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**Survey of State Welfare Policymakers, 1996:**  
**[United States]**

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Greg M. Shaw

ICPSR 3279



SURVEY OF STATE WELFARE POLICYMAKERS, 1996: [UNITED STATES]

(ICPSR 3279)

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The original collector of the data, ICPSR, and the relevant funding agency bear no responsibility for uses of this collection or for interpretations or inferences based upon such uses.



## DATA COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Greg M. Shaw

SURVEY OF STATE WELFARE POLICYMAKERS, 1996: [UNITED STATES]  
(ICPSR 3279)

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this study was to determine the role of citizen input into state welfare and Medicaid policymaking during the early to mid-1990s. The survey, which was conducted during October 1996-February 1997, queried 257 state officials (state legislators, social service agency directors, and senior advisors to governors) about the impetus for welfare reform, the methods used to measure public preferences, and the effectiveness of welfare policies. Policymakers were also asked how much input they sought from the general public and which part of state governments took the most active role in initiating the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Medicaid reforms during the 1990s.

**UNIVERSE:** State welfare policymaking officials: governors' aides, social service agency administrators, and state legislators.

**SAMPLING:** The target group was 550 state officials, including 100 governors' aides (senior policy advisors), 250 social service agency administrators, and 200 state legislators.

**NOTE:** The codebook is provided by ICPSR as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. The PDF file format was developed by Adobe Systems Incorporated and can be accessed using PDF reader software, such as the Adobe Acrobat Reader. Information on how to obtain a copy of the Acrobat Reader is provided on the ICPSR Web site.

**RESTRICTIONS:** This data collection may not be used for any purpose other than statistical reporting and analysis. Use of these data to learn the identity of any person or establishment is prohibited. To protect respondent privacy, the variables STATE (state of respondent) and CLOSURACE (winning electoral margin in last race) were recoded by ICPSR. To obtain the original version of these variables, researchers must agree to the terms and conditions of a Restricted Data Use Agreement in accordance with existing ICPSR servicing policies.

**EXTENT OF COLLECTION:** 1 data file + machine-readable documentation (PDF) + SAS data definition statements + SPSS data definition statements

**EXTENT OF PROCESSING:** REFORM.DATA/ REFORM.DOC/ DDEF.ICPSR/ SCAN

DATA FORMAT: Logical Record Length with SAS and SPSS data  
definition statements and SPSS portable file

File Structure: rectangular

Cases: 257

Variables: 62

Record Length: 122

Records Per Case: 1

RELATED PUBLICATIONS:

Shaw, Greg M. "The Role of Public Input in State Welfare  
Policymaking." POLICY STUDIES JOURNAL, URBANA 28,4 (2000), 707-720.

## PROCESSING NOTE FOR ICPSR #3279

To protect respondent privacy, the variable CLOSURACE (winning electoral margin in last race) and the variable STATE (state of respondent) were recoded by ICPSR. The variable CLOSURACE was recoded into three categories as follows:

- lowest through 9
- 9.1 through 20
- 20.1 through highest.

The variable STATE, originally consisting of 50 states (District of Columbia was not included), was recoded into four regions, which are parallel to Census region codes.

### Census region codes:

#### **Northeast:**

Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
New Jersey  
New York  
Pennsylvania  
Rhode Island  
Vermont

#### **Midwest:**

Illinois  
Indiana  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Michigan  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
Ohio  
South Dakota  
Wisconsin

#### **South:**

Alabama  
Arkansas  
Delaware  
District of Columbia  
Florida  
Georgia  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Maryland  
Mississippi  
North Carolina  
Oklahoma  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas  
Virginia  
West Virginia

#### **West:**

Alaska  
Arizona  
California  
Colorado  
Hawaii  
Idaho  
Montana  
Nevada  
New Mexico  
Oregon  
Utah  
Washington  
Wyoming



## APPENDIX 5.B

### State Policymaker Survey

*Your responses are confidential. Any additional comments are very welcome in the space at the end of the questionnaire. Please return your completed questionnaire to: Greg Shaw, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, 420 W. 118th St., 7th fl., New York, NY 10027.*

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1) Nearly all states have experienced declines in their AFDC enrollment since the early 1990s. For each of the following possible explanations for these declines in caseloads, please indicate how important you think each has been *in your state*.

a) Improvements in your state's economy

very important  somewhat important  not too important  not at all important  
 not sure

b) State AFDC policy changes requiring recipients to seek work more aggressively

very important  somewhat important  not too important  not at all important  
 not sure

c) Declining purchasing power of AFDC grants over time

very important  somewhat important  not too important  not at all important  
 not sure

d) Your state has worked to make its AFDC package less appealing to recipients than are your neighboring states' plans

very important  somewhat important  not too important  not at all important  
 not sure

e) State AFDC policies offering incentives to seek work voluntarily

very important  somewhat important  not too important  not at all important  
 not sure

f) Employers in the state have become more willing to hire welfare recipients

very important  somewhat important  not too important  not at all important  
 not sure

g) Other \_\_\_\_\_

2) Various arguments have been offered to explain why some AFDC recipients do not aggressively seek full-time employment. For each of the following arguments, please indicate how convincing you think each is.

a) A lack of medical insurance prevents many AFDC recipients from looking for employment that they fear would subsequently cause them to lose Medicaid eligibility.

very convincing  somewhat convincing  not very convincing  not at all convincing  
 not sure

b) A lack of affordable child care services prevents many recipients from seeking employment.

very convincing  somewhat convincing  not very convincing  not at all convincing  
 not sure

c) A lack of job opportunities prevents many recipients from seeking employment.

very convincing    somewhat convincing    not very convincing    not at all convincing  
 not sure

d) A lack of reliable transportation to and from work prevents many recipients from seeking employment.

very convincing    somewhat convincing    not very convincing    not at all convincing  
 not sure

e) A lack of self-esteem or personal motivation prevents many recipients from seeking employment.

very convincing    somewhat convincing    not very convincing    not at all convincing  
 not sure

f) A lack of technical job skills prevents many recipients from seeking employment.

very convincing    somewhat convincing    not very convincing    not at all convincing  
 not sure

3) Which policies do you think have been more effective for your state in moving AFDC recipients into permanent jobs, those that mandate certain behaviors (such as work or education), or those offering opportunities for self-improvement on a voluntary basis (such as voluntary education and training or expanded earned income disregards)?

mandatory provisions    voluntary provisions    both about equally    neither  
 not sure

4) Looking back over the significant AFDC reforms in your state since about 1990, which of the following sources most often provided policy ideas that were subsequently implemented as part of your state's AFDC plan? Please mark the three most important.

your state legislators    your governor's office    lobbying groups  
 the general public    research centers/universities    (president/HHS/Congress)  
 officials in other states    your state's social service agency    national leaders  
 the mass media    other \_\_\_\_\_

5) Looking back over the significant Medicaid reforms in your state since about 1990, which of the following entities most often provided concrete policy ideas that were subsequently implemented as part of your state's Medicaid plan? Please mark the three most important.

your state legislators    your governor's office    lobbying groups  
 the general public    research centers/universities    (president/HHS/Congress)  
 officials in other states    your state's social service agency    national leaders  
 the mass media    other \_\_\_\_\_

6) Since about 1990, has your state adopted any AFDC or Medicaid innovations that were explicitly patterned upon another state's program?

yes    no    not sure

7) Using a 1 to 5 scale, please score the following possible reasons for you to urge the adoption of another state's social policy innovation by your own state. Score very convincing reasons a 5 and very unconvincing ones a 1. You may also use any number between 1 and 5.

- a) The state leaders advocating the innovation are people with whom you typically agree \_\_\_\_\_  
b) The innovation is one that promises effectiveness, although there is no firm evidence yet \_\_\_\_\_  
c) The innovation is of proven effectiveness, as judged by non-partisan and trusted evaluators \_\_\_\_\_  
d) The innovation enjoys substantial popular support in your state, although you are basically neutral toward it \_\_\_\_\_  
e) You don't like the innovation much but fear that if you don't adopt it welfare recipients in neighboring states will move to your state to take advantage of a more

attractive public assistance package \_\_\_\_\_

8) In your own work as a policymaker, how much input do you seek from the general public?  
 a great deal     a moderate amount     a little     none     not sure

9) In what ways do you most commonly seek public input? Please feel free to list formal or informal forums. List as many forums as you think are at least moderately important.

\_\_\_\_\_ don't recall

10) Some people argue that most government officials usually select issues on which to work and lead the public to follow these initiatives. Others argue that while leadership of opinion does occur, it happens rarely and that the public usually makes up its own mind. Which of these views comes closer to your own regarding the current wave of welfare reform in the U.S.?

the demand for welfare reform has been driven mostly by government officials  
 the demand for welfare reform has been driven mostly by the general public  
 neither  
 not sure

11) Looking back over the AFDC and Medicaid reforms undertaken by your state during the 1990s, which part of your state's government would you say took the most active leadership role in *initiating* these policy changes?

governor's office     state legislators     social service agency     state courts  
 not sure

12) Thinking of those same AFDC and Medicaid reforms, which part of your state's government would you say took the most active role in *developing the details* of the new programs?

governor's office     state legislators     social service agency     state courts  
 not sure

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ASKED OF LEGISLATORS AND GOVERNORS' AIDES ONLY

13) (As a state legislator,) how do(es) you(r governor) stay in touch with your (his/her) constituents on issues of social policy? Please check the one or two methods most common for you(r governor).

consulting (other) legislators  
 informal meetings w/ constituents  
 my (his/her) own sense based on my (his/her) knowledge of my district (the state)  
 formal meetings or public hearings  
 constituent-initiated contacts (phone, mail, etc.)  
 focus groups/opinion polls  
 the mass media  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

14) Would you say that the volume of constituent contact you receive about welfare reform places this issue near the top of the list of issues about which constituents contact you, near the middle of the list, or near the bottom of the list?

at or near the top     near the middle     at or near the bottom     not sure

15) To what extent do you think your (governor's) constituents watch how you vote (the positions he/she

takes) on social policy questions?

very closely       somewhat closely       not too closely       not at all closely       not sure

16) During your (governor's) current (or most recent) campaign for election/re-election, to what extent did your (the) challenger force you (your governor) to publicly defend your (his/her) positions on welfare policies?

a great deal       a moderate amount       only a little       none       not sure

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ASKED OF AGENCY DIRECTORS ONLY

17) How would you describe the level of oversight of your policy area from the governor's office?

extensive       moderate       slight       none       not sure

18) How would you describe the level of oversight of your policy area from the legislature?

extensive       moderate       slight       none       not sure

19) Looking back over recent episodes of significant reform to your policy area(s), what happened to the level of attention by your governor to your programming after the initial passage of legislation? Would you say it:

increased a lot       increased slightly       remained about the same       decreased slightly  
 decreased a lot       not sure

20) Looking back over recent episodes of significant reform to your policy area(s), what happened to the level of attention by your state legislature to your programming after the initial passage of legislation? Would you say it:

increased a lot       increased slightly       remained about the same       decreased slightly  
 decreased a lot       not sure

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ASKED OF ALL RESPONDENTS

25) Overall, how effective do you think your state's AFDC reforms since about 1990 have been in moving adult recipients into permanent employment?

very effective       moderately effective       slightly effective       not effective       not sure

26) If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, for which of the following programs would you like to see spending increased and for which would you like to see spending decreased or kept the about same? Should federal spending on each be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

Welfare programs	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input type="checkbox"/> decreased	<input type="checkbox"/> kept about the same	<input type="checkbox"/> not sure
Child care	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input type="checkbox"/> decreased	<input type="checkbox"/> kept about the same	<input type="checkbox"/> not sure
Health care	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input type="checkbox"/> decreased	<input type="checkbox"/> kept about the same	<input type="checkbox"/> not sure
Food stamps	<input type="checkbox"/> increased	<input type="checkbox"/> decreased	<input type="checkbox"/> kept about the same	<input type="checkbox"/> not sure

27) Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good

standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1  government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living

2

3

4

5

6

7  government should let each person get ahead on own

I haven't thought much about it

*Thank you very much for your input. Please feel free to include any additional comments in the space below.*