



# **The Promise of Welfare Reform: Political Rhetoric and the Reality of Poverty in the Twenty-First Century**

*Elizabeth Segal*

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Find out how—and why—legislation has made economic rights more important than human rights

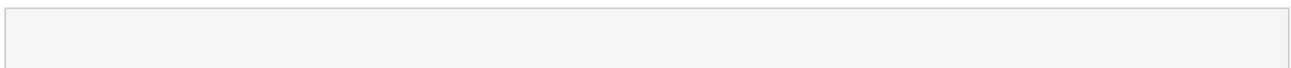
Since 1996, politicians and public officials in the United States have celebrated the “success” of welfare reform legislation despite little, if any, evidence to support their claims. *The Promise of Welfare Reform: Political Rhetoric and the Reality of Poverty in the Twenty-First Century* presents articles from 23 community practitioners and researchers who challenge the “reform” that has turned public aid from a right to a privilege. The authors transcend conventional academic writing, offering careful and thoughtful analysis that examines the history of welfare reform, its connection to poverty, family issues, and the impact of racism on poverty and on the treatment of the poor.

*The Promise of Welfare Reform* analyzes the consequences over the past ten years of legislative changes made to the public assistance program formerly known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). This powerful book examines the social, political, and economic context of welfare reform, including the elimination of poverty as a societal goal, how racial and ethnic groups have been targeted, popular stereotypes about the poor and their work ethic, anti-immigrant hostility, the struggles of single mothers with children, domestic violence, and marriage as a realistic escape from poverty. The book’s authors address the need for empathy and understanding to change public sentiments about welfare and poverty.

Contributors to *The Promise of Welfare Reform* include:

- Elizabeth A. Segal and Keith M. Kilty, co-founding editors of the *Journal of Poverty* (Haworth)
- Frances Fox Piven, co-author of *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*
- Ann Withorn, co-editor of *For Crying Out Loud: Women’s Poverty in the United States*
- Mimi Abramovitz, author of *Under Attack, Fighting Back: Women and Welfare in the United States*
- Joel Blau, co-author with Mimi Abramovitz of *The Dynamics of Social Welfare Policy*
- Margaret K. Nelson, author of *The Social Economy of Single Mothers: Raising Children in Rural America*
- Gwendolyn Mink, co-editor of *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*
- Kenneth J. Neubeck, co-author of *Welfare Racism: Playing the Race Card Against America’s Poor*
- Lynn Fujiwara, author of *Sanctioning Immigrants: Asian Immigrant Women and the Racial Politics of Welfare Reform*
- Nancy C. Jurik, author of *Bootstrap Dreams: U.S. Microenterprise Developments in an Era of Welfare Reform*
- and much more!

*The Promise of Welfare Reform* challenges current views on welfare reform and promotes alternative methods to alleviate poverty. It is an essential resource for sociologists, political scientists, economists, public policy and management specialists, social welfare and human services workers, and anyone else concerned about changes made to public assistance by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.



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#### **Joanna Bowen:**

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