



Welfare Transformed: Universalizing Family Policies That Work

Robert Cherry

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In the ten years after President Clinton made good on his promise to end welfare as we know it by signing the reform act of 1996, the number of families on welfare dropped by over three million. This hotly contested legislation has fueled countless hyperbolic arguments from both sides of the political spectrum rather than a clearheaded examination of the actual results of the reform. Robert Cherry steps into the fray with a story that differs sharply from both conservative and liberal critiques. He portrays the women who left welfare as success stories rather than victims, and stresses the many positive lessons of the policy initiatives that accompanied the reform without downplaying the problems it created. The result is an eye-opening look at the ground-level repercussions of welfare policy changes, developments that have been overshadowed by partisan politics for too long. Anchored by solid economic research and policy background, *Welfare Transformed* comes alive with revealing interviews of key members of the Clinton Administration, directors and staff at welfare-to-work programs and community colleges, and - most importantly - welfare leavers themselves. Cherry carefully explains the factors (racial, social, economic, generational) that spurred and shaped the reform, and moves past partisan rhetoric in his review of its effects. Instead, he pays attention to concrete data and real peoples experiences that combine to provide a full account of the legislations aftermath. Armed with this new view, Cherry offers a range of strong suggestions for transforming successful welfare policies into universal family policies, from strengthening federal economic supports for working families to improving our community colleges. A refreshing take on a lightning-rod subject, this book is certain to foment heated discussions among all who read it.

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