who received welfare nationally in 1993. But experts say giving them a hand early is critical to breaking the cycle of dependence.

That is because the mothers and their children form an intractable core of the welfare system: people who start on welfare early and stay for years, often into the next generation.

Seventy-seven percent of teen-age mothers start receiving welfare checks within five years of having babies, and they make up 43 percent of all long-term welfare recipients, said Kathleen Sylvester, a vice president of the Progressive Policy Institute and the source of much of Congress's research on second-chance homes.

The Massachusetts homes, which were first opened a year ago, house 79 teen-agers, and the state plans four additional centers. Its network of homes is the first to meet the new law's requirement that the youngest mothers live with parents or adult relatives or in second-chance homes to be eligible for welfare checks.

In Massachusetts, the mothers have to stay until they are 18. They may choose to live in the homes until they are 20 as long as they attend school.

The homes are so new that they have skimpy track records. Their backers say they believe that the homes offer more hope than the alternative, simply giving a young mother cash and food stamps without strings or supervision. Indeed, the homes have aroused little opposition, aside from their expense, among welfare critics on the left or right.

In Massachusetts, the mothers contribute 30 percent of their \$446 monthly welfare checks and pool their food stamps for the community kitchen.

Like other young mothers in the home in Somerville, Ms. Cameron was driven here by poverty. She was born in Boston, and her parents divorced soon after the birth of her brother and sister, who are also now teen-agers. She said that her father was an alcoholic and that she had not seen him since she was 5.

The family bounced from town to town and apartment to apartment, on welfare and periodically homeless. "I was on the street at 11½, doing a lot of stupid stuff," Ms. Cameron said.

In the spring of 1994, when she was 15, she missed her period. She told her boyfriend, Brian, that she was pregnant, and a few days later he asked four male friends to come over.

"They had a kind of blanket party," Ms. Cameron said. "They threw a blanket over my head and pushed me down and beat me up."

She suspected that Brian wanted to force a miscarriage, but the baby held on, and Brian disappeared.

Within weeks, she took up with another boy, Shaun, who moved in with her and her family. Shaun, who is now serving 18 months for assaulting someone else, saw her through her pregnancy so tenderly that Katie named the child Shaun Jr.

"But he was on heroin," she said, "and started treating me like garbage."

She lost custody of the baby, "They said I was hurting my baby because I couldn't get away from Shaun," Ms.

Cameron said. Now, she added, she is through with Shaun.

For Ms. Cameron, having a child was a jolt. "I should have been going to the prom, going to parties," she said. "I was changing my baby's diapers. I was taking care of my family at 16."

It was also a catalyst. "If I didn't have my baby, I wouldn't have my education," she said. "I'd be on the street."

It was the knowledge that without a welfare check she could become homeless and have her child taken away that drove Ms. Cameron, and many other mothers at Just a Start, into the home.

An option for states, but one they may find difficult to afford.

Ms. Cameron joined three others at an oilcloth-covered table in the dining room as they talked about their old lives, their new ones in the home and the ones that they hope to lead when they leave.

One mother, Annouse Dorime, 19, has a 3-year-old boy and has started junior college, majoring in physical therapy. Another, Sandra Surprenant, 18, has a 14-month-old daughter and is finishing her high school diploma. And the third, Janice Rivera, 17, the mother of a boy 2 years old and one 3 months old, is also in high school.

They call this place a prison.

"Wake up at 6," Ms. Rivera said. "Get my kids ready by 7:30. Walk one to day care by 8. Come back. Fix my room. Do my chores by 9. Go to school. Come back by 2:30. At 3 o'clock, a house meeting. Pick my kid up by 4:30. Dinner at 5:30. Everybody's supposed to be done by 6. Then cleaning time to 7:30. Then we have to run upstairs and give them a bath and put them to bed. Then come downstairs and go to group meeting."

There are rules, rewards and punishments. The mothers must leave their rooms spotless, for daily inspections. They can use pay telephones but are limited to 15 minutes per call. They have to sign in and sign out. There is a 10 P.M. curfew on weekdays and an 11:30 curfew on Fridays and Saturdays. Come in late and be grounded the next weekend. Stay out all night without permission and lose all overnight privileges for up to two months.

"I have people telling me when I have to go to bed, get off the phone, to eat, when I have to do this, do that," Ms. Cameron said. "Why don't I do it that way, this way?"

None spoke kindly of men. "A lot of boys, they get some sex out of the baby's mother," Ms. Rivera said, "and they just disappear. They say: 'Mommy, I love you. Mommy, I miss you. I love your kid.' After they have sex with you, they throw you out in the street."

All hope for easier lives, but none mentioned marriage. "I want a good education and a place to live," Ms. Surprenant said. "I want my daughter to be smart. There are things you can't learn in school. I want her to see me with a roof over my head, food on the table every night, clothes on her back when it's cold."

Ms. Cameron said: "I sit myself on a police force with a place I can call mine. I want my baby to have a

room of his own. My son won't go through anything like I've been through. I want my son to have an education. I want my son to make the right choices so he won't end up in a situation like mine. He's not going to be like his father."

Describing the young women under her roof, the home's manager, Donna McLaughlin, said: "They're struggling, incredibly resilient, sometimes sad, sometimes elated. They're loving toward their children and needing, for the most part, role modeling, guiding, consistency. The majority have come from very traumatic experiences in their lives, ranging from abusive situations, sexual and physical, homelessness, poverty."

How far other states go in offering such programs is an open question. The law says states "shall provide or assist the individual in locating a second-chance home, maternity home or other adult-supervised supportive living arrangement." But the law does not penalize states for failing to do so, and it does not set aside specific Federal money to build such homes.

Along with Massachusetts, Ms. Sylvester said, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico and Wisconsin are opening homes or their legislatures are considering them.

In New York, Covenant House and Homes for the Homeless accept teen-age mothers, but they would have to offer additional services to qualify as second-chance homes under the law.

Many states, in particular those facing acute budget constraints, have done nothing, in part because of the lack of Federal financing.

In the debates over the legislation, Congress rejected a proposal of Senators Kent Conrad of North Dakota and Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, both Democrats, to spend \$150 million to help pay for the homes.

"I think some states will grapple with it," Sharon Daly, director for social policy at Catholic Charities USA in Washington, said. "And some will do as little as possible. Since they

'We're providing the family,' a state official says.

have the option of not providing the homes, a lot of young moms will be out of luck."

With help from the State of Massachusetts, Ms. Cameron has turned a corner on the course to self-sufficiency. She is studying criminal justice at a two-year college so she can become a police officer. But her prospects are unclear.

She had an abortion in December, Ms. Cameron said, just a few weeks after entering the home. Her doctors had told her, she said, that her Fallopian tubes are deteriorating.

She said she knew that Massachusetts would no longer give women bigger welfare checks for additional children and that eventually she could lose her entire check. She could spend a few years getting settled into a well-paid job as a police officer, but her clock is ticking.

"If I was to get pregnant," she said, "I would have the baby." By then, she would be too old for the home here. "But," she added, "I want to have kids."

They Only Look Dead

*Why Progressives
Will Dominate
the Next Political Era*

E. J. DIONNE JR.

Similarly, there must be honest talk about the costs to society of the rise in fatherless families—and equally honest talk about the difficulties in fashioning government policies to deal with the problem. As David Blankenhorn argues in his important book, *Fatherless America*, there is simply no way a society can feel at ease when some 40 percent of its children will live a major portion of their childhoods without their fathers. The issue here is not the incapacity of single mothers to care for their children, but the responsibility of men to share in a task in which their role is crucial. Government cannot force men to love their children, but it can at least require them to pay child support. It can also use its capacity for public education to strengthen the already growing sense that something is awry in the way many Americans are discharging their family responsibilities. Public education has already changed popular attitudes toward smoking, drinking and drug use. The same sort of public campaigning could reinforce the need for individual responsibility about parenthood.

There is an equal need for candor about what can be done to help families that cannot be put back together. The welfare debate that unfolded in the new Republican Congress was an example of exactly what should *not* happen. Many Republicans pushed for cutting off welfare payments to mothers under the age of eighteen, on the theory that removing the welfare check would vastly change the incentives to have a child out of wedlock. There might be some reduction in births—though the evidence for this conclusion was scant even as the risks to children were large. In any event, as conservatives themselves have argued repeatedly, the problem here is as much cultural as economic. The conservatives were unable to answer the question: What would happen to poor children in the absence of the welfare check? "Conservatives needlessly risk the well-being of children," writes Kathleen Sylvester of the Progressive Policy Institute. "Ignoring the inadequacy of the welfare system,

they would break up families with no alternative safety net in place. Ignoring the reality that the welfare system was designed to help families whose fathers are absent, they would reform it by absenting mothers as well, substituting institutions such as orphanages for real parents."

Sylvester proposes not to defend the existing system, but to search for alternatives. She calls for federal help to local communities to build a national network of "second chance homes," which would be "a new version of the homes that once provided community support for unmarried mothers." Young mothers could live with their children under adult supervision, "while meeting their social and personal obligations for receiving welfare support." Such homes, she says, could offer mothers "nurturing and support, structure and discipline, and socialization" while also "removing children from dangerous environments" in which they might be abused or neglected, or simply be "shuffled from foster home to foster home."

Sylvester's proposal embodies precisely the spirit a New Progressive project needs to embrace. It accepts the seriousness of moral concerns and does not pretend that the problems confronting poor children are only economic. It accepts the need for innovation. At the same time, it embraces government's responsibility to assist those who need help and who would be unlikely to find it if government did not act.