

# FACT SHEET

## H.R. 3005

### Julia Carson Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood 2015 Reauthorization

Are these programs performing well?  
After ten years of trying, the answer is.... "Who knows?"

In the past decade, nearly \$1.5 billion was spent on Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood. There is no evidence the programs met Temporary Assistance to Needy Families' goal to improve families' lives by ending dependence of needy parents on government benefits with job preparation, work, and marriage; preventing/reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; or encouraging two-parent families.

Since the programs do not perform rigorous outcome evaluations, there is no way to demonstrate whether they had any effect at all on the problem they intended to solve. [i]

However, other data show that families' lives have definitely *not* improved.

- Low income working families rose from 28% to 32.1%, and poor working families rose from 8.1% to 10.6% between 2007 and 2011.[ii]
- Out of wedlock births dropped for teenagers but increased for women 20 and older. Percentage of births to unmarried women increased significantly in 10 states and declined in 4 states, with insignificant changes in the other 36 states and the District of Columbia.[iii]
- Marriages decreased at a substantially faster rate during the programs.[iv] [v]
- Cohabitation increased from 4.85 million in 2005 to 7.6 million in 2011.[vi]

Other government agencies with smaller budgets such as Department of Justice use evidence-based practices (see CrimeSolutions.gov) to avoid wasteful spending. This is a much more direct route to reach a goal.

It's time for Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families to begin to rigorously measure specific outcomes of their programs. It would certainly help reduce waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

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[i] [www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/9th\\_report\\_to\\_congress\\_3\\_26\\_12.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/9th_report_to_congress_3_26_12.pdf)

[ii] [www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/us-working-poor-families.aspx](http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/us-working-poor-families.aspx)

[iii] [www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr62/nvsr62\\_03.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr62/nvsr62_03.pdf)

[iv] [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage\\_divorce\\_tables.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage_divorce_tables.htm)

[v] [US marriage rate hits new low & may continue to decline - national.deseretnews.com/](http://USmarriage.com/news/US-marriage-rate-hits-new-low-may-continue-to-decline-national-deseretnews.com/)

[vi] [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2011.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2011.html)