

The Mobility Agenda

Anti-Poverty Policy In the News: Recent Media Coverage and Commentary *Compiled by* **The Mobility Agenda Staff**

Some stakeholders promote coverage of poverty issues and policy, and recommend adopting a goal to cut poverty in half. We note that historically, when politicians focus on the poor and/or media coverage increases, public opinion opposing funding for anti-poverty programs goes up. At the same time, media coverage often reinforces problematic frames on causes of poverty and creates opportunities for opponents to promote these frames. We provide these recent examples:

"A New Strategy Against Poverty" commentary by Newt Gingrich

Newt Gingrich answers Barack Obama's call for an honest discussion about poverty.

May 15, 2008: Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity

<http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org/news.aspx?id=f530de1e-6ee9-40ab-ae23-7ef3a79cba15>

We need bold, courageous solutions that dare to be politically incorrect. So how do we endure and prevail? There are seven areas that I will describe briefly... First, it is important to recognize that we have an absolute, verifiable model of minimizing crime... Second, I believe that adolescence is a failed, nineteenth-century idea... Now we have invented a middle zone, where kids are bored, trapped in mindless bureaucracies, critiqued routinely, and end up hanging out, watching junk television, doing drugs, and having sex... Sixth, we cannot address poverty in American without fundamentally questioning the current social contract with Native Americans... Native Americans are 100 times more likely to have a baby damaged by fetal alcohol syndrome than Asian Americans. And yet, that's not a medical problem. That's a cultural problem... I have given you a large and sweeping overview. I truly hope that is the beginning of a continuing dialogue in which we are not afraid to address the real reasons people in America are poor and in trouble.

"Toledo mayor wants to help people break the cycle of poverty"

June 5, 2008: WTGV Toledo, Ohio. ABC 13.

<http://abclocal.go.com/wtv/story?section=news/local&id=6187489>

They are families living below the poverty line who need help paying the light bill or fighting foreclosure. Alcohol or drug addiction, illegitimacy, a lack of education, even a job loss can create poverty... He intends for representatives of these groups to go into neighborhoods and talk to people

to find out why they're poor. Some possible reasons include alcohol and drug addiction and illegitimacy.

"Poverty expert accuses Clinton of 'hyping' child hunger in U.S."

February 29, 2008: Jim Brown, OneNewsNow.

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/Election2008/Default.aspx?id=68687>

(This article appeared immediately after Hillary Clinton adopted a goal to cut poverty during her campaign for President.)

Robert Rector, senior research fellow on welfare and family issues at the Heritage Foundation, says Clinton refuses to even acknowledge the two primary causes of child poverty -- out-of-wedlock births, and parents living on welfare instead of working. "What she wants to do is combat poverty by putting the responsibility on the U.S. taxpayer, who already spends about \$450 billion a year fighting poverty," says Rector, "while [at the same time] specifically avoiding the issue of changing the behaviors that are the cause of poverty."

The researcher cites statistics indicating that more than a third (38 percent) of children born in the U.S. are born outside of marriage, without a father in the home; and among blacks, that jumps to 69 percent, he adds. "That is the overwhelming single, strongest cause of poverty," he states. "And [most of] those out-of-wedlock births occur among the least educated white, black, and Hispanic women in the United States."

"Poverty in Colorado: 73% increase since 2000 only to grow worse"

The poor will always be with us; just more of them!

June 11, 2008: Frosty Wooldridge, denverpost.com.

<http://neighbors.denverpost.com/blog.php/2008/06/11/poverty-in-colorado-73-increase-since-2000-only-to-grow-worse/>

Educational experts estimate over 30 million people in American suffer functional illiteracy. They can't read, write or perform simple math. They offer no skills other than the labor of their hands. Twenty million illegal aliens residing in America make up the largest high school drop out population in the history of the nation. Over half of all black and Hispanic babies originate from unmarried mothers that lack high school diplomas. Fifty to 70 percent of blacks and Hispanics do not graduate from high school. Thirty percent of whites do not graduate from high school.

"Why Do We Turn Away?" commentary by Senator John Edwards

June 4, 2008: Senator John Edwards, Time.

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1811743,00.html>

Why do we accept the family living in their car, the mentally ill and the addicts who die on our streets, and the children who go to school tired and hungry? Maybe we accept things as they are because poverty has always been with us and we think nothing will change. Or maybe we accept things as they are because it's so easy to look away.