Milestone Two- Position Paper

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Department of Social Services’ Position on Welfare Reform Act of 1996

The Department of Social Services is concerned with ensuring welfare services to Americans. This department is, therefore, responsible for implementing social welfare policies that the government develops. The Department organizes the citizens who are to benefit from the social welfare programs. More importantly, the Department of Social Services processes the social and disability benefits on behalf of the government. This ensures that the aid that the government has given to help certain people in society have reached them. By doing this, the Department contributes to social development (Maks‐Solomon & Stoker, 2019). In this regard, the Department of Social Services should be involved in the development of welfare legislation. From the point of experience, this Department can know which welfare policies are viable and which ones are not. In light of this, the Department of Social Services is against the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. The main objective of this policy was to reduce poverty in America by helping people who are economically disadvantaged (Byrnes, 2014). The rationale for this policy was that social assistance would help people to reorganize themselves and enable them to rise economically. However, the policy seems to be encouraging dependency and hence increase poverty.

Welfare Reform Act of 1996 is one of President Clinton’s legacy. One of the advantages of this policy is that it offered a large safety net for the poor. Most of the socially disadvantaged people in society benefited from this policy. Unlike the welfare policies that were enacted previously, Welfare Reform Act provided assurance to many people (Muennig et al., 2015). This helped to improve the standards of living for many people. In light of this, the standards of poor people significantly improved. Subsequently, the inequalities in society reduced. Thirdly, this policy provided substantial flexibility. It allowed corrections to be made, however, this policy was unsustainable. Given that it covered many sections of people in society, a large budget was required to sustain it. Moreover, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 was provided independently from other Federal government’s efforts of securing the safety net for the poor. This increased the room for public accountability. The second disadvantage of this policy is that it did not encourage work (Maks‐Solomon & Stoker, 2019). The funds that people were given under this policy were not limited to specific utilization. As a result, people mainly used them to buy food instead of investing in education, training, and looking for a job, which culminates dependency. For this reason, the population of the poor failed to shrink as anticipated (Byrnes, 2014). Subsequently, new inequities emerged. The Department of Social Services is concerned with assisting people who are economically, mentally, or health-wise disadvantaged to ensure that all people in the society have equal access to public services. In light of this, the Department is concerned with reducing inequalities. Since new inequities are emerging despite the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, the Department of Social Services is against this policy.

The Department of Social Services envisions equal provision of social services to American citizens. It acknowledges that equality is needed for optimal social development. The welfare policies should also follow this suit. They should be beneficial to all people. However, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 sought to help only the absolute poor people. These are mainly people struggling to get food (Muennig et al., 2015). The policy did not consider people in other economic classes. In line with this, even people who were struggling in the middle class did not get any substantial help. Culturally, the Welfare Reform Act was only limited to people who had American citizenship, therefore many people could not access government assistance. This implies that the policy was only enjoyed in places dominated by the majority. The minority who were lucky to get social assistance got low-quality service. In this regard, the Department of Social Service wants a welfare policy that is more diverse. The department is concerned that the welfare services provided under this legislation promote discrimination. For example, many non-white people have been unable to obtain social benefits. Also, people with disabilities have not been able to get social assistance like other people. This reduces the quality of service provided under this welfare legislation (Feldman, 2015). On legal and ethical matters, the Department of Social Services is concerned that the accountability framework of this welfare policy is weak. Because of this, there is a lot of corruption taking place in the offices where the social services are provided. For example, people have been using fake identities to entertain grants. This is not only unethical but also illegal.

The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 can be redesigned to address these legal and ethical matters. More so, the Act can be amended to increase the diversity of the intended beneficiaries. To ensure diversity, welfare legislation should eliminate the barrier of nationality. For example, it can state the beneficiaries of government assistance as people of a certain area who have been affected by a calamity (Feldman, 2015). Alternatively, the legislation can define the intended beneficiaries as anyone needy. This will address the diversity issues associated with the legislation. To address ethical concerns, the legislation should provide a way to make complaints if they are discriminated against (Maks‐Solomon & Stoker, 2019). This will help to improve public accountability. To make the policy more effective, the federal government should stop giving welfare services. Instead, it should allocate the money it used in this venture to the Department of Social Services to implement the welfare legislation. My role in the organization is a front line eligibility worker who sees the people coming in for benefits everyday. Although on the smaller scale, this role is still very important in the long run. The face to face meetings with clients sets the tone for the department itself.

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