Welfare Reform Act Background Paper

Savannah Silva

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Brown

Welfare Reform Act

**Background Analysis**

Welfare Reform Act is federal legislation that requires the government to provide aids to the vulnerable people in society. Presently, the United States is experiencing a health crisis due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The amount of coronavirus patients is increasing every day. In this regard, a lot of resources are used to treat this disease at both individual and federal level. Predictably, the country will experience an economic crisis once this pandemic end. This is because most of the economic activities in the country have been brought into a halt. Getting back the economy to where it was initially may take the country some a considerable time. Many people have lost their jobs. More so, many industries and companies have collapsed. Though the government has given out significant economic stimulus to help businesses that have been affected by the pandemic, it will take a long time to restart the country’s economy. Before this happens, many people will suffer. The vulnerable population will suffer the most. In line with this, Congress should consider passing legislation that will require the government to offer food relief to vulnerable people like poor, elderly and disabled. Welfare Reform Act can help to achieve this. Welfare reform policies have achieved positive outcomes for America, especially at a time when America is facing economic and social hardships. Historically, there have been several welfare reform policies in the United States. These policies have been helpful at different time. Therefore, enacting Welfare Reform Act of 2020 will be like reauthorizing welfare reform.

The welfare reform legislation has been successful in helping America to overcome hardships at various times. In the 1950s, America had some welfare programs (Mallon & Stevens, 2011). However, the coverage of the welfare programs was so narrow. In line with this, welfare benefits were limited to a few states. The applicants of social aids were required to produce their state identification documents in order to be enlisted in the welfare rolls. Moreover, the family setup was considered in enlisting people in the welfare roll. Specifically, families with men were cut off from these benefits. Such families were not considered as vulnerable. However, in 1960, the law was amended to allow even families with men to access social benefits (Moffitt, 2015). The law required people in a similar situation to be treated equally. This welfare policy was not effective became as it encouraged people’s dependence on government relief. In this regard, welfare became a way of life.

In 1960, the poverty level in America had gone to high. This prompted the new President Lyndon B. Johnston to declare war on poverty (Tanner, 2016). Forthwith, he came up with Great Society Deals. This was a welfare program that sought to give food and medical assistance to people. Great Society Deals benefited many people in society. Other benefits in this program were job training, food stamps, Medicaid, Head Start and Job Corps (Mallon & Stevens, 2011). Consequently, poverty significantly declined. However, this program offered short-term assistance. In 1969, after the election President Nixon introduced Family Resistance Plan in America. This welfare program proposed giving a sum total of $1,600 to needy families. Partly, this money was to act as an incentive to encourage people to work (Moffitt, 2015). The applicants or recipients of this aid had to work. This was the program’s strength. It did not encourage laziness or unproductively. However, the work done under this program was too much compared to the support given by the government. Thus, the program appeared to be punitive. Besides, the bureaucracy involved in obtaining this service was much complicated. This reduced its help to the beneficiaries.

In the 1980s, there were many state-based welfare systems. Most of these programs provided assistance on education and training. In 1988, Congress passed The Federal Family Support Act. This legislation required states to expand their welfare programs beyond training and education. As a result, the recipients of government aid increased. Thus, many people lived well. However, this legislation increased dependency, leading to more poverty. In 1996, Congress passed PRWORA (Moffitt, 2015). This welfare legislation sought to increase personal responsibility and work opportunities. The legislation was necessitated by the high unemployment rate that was present at that time. In line with this, states were given money blocks known as TANF to be given to needy families (Mallon & Stevens, 2011). However, by 2000, TANF had disappeared. In 2002, Congress passed PRWFPA. This law reintroduced TANF.

The previous social welfare programs were ineffective in addressing the diverse needs of the clients. In relation to this, the existing welfare program is inadequate in addressing the problems of the vulnerable populations, especially in the post-coronavirus period. A broader social welfare program is needed for this purpose. In this regard, the Welfare Reform Act of 2020 will make many people eligible for government support.

References

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