

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

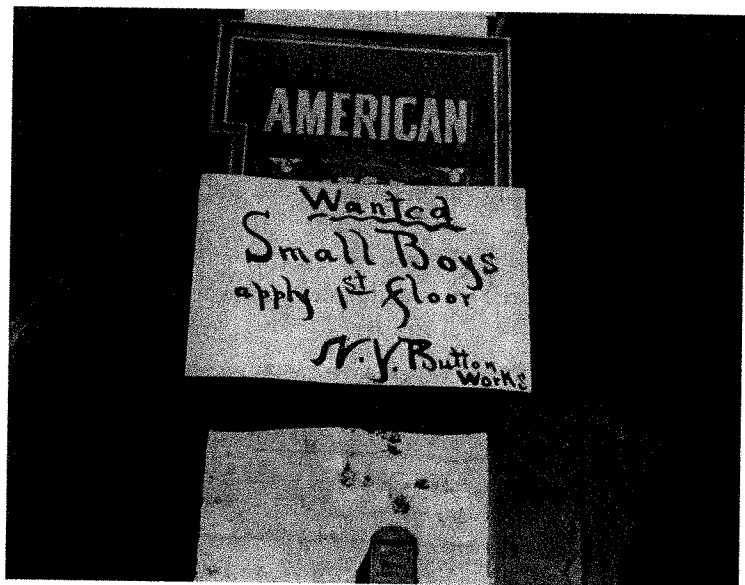
- Identify ways in which Europe's feudal system and the English Poor Laws have served as the roots of the U.S. social welfare system.
- Describe the historic role of people of color in the development of the social work profession.
- Identify core social work values embedded in advocating for marriage equality and other LGBT rights.
- Describe the philosophical roots underlying the most recent push toward the privatization of social welfare services in the United States and the impact on disenfranchised and at-risk populations.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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The Evolution of Social Welfare Policy

Effect on Social Work Practice



THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND PROVISION IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

Helping others in need can be traced back to ancient times, but the social work profession in its current context has historic roots dating back to at least the late 1800s. The practice of social work is wholly influenced by social welfare policy, and to be truly effective in helping the poor and indigent, it is essential that all social workers gain a level of social and cultural objectivity so that they can more fully understand both how social welfare policy and legislation has evolved over the years and how the complex relationship between

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such social welfare policy and legislation and the current prevailing attitudes toward the poor influence one another.

It would be naïve to assume that any current trends in how the poor are perceived and treated developed in a vacuum; thus, a general understanding of the roots of current social welfare legislation, policy, and attitudinal trends is essential to any practicing social worker. The development of the social welfare system in the United States was very much influenced by England's social welfare system; therefore, it is important to understand the evolution of how the poor were treated in England to fully understand how social welfare policy has developed within the United States.

Despite popular contention that social welfare policy practice is evidence based, objective, and free of ideological bias, significant evidence exists indicating that both historic and current economic policy practices are solidly interwoven with moral and religious philosophy, reflecting the cultural mores of the times within a given society (Hausman & McPherson, 2006). Essentially, social policy, particularly policy addressing the social welfare of its citizenry, often reflects dominant philosophical movements and themes, including religious and societal moral codes as well as beliefs about the causes of poverty and the various reasons poverty afflicts certain individuals and populations, and why other individuals and populations do not struggle with poverty on a collective basis (see Box 2.1).

The Feudal System of the Middle Ages

A good place to begin this exploration is England's Middle Ages (around the 11th century), where a system called *feudalism* prevailed as a social structure that also served as a sort of social welfare system. This system of legal and military customs prevailed as England's primary manner of caring for the poor. Under this elitist system, privileged and wealthy landowners called lords would parcel off small sections of their land, which would then be farmed by peasants, also called serfs. Many policy experts frame the feudal system as a harsh but effective method for controlling poverty. However, it has also been characterized as a governmentally imposed form of servitude, since individuals became serfs through both racial and economic discrimination and were commonly born into serfdom with little hope of ever escaping. Serfs were considered the legal property of

Box 2.1 Understanding the Social Phenomenon of White Privilege

White privilege is a social phenomenon where Caucasian members of society enjoy a distinct advantage over members of other ethnic groups. White privilege is defined as "unearned advantages of being white in a racially stratified society" and an expression of institutionalized power (Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman, 2009, p. 417). White privilege is something that most Caucasians do not acknowledge, leading many of those who benefit from this advantage to take personal credit for whatever they gain through their privilege (Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001). Unfortunately, this also means that many Caucasians may blame those

from groups that do not benefit from privilege for not being as successful. Yet, due to various forms of racial discrimination, it has typically been white people who have benefited most from the best that life has to offer—gaining access into the best educational systems (or being the only ones to obtain an education at all), the best jobs, and the best neighborhoods. Even if white privilege were to end, the cumulative benefit of years of advantage would continue well into the future, just as the negative consequences of years of social exclusion will continue to negatively affect groups who have not benefited from white privilege.

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their lord; thus, although lords were required to provide for the care and support of serfs in exchange for farming their land, the lords had complete control over their serfs and could sell them or give them away as they deemed fit (Stephenson, 1943; Trattner, 1998).

Despite the seeming harshness of this system, it did provide insurance against many of the social hazards associated with being poor. It was also complemented by the prevailing belief that there was no shame in poverty. In fact, the commonly held societal more during medieval times was that poverty within society was unavoidable, and the poor were a necessary component of society, in that poverty gave an opportunity to the rich to show their grace and goodwill through the giving of alms to those less fortunate than themselves. Thus, caring for the poor was perceived as a noble duty that rested on the shoulders of all those who were able-bodied. Also, the poor were necessary because without them there would be no servants for the ruling class.

Poor Laws of England

Many economic and environmental conditions led to the eventual phasing out of the traditional feudal system in the mid-14th century to the mid-16th century (1350 through 1550), including several natural disasters, such as massive crop failures, the bubonic plague, and mass urbanization spawned by the Industrial Revolution. The increased demand for factory wage labor in the cities ultimately led to droves of individuals moving to the city to work in factories. This trend, coupled with the decline of the feudal system and the diminishing influence of the church with its complex and effective framework of charitable provision, led to the need for a complete overhaul of the social welfare system in England. Thus, although mass urbanization may have led to freedom from serfdom for the poorest members of English society, it also generated a vacuum in how poverty was managed, creating the necessity for the development of England's earliest poor laws (Trattner, 1998).

Although these social changes were gradual, they led to a dramatic shift not only in how poverty was managed but also how it was perceived. It is always easier to have a gracious attitude and extend a helping hand to someone we know, but such graciousness becomes challenging when the poor are no longer extended family and longtime neighbors, whose personal circumstances are well known; rather they are nameless, faceless strangers living en masse, often from different countries, speaking different languages, and behaving in very different manners (Martin, 2012; Trattner, 1998). The increasingly impersonal nature of caring for the poor, as well as the complexity of life in cities, ultimately led to the belief that the incorporation of punitive measures into relief policy was needed to control begging, vagrancy, and increased crime in the cities. In response, England passed several relief laws during the mid-1500s through the early 1600s, which set forth guidelines for dealing with the poor. England's Relief Act of 1536 placed responsibility for dealing with the poor at the local level and reflected a complete intolerance of idleness. Local law enforcement scoured the cities in search of beggars and vagrants, and once found, a determination was made as to whether they were true victims of poverty (the worthy poor) or legally defined vagrants (the unworthy poor). Legislative guidelines typically stipulated that only pregnant women, individuals who were extremely ill and unable to work, or any person over the age of 60 were considered justifiably poor; thus, they were treated more leniently, including receiving governmental authorization to beg (typically in the form of a letter of authorization). In some cases, the poor were given

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other forms of sustenance in addition to being allowed to beg. If an able-bodied person was found to be unemployed, they were considered vagrant, and were punished by whippings, naked parading through the streets, being returned to the town of their birth, or incarceration. Repeat offenders were often subjected to having an ear cut off or were even put to death (Beier, 1974; Birtles, 1999).

Clearly, no sympathy was shown to individuals, male or female, who were deemed capable of working but found themselves without a job or any means of support, and little consideration was given to economic difficulties or what is now termed the *cycle of poverty*. Also, little sympathy was extended to children, particularly adolescents who were found begging, and district officials often took these children into custody, placing them into apprenticeship programs, which were later considered to be little different from child slavery. Thus, vagrancy was handled as a criminal matter, and the local authorities provided sustenance only for those deemed unable to work (Trattner, 1998). The earlier English Poor Laws laid the foundation for the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601, which acted as a foundation for U.S. social welfare policy.

The Elizabethan Poor Laws

The Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601 were an organized merging of England's earlier, sometimes conflicting and erratic social welfare legislation, which not only brought order and organization to England's poor laws but also served as the foundation for such legislation in colonial America. Thus, rather than viewing the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601 as a single act, it is more appropriate to view it as an evolution of legal acts in a series of previous acts. The Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601 served to set the stage for poor relief for several centuries and is still considered foundational in contemporary social welfare policy in both England and the United States. This Act established three driving principles as the foundation for social legislation: the belief that the primary responsibility for provision lay with one's family, that poor relief should be handled at the local level, and finally, that individuals should not be allowed to move to a new community if they were unable to provide for themselves financially. Charity included both *indoor* and *outdoor* relief, with the former referring to assistance provided in almshouses and other institutionalized settings and the latter referring to services provided in the home environment of the person in need, including the delivery of food baskets and/or medicines.

It was quite common for community members to bring charges against others if it could be proven that they had moved into the district within the past 40 days and had no means to support themselves. Such individuals would be charged as vagrants by the local officials and returned to their home districts. The underlying notion was that local parishes didn't mind supporting those individuals who had fallen on hard times after years of paying taxes, but they didn't want to be forced to support strangers who came to their district for the sole purpose of receiving aid. Elements of these residency requirements can be found among current U.S. welfare policy; in fact, most welfare reform legislative bills today contain residency requirement language.



Engage in Policy Practice to Advance Social and Economic Well-Being and to Deliver Effective Social Work Services

Practice Behavior: Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.

Critical Thinking Question: Jane Addams believed that advocacy was most effective when advocates lived within the communities they served. Describe how this philosophy influenced the model of social work that serves as a foundation for the profession to this day and how it enables social workers today to be better advocates for their clients.

English colonization of North America began around the 16th century and continued throughout the 17th century. Life in colonial America not only offered tremendous opportunity but also presented significant hardship related to life on the frontier. Many immigrants were quite poor to begin with, and the long and difficult ocean voyage to the New World often left them unprepared for the rigors of life in the United States. Because there was no existing infrastructure in the original 13 colonies (such as religious monasteries or other social welfare programs), relief for the poor consisted primarily of mutual kindness, family support, and distant help from the motherland. Self-sufficiency was a must, and life was not easy on the frontier. But as the population increased within the colonies, the need arose for a more organized form of relief, and it makes sense that the colonies would rely on the English Poor Laws. The colonies adopted not only the social welfare legislation of England but also much of the perceptions of and attitudes about the poor and indigent as well.

Charity Organization Society Movement in the United States

The Charity Organization Society (COS), often considered the genesis of the social work movement, marked one of the first organized efforts within the United States to provide charity to the poor. The COS movement started in about 1870 in response to frustration with the current welfare system that was less of a system and more of a disorganized and often chaotic practice of almsgiving. The COS movement itself was started by a pastor, Rev. S. Humphreys Gurteen, who believed that it was the duty of good Christians everywhere to provide an organized and systematic way of addressing the plight of the poor. Gurteen and his colleagues strongly believed that the indiscriminate giving of alms by many of the relief agencies of that time encouraged fraud and abuse, which in turn encouraged laziness on the part of those who were beneficiaries of relief.

The COS philosophy was built on the concept of voluntary coordination, in which various charities worked within a larger network-coordinating services delivered to the local community. The first COS was created in New York in 1877, and the concept quickly spread to large cities across the nation. Soon, most large cities had at least one COS serving the community, acting as an umbrella organization for smaller agencies and churches offering charity services to the community. The COS practiced what was called *scientific charity*, which embraced social Darwinist philosophies of *intelligent giving* and embraced the notion that charity should work with natural selection, not against it (Gettleman, 1963). A primary motivation of the COS movement was to coordinate charity efforts by serving as an umbrella organization for the myriad of independent and private charities, thus maximizing the best use of material relief (Schlabach, 1969). Outdoor relief, such as cash assistance or indiscriminate giving, was highly discouraged and actually considered evil based on the longstanding belief that such assistance encouraged dependence and laziness, while discouraging self-sufficiency, ultimately leading to increased poverty (Gettleman, 1963; Kusmer, 1973).

In this respect, those involved in the COS movement embraced the concepts of the *unworthy versus the worthy poor*, and it was their goal to determine which category aid recipients fell into and then prescribe what each recipient actually needed. Material aid was provided for those who would not abuse it and other services for those who would. To accomplish this goal, the COSs employed *friendly visitors*, an early version of caseworkers, who visited the homes of aid applicants and attempted to diagnose the reason for their poverty and, if possible, develop a case plan to authentically alleviate their suffering (Trattner, 1998).

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A social hierarchy was reflected in the philosophical motivation of the COS leaders, often the community's most wealthy members, who agreed to provide charity to the poor depending on the poor remembering "his place of inferiority" (Gettleman, 1963, p. 319). Yet even the deserving poor did not escape the demands of the Protestant work ethic, which stressed the importance of hard work in order to achieve salvation, or the fatalism of social Darwinism, both of which were deeply imbedded in the COS culture. These philosophical values were clearly reflected in a speech given by Josephine Shaw Lowell, a leader in the COS movement, at a charity conference held in 1895: "Even the widow with little children, if she finds that everything is made easy for her, may lose her energy, may even, by being relieved of anxiety for them, lose her love for the children" (cited in Gettleman, 1963, p. 323). The unworthy poor were often provided with indoor relief only, in the form of placement in an almshouse, and, according to COS leaders, should be allowed to perish according to natural selection. Many in the COS movement argued that to provide charity to those destined to perish was immoral and unkind because it only prolonged their suffering to no good end for either the poor or society (Gettleman, 1963).

Mary Richmond, the general secretary of the Baltimore COS, is often associated with the COS movement because of her passion for social advocacy and social reform. Richmond believed that charities could employ both good economics and compassionate giving at the same time. She became well known for increasing public awareness of the COS movement and for her fund-raising efforts. Her compassion for the poor was the likely result of her own experience with poverty. Orphaned at the age of two and later left by an aunt to fend for herself in New York when she was only 17 years old, she no doubt understood the social components of poverty, and how devastating it could be to one's life. Richmond is also credited for developing the early conception of casework, having written several books and articles on the service delivery model. As a result, the concept of the friendly visitor grew and the debate about material relief continued. Many argued that the best opportunity to truly effect change in those suffering from poverty was through the services of the friendly visitor who could help identify and address any barriers to self-sufficiency (Kusmer, 1973).

Despite the general success of the COS movement, its philosophy was influenced by the Reformation theology that anyone who worked hard enough would be blessed and could rise from the depths of poverty. The country would later realize that it was naïve to presume that poverty was primarily caused by individual failure and that material relief would lead to moral decline. The very hard lesson came during the Depression era—a lesson learned long ago by immigrants and ethnic minorities—that sometimes conditions exist that are beyond an individual's control and that create immovable barriers to self-sufficiency, leading to poverty and destitution.

Jane Addams and the Settlement House Movement

Not all social welfare movements within the United States reflected these harsh philosophical approaches, though. Jane Addams, an advocate for social reform, was responsible for beginning the U.S. settlement house movement in the late 1800s. Addams's social action efforts reflected a far more compassionate approach to poverty alleviation and social inequity. She started the Hull House settlement house in Chicago as an alternative to the more religiously oriented charity organizations, which she perceived as "heartless and overly concerned with efficiency and rooting out of fraud" (Schneiderhan, 2008, p. 3). Addams used a relational model of poverty alleviation based on the belief that the problems of poverty and disadvantage resulted from problems within society, not idleness and

moral deficiency (Lundblad, 1995). She advocated for changes within the social structure of society that created barriers to lateral contribution of all members of society, which she viewed as an essential aspect of a democracy (Hamington, 2005; Martin, 2012). In fact, the opening of the first settlement house in the United States was considered the beginning of one of the most significant social movements in U.S. history (Commager, 1961, as cited in Lundblad, 1995).

Addams was born in Cedarville, Illinois, in 1860. She was raised in an upper-class home where higher education and philanthropy were highly valued. Addams greatly admired her father, who encouraged her to pursue an education at a time when women were primarily encouraged to pursue only marriage and motherhood. She graduated from Rockford Female Seminary in 1881, the same year her father died. After her father's death, Addams entered Woman's Medical College in Pennsylvania, but dropped out because of chronic illness. She had become quite passionate about the plight of immigrants in the United States, but due to her poor health and the societal limits placed on women during that era, she did not believe that she had a role in social advocacy.

The United States experienced another significant wave of immigration in the 19th and early 20th centuries (between 1860 and 1910), with 23 million people emigrating from Europe, including Eastern Europe. Many of these immigrants were from non-English-speaking countries, such as Italy, Poland, Russia, and Serbia, did not speak English, and were very poor. Unable to obtain work in the skilled labor force, many immigrants were forced to live in subhuman conditions, crammed together with several other families in deplorable tenements in large urban areas. For instance, New York's Lower East Side had 330,000 inhabitants per square mile (Trattner, 1998). With no labor laws for protection, racial discrimination and a variety of employment abuses were common, including extremely low wages, unsafe working conditions, and child labor. Poor families, particularly non-English-speaking families, had little recourse, and their mere survival depended on their coerced cooperation.

Addams was aware of these conditions because of her father's political involvement, but she was not sure how to respond. Despondent after her father's death and her failure in medical school, as well as over her chronic medical problems, Addams took an extended trip with friends to Europe, where among other activities, she visited Toynbee Hall, England's response to poverty and other social problems. Toynbee Hall was a settlement house, which was essentially a neighborhood welfare institution in an urban slum area, where trained workers endeavored to improve social conditions, particularly by providing community services and promoting neighborly cooperation.

This concept was revolutionary, in that in its attempt to improve conditions through the promotion of social and economic reform, it actually called for the settlement house workers to reside in the home alongside the immigrant families they helped. In addition to providing a safe, clean home, settlement houses also provided comprehensive care, such as assistance with food, healthcare, English language lessons, child care, and general advocacy. The settlement house movement was different from the traditional charity organizations, in that it had as its goal the mission of no longer distinguishing between the worthy and unworthy poor.

Jane Addams is considered the 'mother of social work' due to her tireless advocacy work.



Addams returned home convinced that it was her duty to do something similar in the United States, and with the donation of a building in Chicago, Hull House became the United States's first settlement house in 1889.

Addams and her colleagues lived in the settlement house, in the middle of what was considered a bad neighborhood in Chicago, offering services targeting the underlying causes of poverty such as unfair labor practices, the exploitation of non-English-speaking immigrants, and child labor. Services ranged from child care to education classes. Hull House became the social center for all activities in the neighborhood and even offered residents an opportunity to socialize in the residents' café.

Addams's influence on American social policy was significant, in that it represented a shift away from the fatalistic and metaphysical philosophies of social Darwinism, marking recognition of the need for social change within society to remove barriers to upward mobility and optimal functioning (Martin, 2012). Addams and her counterparts were committed to viewing all individuals equally, to be treated with respect and dignity. She clearly saw societal conditions and the hardship of immigration as the primary cause of poverty, not necessarily one's own moral failing. Focus was placed on making changes in the community, and social inequality was perceived as the manifestation of exploitation, with social egalitarianism perceived as not just desirable but also achievable (Lundblad, 1995; Martin, 2012).

The settlement house movement radically transformed not only how the poor were cared for but also how they were perceived by the majority population. Now, immigrants had a safe place to live, a voice to advocate for them, and a way to better integrate into American society, so that their dream of obtaining a better life for themselves and their children could actually be realized. Addams also lobbied tirelessly for the passage of child labor laws and other legislation that would protect the working-class poor, who were often exploited in factories with sweatshop conditions. She also worked alongside Ida B. Wells, an African American reformer, confronting racial inequality in the United States, such as the extrajudicial lynching of black men.

Although there are no working settlement houses today, the prevailing concept espoused by this model involves recognition of the need for a holistic approach to poverty alleviation that encompasses challenges to social structures, and not just a focus on individual behavioral management. Elements of this concept can still be seen in the current U.S. social welfare system, as well as the current mental healthcare system, yet unfortunately there would be far more future challenges to any philosophical approach to poverty alleviation that considers social inequality as a core reason for poverty, rather than personal moral failing. Thus, despite the overall success of the settlement house movement and the particular success of Addams with regard to achieving social reform in a variety of arenas, the influences of Calvinism, particularly the Protestant work ethic and social Darwinism remained strong, experiencing cyclical decline only during difficult economic times or civil unrest (as experienced in the 1960s).

The New Deal and the Social Security Act of 1935

In 1929 the stock market crashed, leading to a series of economic crises that the United States had never before experienced. For the first time in modern U.S. history, large segments of the middle-class population were unemployed, and within a very short time, thousands of people who had once enjoyed secure lives were without jobs, homes, and

Make a cyber-visit to The Hull House Museum by going to the University of Illinois at Chicago website and navigating to the museum website.

even food. This served as a wake-up call for social reformers, many of whom had abandoned their earlier commitment to social activism. In response, many within the social service and advocacy fields started pushing President Hoover to develop the country's first federal system of social welfare.

Hoover was resistant, though, fearing that federal social welfare programs would create dependency and displace private and local charities. He wanted to allow time for democracy and capitalism to self-correct before intervening with broad entitlement programs. But much of the country's population, including many who were literally starving, apparently did not agree, and in 1933, Hoover lost his bid for reelection, and Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected as president.

Roosevelt immediately set about to create dramatic changes in federal policy with regard to social welfare, promising a *New Deal* to the country, where a minimum standard of living was seen as a right, not a privilege. Within his first 100 days in office, Roosevelt passed 13 Acts, including the Civil Works Administration (sometimes referred to as the CWA), which provided over a million temporary jobs to the unemployed; the Federal Emergency Relief Act, which provided direct aid and food to the unemployed; and the Civilian Conservation Core (CCC), which put thousands of young men aged 18 to 25 to work in reforestation and other conservation programs. Yet, as progressive as Roosevelt was, and as compassionate as the country had become due to the realization that poverty could strike anyone, racism was still rampant, as illustrated by Roosevelt placing a 10 percent limit on the enrollment of black men in the CCC program (Trattner, 1998).

By far the most famous of all programs in the *New Deal* and *Great Society* programs were those created in response to the Social Security Act of 1935, which, among other things, created old-age pensions for workers, unemployment compensation, and Aid to Dependent Mothers, Children, and the Blind and Disabled. In total, Roosevelt created 15 federal programs as a part of the New Deal, some of which remain and some of which were dismantled once the crisis of the Great Depression subsided. Although some claim that the New Deal was not good for the country in the long run, it did pull the country out of the Depression, and it provided relief for millions of Americans who may have literally starved had the federal government not stepped in when it did. Programs such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which provided insurance for bank deposits, helped to instill a sense of confidence in the banking system once again, and the

development of the Securities and Exchange Committee (SEC), which regulates the stock market, helped to ensure that a crash similar to the one in 1929 would be unlikely to occur again. In later times, though, the dismantling of some post-Depression financial regulations would contribute to yet another devastating economic downturn—perhaps not as severe as the Great Depression, but more serious and long-lasting than any other recession experienced in the U.S. post-Depression era, particularly because of its global consequences.

Assess your comprehension of "The History of Social Welfare Policy and Provision in Europe and the United States" by completing this quiz.

INFLUENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SOCIAL WORKERS

A review of the historical elements influencing the development of the social work field would be remiss if the influences of African American reformers, particularly African American women in the last part of the 19th century, weren't explored. Black activists had a significant influence on the development of social justice and social work, particularly

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in the South, filling the vacuum left by a racist society that often created barriers to service in the black community in earlier eras.

Ida B. Wells was an African American reformer and social activist whose campaign against racial oppression and inequity laid the foundation for the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Wells was born in 1862 to parents who were slaves in rural Mississippi, and although her parents were ultimately freed, Wells's life was never free from the crushing effects of severe racial prejudice and discrimination. She was orphaned at the age of 16, and went on to raise her five younger siblings. This experience not only forced her to grow up quickly but also seemed to serve as a springboard for her subsequent advocacy against racial injustice. In Wells's early advocacy career, she was the owner of a black newspaper (the only one of its kind) called *Free Speech*, where she consistently wrote about matters of racial oppression and inequity, including the vast amount of socially sanctioned crimes committed against blacks (Hamington, 2005).

The indiscriminate lynching of black men was prevalent in the South during Wells's lifetime, and was an issue that Wells became quite passionate about. Black men were commonly perceived as a threat on many levels, and there was virtually no protection of their personal, political, or social rights. The black man's reputation as an angry rapist was endemic in white society, and many speeches were given and articles written by white community members (including clergy) about this "allegedly growing problem". For example, an article published in the mainstream newspaper in the South, the *Commercial*, entitled "More Rapes More Lynchings," cites the black man's alleged penchant for raping white women, stating:

The generation of Negroes which have grown up since the war have lost in large measure the traditional and wholesome awe of the white race which kept the Negroes in subjection. . . . There is no longer a restraint upon the brute passion of the Negro. . . . The facts of the crime appear to appeal more to the Negro's lustful imagination than the facts of the punishment do to his fears. He sets aside all fear of death in any form when opportunity is found for the gratification of his bestial desires. (Davidson, 2008, p. 154)

Wells wrote extensively on the subject of the "myth of the angry black man," and the myth that all black men raped white women (a common excuse used to justify the lynching of black men) (Hamington, 2005). She challenged the growing sentiment in white communities that black men, as a race, were growing more aggressive and 'lustful' of white women, which she believed was prompted in part by the increasing number of biracial couples. The response to Wells's articles was swift and harsh. A group of white men surrounded her newspaper building with the intention of lynching her, but when they could not find her, they burned down her business instead (Davidson, 2008).

Although this act of revenge essentially stopped her newspaper career, what it really did was motivate Wells even further. After the burning down of her business, Wells left the South and moved to Chicago, where she continued to wage a fierce anti-lynching campaign, often coordinating efforts with Jane Addams. She wrote numerous books and articles on racial inequality, challenging

The African American Women and the Struggle for Civil Rights video is a resource that provides an overview of the role of African American women in the fight for racial equality in the United States. After watching this video, consider how the actions of these women influenced and contributed to the field of social work.

Identify as a Professional Social Worker and Conduct Oneself Accordingly

Practice Behavior: Advocate for Client Access to the Services of Social Work

Critical Thinking Question: Historically, there have been many influential African American social workers who contributed significantly to the black community, as well as to the development of the social work profession as a whole. What was the initial motivation that made their grassroots advocacy necessary? Are any of these dynamics still at play in contemporary society, and how can these lessons of the past inform social workers in their perceptions of and advocacy for ethnic minority populations in need?

socially entrenched notions that all black men were angry and violent sexual predators (Hamington, 2005). Wells and Addams worked as colleagues, coordinating their social justice advocacy efforts fighting for civil rights. Together, they ran the Chicago Association for the Advancement of Colored People and worked collectively on a variety of projects, including fighting against racial segregation in schools (Martin, 2012).

Many other key African American social welfare reformers made significant advances in the social work field, particularly with regard to confronting the disenfranchisement and marginalization of African Americans within U.S. society. In the absence of mainstream social work within this population, African American social welfare reformers operated as a tight community, developing close relationships with each other, even though many of them were spread across the United States. Because racism excluded African Americans from receiving many services, including educational opportunities and health services, many early social welfare reformers focused on these two areas, developing 'Negro schools' and healthcare facilities. One such reformer was Modjeska Simkins, who developed healthcare programs for the black community focusing on everything from infant mortality to tuberculosis. Another creative example of social work in the face of extreme opposition was the work of the black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha, whose members were determined to provide health care services to sharecroppers in Mississippi. When the white community refused to rent them office space, they offered the health care services from cars (Gordon, 1991).

Other black women who significantly influenced social welfare reform include Anna Cooper, who pushed for increased educational opportunities for blacks, and Jane Hunter, who formed the first black Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) (Gordon, 1991). Although often unreported and undervalued, African American social welfare reformers not only assisted their own communities but helped the broader community as well by modeling the power of networking and relentlessly pursuing social justice for all, particularly for those who are the subject of social oppression and discrimination.

Explore the role of black social work pioneers by going to the National Association of Black Social Workers website.

Assess your comprehension of "Influences of African American Social Workers" by completing this quiz.

GAY RIGHTS: FROM MARRIAGE EQUALITY TO "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" REPEAL

Ethnic minorities, women, and immigrants are not the only groups in U.S. society to be used as scapegoats, oppressed and marginalized. The gay community, typically referred to as the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning and/or queer), has long been a marginalized group in the United States (as well as in most countries in the world). Members of the LGBTQ community are often victims of hate crimes, often solely because of their sexual orientation. For years this community has been excluded from many of the social welfare laws designed to protect disenfranchised and socially excluded groups. Yet, in the past three decades, several LGBTQ advocacy organizations, such as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), have become increasingly vocal about the right of the LGBTQ community to live openly and enjoy the same rights and protections as heterosexuals without fear of reprisal. The specific issues GLAAD has advocated for include the right to be included as a specially protected group in hate crimes legislation, the right of same-sex

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Identify as a Professional Social Worker and Conduct Oneself Accordingly

Practice Behavior: Advocate for client access to the services of social work.

Critical Thinking Question: How can understanding the history of discrimination and marginalization of the LGBTQ population inform social workers' advocacy on behalf of this population today? If a social worker doesn't agree with the equality movement due to religious beliefs, is it okay not to advocate for LGBTQ populations' access to social work services? Why or why not?

Get updates on the most recent news about marriage equality and other contemporary LGBT issues at the GLAAD website.

partners to legally marry (often referred to as marriage equality), and the right to serve openly in the military.

Despite strong opposition from social conservative groups, the LGBTQ community has experienced recent success in response to their efforts. In 2009 President Obama signed into law the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which expanded existing hate crime legislation to include crimes committed against individuals based on perceived gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Marriage equality is currently a battle fought on both the federal and state levels. In 1996 the Defense of Marriage Act was passed, which defined marriage on a federal level as a union between one man and one woman. Yet many states have now passed laws legalizing same-sex marriage.

Arguments for same-sex marriage are typically based on rights of equality (see Box 2.2). Arguments against same-sex marriages are often based on conservative or religious values that hold same-sex partnerships as sinful and unnatural, and define traditional marriage as being between a man and a woman. There also appears to be a general fear that the normalization of same-sex marriage will lead to the lowering of moral standards in a variety of respects throughout society. Yet advocates of same-sex marriage confront religious arguments by citing research that disputes allegation that same-sex marriage will somehow dilute *traditional* marriage or harm children. They also cite the increasing acceptance among U.S. citizens of same-sex marriage and of same-sex partnerships in general. For instance, according to a series of Gallup polls, in 2009, 63 percent of the U.S. population surveyed stated that they believed that same-sex couples should be able to marry or have a legal civil union, compared to 55 percent in 2004.

Another area of success for the LGBTQ population involves the right to serve in the U.S. military openly. Historically, gays and lesbians were systematically discharged from the military if their sexual orientation was discovered. In December 1993, in response to mounting pressure to change this policy, the Clinton administration compromised by implementing *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* (DADT), an official policy of the U.S. government

Box 2.2 In Defense of Marriage Equality

The GLAAD website lists several protections that marriage offers that are currently unavailable to the LGBTQ population in same-sex partnerships.

- automatic inheritance
- child custody/parenting/adoption rights
- hospital visitation
- medical decision-making power
- standing to sue for wrongful death of a spouse
- divorce protections
- spousal/child support
- access to family insurance policies
- exemption from property tax upon death of a spouse
- immunity from being forced to testify against one's spouse
- domestic violence protections, and more. (GLAAD, 2010, p. 7)

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that prohibited the military from discriminating against gay and lesbian military personnel as long as they kept their sexual orientation a secret. In other words, military personnel could no longer investigate the sexual orientation of those serving in the military, but if a member of the military admitted to being a gay or lesbian, he or she could legally be discharged from the military. DADT was repealed by Congress in December 2010 pending review by military leadership who were to determine the effect on military readiness, but in July 2011, a federal court of appeals ruling barred further enforcement of the policy, and it was officially repealed by President Obama in September 2011. In May 2012 President Obama officially declared his support for marriage equality, citing his daughters' friends with same-sex parents, and his recognition that he could not defend a position that would prohibit them from having the same right to legally marry as heterosexual parents. Achievements by the LGBTQ population seem to illustrate a movement toward greater acceptance of what some call *alternative lifestyles*, yet there remains considerable resistance to the inclusion of same-sex partnerships into mainstream United States, particularly among social conservatives.

Assess your comprehension of "Gay Rights: From Marriage Equality to 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Repeal" by completing this quiz.

WELFARE REFORM AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEOLIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

A resurgence of earlier negative sentiments toward the poor and their plight began in the mid-1970s, peaking in the 1990s, perhaps in response to increased economic prosperity within mainstream United States. This increased negative attitude toward the poor is reflected in several studies and national public opinion surveys that reflected the general belief that the poor were to blame for their situation. For instance, a national survey conducted in 1975 found that the majority of those living in the United States attributed poverty to personal failures, such as having a poor work ethic, poor money management skills, a lack of any special talent that might translate into a positive contribution to society, and low personal moral values. Those questioned ranked social forces, such as racism, poor schools, and the lack of sufficient employment, the lowest of all possible causes of poverty (Feagin, 1975).

Ronald Reagan capitalized on this negative sentiment toward the poor during the 1976 presidential campaign when he based his platform in large part on welfare reform. In several of Reagan's speeches, he cited the story of a woman from the South Side of Chicago who was arrested for committing egregious welfare fraud.

While Reagan never mentioned the woman's race, the context of the story as well as the reference to the South Side of Chicago (a primarily black community) made it clear that he was referring to an African American woman on welfare—thus matching the common stereotype of welfare users (and abusers) (Krugman, 2007). And with that, the enduring myth of the *welfare queen* was born.

Journalist David Zucchino attempted to debunk the myth of the welfare queen in his exposé on the reality of being a mother on welfare, but later stated in his book, *The Myth of the Welfare Queen*, that the image of the African American woman who drove a Cadillac while collecting welfare illegally was so imbedded in American culture that

For more information on the myth of the welfare queen, go to the NPR website and search for "The Truth Behind the Lies of the Original 'Welfare Queen'."

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it was impossible to debunk the myth, even though the facts do not back up the myth (Zucchini, 1999). Krugman (2007) also cites how politicians have used the myth of the welfare queen to reduce sympathy for the poor and gain public support for welfare cuts ever since, arguing that while covert, such images clearly play on negative racial stereotypes. They also play on the common belief in the United States that those who receive welfare benefits are poor due to immoral behavior and a lack of motivation to work.

More recent surveys conducted in the mid-1990s revealed an increase in the tendency to blame the poor for their poverty (Weaver, Shapiro, & Jacobs, 1995), even though a considerable body of research points to social and structural issues as the primary cause of poverty, such as shortages in affordable housing, recent shifts to a technologically based society requiring a significant increase in educational requirements, longstanding institutionalized oppression and discrimination against certain racial and ethnic groups, and a general increase in the complexity of life (Martin, 2012; Wright, 2000). The general public's perception of social welfare programs seems to be based in large part on this negative bias against the poor, and the misguided belief that the poor are lazy, immoral, and dependent. In several studies during the 1980s and 1990s, those surveyed claimed support for the general idea of helping the poor, but when asked about specific programs or policies, most became critical of governmental policies, specific welfare programs, and welfare recipients in general. In fact, a 1987 national study found that 74 percent of those surveyed believed that most welfare recipients were dishonest and collected more benefits than they deserved (Kluegal, 1987).

During this same time period a new conservative political movement was born at least in part out of this increasingly negative attitude toward the poor and social programs designed to alleviate poverty. Welfare reform rooted in the Reagan administration in the 1980s ultimately led to both Republican and Democratic support for drastic welfare reform in 1996. Focus once again shifted from social and structural causes of poverty to personal ones with a renewal of punitive social welfare policies reflecting the paternalistic ideologies of the past (Schram, Fordingy, & Sossz, 2008).

Political discourse in the mid-1990s reflected what is often referred to as economic *neoliberal philosophies*, a political movement embraced by most political conservatives, espousing a belief that capitalism and the free market economy were far better solutions to many social conditions, including poverty, than government programs. Advocates of neoliberalism pushed for social programs to be privatized based on the belief that getting social welfare out of the hands of government and into the hands of private enterprise, where market forces could work their magic, would increase efficiency and lower costs. Yet research has consistently revealed that social welfare services do not lend themselves well to free market theory due to the complexity of client issues, as well as unknown outcomes, lack of competition among social service providers, and other dynamics that makes social welfare services so unique (Nelson, 1992; Van Slyke, 2003).

In 1994, during the U.S. congressional campaign, the Republican Party released a document entitled *The New Contract with America*, which represented "a plan that would reform welfare and, along with it, the behavior of the poor" (Hudson & Coukos, 2005, p. 2). The document, introduced just a few weeks before the 1994 congressional election, President Clinton's mid-term election, was signed by all but two of the Republican members of the House of Representatives, as well as all of the party's congressional

candidates. In addition to a renewed commitment to smaller government and lower taxes, the contract also pledged a complete overhaul of the welfare system to root out fraud and increase the poor's commitment to employment and self-sufficiency.

Hudson and Coukos (2005) note the similarities between this political movement in the mid-1990s and the one just 100 years before, arguing that the Protestant work ethic served as the driving force behind both. Take, for instance, the common arguments for welfare reform (policies that reduce and restrict social welfare programs and services), which have often been predicated upon the beliefs that

1. hardship is often the result of laziness;
2. providing assistance will increase laziness (and thus dependence), hence increasing hardship, not decreasing it; and
3. those in need often receive services at the expense of the working population

In an article in *Time Magazine* entitled "100 Days of Attitude," Stacks (1995) captured this "us versus them" dynamic fostered in the debate on welfare reform in the mid-1990s. Stacks described how the country was "up-in-arms" over public assistance program, and this outrage spread quickly through the country. The House held hearings on the state of public welfare in the country in response to the uproar. One of the most inflammatory speeches heard on the House floor was when the U.S. Representative for Florida's 7th congressional district, John Mica compared public assistance users to alligators, arguing that "if you treat the alligator like a pet or a child, it will become dependent." Such perspectives negate the complexity of economic disadvantage often experienced by vulnerable and marginalized populations, and categorize the poor as a homogenous group that is in some significant way different with regard to character from mainstream working society.

The debate about public welfare also reflects the genderized and racialized nature of welfare contributing to institutionalized gender bias and racism. Whether veiled or overt negative bias bestowed upon female public welfare recipients of color negates the disparity in social problems experienced by African American women, including increased incidences of poverty, violence, and untreated child sexual victimization, and their associated psychological and social problems (El-Bassel, Caldeira, Ruglass, & Gilbert, 2009; Martin, 2012; Siegel & Williams, 2003).

Although welfare reform was initiated by a Republican Congress, it was passed by the Democratic Clinton administration, in the form of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) of 1996, illustrating wide support not only for welfare reform but also for the underlying philosophical beliefs about the causes of poverty and effective poverty alleviation methods. PRWORA of 1996 reflects a marked shift away from its predecessor, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), an entitlement program created under the New Deal. Many social welfare advocates believe that the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), is punitive in nature, with its strict time limits for lifetime benefits (ranging between three and five years depending on the state), stringent work requirements (often regardless of circumstances), and other measures designed to control the behavior of recipients. Supporters of welfare reform and the passage of PRWORA relied on old arguments citing the need to control welfare fraud and welfare dependency, among a host of other behaviors exhibited by welfare recipients, such as sexual promiscuity and having children out of wedlock (Hudson & Coukos, 2005).

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The Christian Right

A powerful voice within the Republican Party that was a big backer of welfare reform is often called the *Christian Right*—a group of individuals, often Evangelical Christians, who espouse what they consider conservative family values. Conservative Christian organizations, such as the Christian Coalition, the Eagle Forum, and Focus on the Family, have wielded considerable influence within the Republican Party beginning in the 1980s, becoming a fringe core of the party in the 1990s (Green, Rozell, & Wilcox, 2003; Guth & Green, 1986; Knuckey, 2005). These groups were instrumental in the call for welfare reform, voicing significant concerns about moral decline in society and citing the need to defend and uphold traditional family values (Reese, 2007; Uluorta, 2008).

Uluorta (2008) points out that far too often “morality within the United States is a highly circumscribed concept that often confines itself to select individual behaviors such as those pertaining to sex and sexuality (e.g., abortion, abstinence), marriage (e.g., gay marriage) and social standing (e.g., welfare reform)” (pp. 253–254). Many within the Christian Right were fervent supporters of welfare reform, and specifically the PRWOA of 1996, because of its focus on behavioral reform, including the promotion of marriage and sexual abstinence (Reese, 2007).

The ability of the conservative Christian movement to mobilize its members into political action is notable. For instance, Uluorta (2008) points out the political lobbying success of Focus on the Family, a conservative Evangelical Christian organization that broadcasts its messages on over 1,600 radio stations and 16 television stations nationwide, has a frequently used website, and disseminates newsletters and political action alerts via email and physical mail to millions of members who are often asked to strongly advocate for the organization’s policy positions reflecting its socially conservative values. This level and type of mobilization is of concern to some within the social work fields and others who advocate for a more compassionate approach to helping the poor and disadvantaged, and who recognize the wide range of ways to frame social problems (and their causes), rather than focusing solely on perceived behavioral patterns of those who are struggling. The Christian Right and other socially conservative groups often frame their arguments in terms of tradition, yet their version of American tradition and patriotism often reflects the experiences of the majority population, many of whom have had the cumulative benefit of white privilege (Martin, 2012).

The Tea Party Movement

Another conservative social movement, which appears to overlap at least to some extent with the Christian Right, is the American Tea Party Movement, a social movement and a part of the Republican base that advocates for smaller government, lower taxes (the name of the group is a reference to the Boston Tea Party), state rights, and the literal interpretation of the U.S. Constitution. The Tea Party Movement has quickly gained a reputation for advocating on behalf of conservative policies, similar in many ways to the Christian Right agenda. For instance, Michele Bachmann, a Tea Party member, Minnesota congresswoman, and 2012 presidential candidate, has been criticized for her position on social issues, many of which are based on her conservative Christian values. For example, in a 2006 speech to a Christian youth group, Bachmann asserted that religion was supposed to be a part of government and that the notion of separation of church and state (contained in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution) was a myth (Turley, 2011).

Allegations have also been made against some members of the Tea Party Movement for their stance on immigration and racial issues in general. The media has consistently highlighted the racially charged tone at some Tea Party political rallies, pointing out racial slurs on posters, many of which are directed at President Obama's ethnic background, although proponents of the Tea Party complain that the media is exaggerating racist elements at the protests and rallies by seeking out and overfocusing on the more extremist elements of the movement. Although "tea partiers" often deny racist or homophobic values, a recent study showed that about 60 percent of tea party opponents believed that the movement had strong racist and homophobic overtones (Gardner & Thompson, 2010).

Currently the Tea Party is considered a part of the Republican base, but its existence appears to be creating some controversy within the party, particularly among the more moderate GOP base. Whether the Tea Party remains a part of the Republican Party or branches off to its own party will depend on many factors, including whether it can maintain its current momentum and increase the number of supporters.

Assess your comprehension of "Welfare Reform and the Emergence of Neoliberal Economic Policies" by completing this quiz.

A TIME FOR CHANGE: THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PRESIDENT

The 2008 presidential election was unprecedented in many respects. The United States had its first African American presidential candidate and its first female presidential candidate of a major party. Many people who have historically been relatively apathetic about politics were suddenly passionate about this election for a variety of reasons. Growing discontentment with the leadership in the preceding eight years coupled with a lengthy war in the Persian Gulf region and a struggling economy created a climate where significant social change could take root. Barack Obama's campaign slogans based on hope and change (e.g., "Yes We Can!" and "Change We Can Believe In") seemed to capture this growing discontent.

The fledgling economy of 2007 evolved into an economic meltdown toward the end of the Bush presidency, extending into the Obama administration, evidenced by a plummeting stock market, the near-collapse of the banking industry, and the real estate bubble at a level not experienced since the Great Depression (Geithner, 2009). Some social reformers and economists have advocated for policies that strive to achieve balance between free market forces, which can stimulate the economy by creating a spirit of competition, and a strong nation-state that provides a safety net for all of its constituents.

President Obama and the 111th Congress responded to the economic crisis with several policy and legislative actions, including the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (often referred to as the Stimulus bill [Pub. L. No. 111-5]). This economic stimulus package, worth over \$787 billion, included a combination of federal tax cuts, various social welfare provisions, and increases in domestic spending, designed to stimulate the economy and assist Americans who were suffering economically. It will be some time before economists and the American public come to a consensus on whether the stimulus package was successful in turning the economy around, but early indications appear to suggest that the stimulus package was at least somewhat successful.

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In the meantime, the lead-up to the 2012 presidential elections revealed the same debate about the causes of poverty and effective poverty alleviation strategies. After a brief display of compassion toward the poor at the height of the 2008 economic crisis, harsh sentiments reflecting historic stigmatization of the poor were strongly espoused, particularly among potential Republican primary candidates who continued their campaign against 'big government', social welfare programs, and civil liberties in general. The 2012 Republican presidential candidate, Newt Gingrich, even went so far as to challenge current child labor laws, calling them "stupid." In a campaign speech in Iowa in the fall of 2011, Gingrich characterized poor ethnically diverse children living in poor neighborhoods as lazy and having no work ethic. In two different speeches (his initial speech and a subsequent speech where he was asked to clarify his earlier comments), Gingrich suggested that poor children in poor neighborhoods could start work early, perhaps as janitorial staff in their own schools. Describing most poor children in economically challenged neighborhoods, Gingrich stated that these children have

no habits of working and nobody around them who works . . . they have no habit of showing up on Monday and staying all day or the concept of "I do this and you give me cash," unless it's illegal.

In his follow-up statements, he clarified his earlier comments by stating:

You have a very poor neighborhood. You have students that are required to go to school. They have no money, no habit of work. . . . What if you paid them in the afternoon to work in the clerical office or as the assistant librarian? And let me get into the janitor thing. What if they became assistant janitors, and their job was to mop the floor and clean the bathroom?

Framing his comments in religious terms, Gingrich concluded by stating:

If we are all endowed by our creator with the right to pursue happiness, that has to apply to the poorest neighborhoods in the poorest counties, and I am prepared to find something that works, that breaks us out of the cycles we have now to find a way for poor children to work and earn honest money. (Dover, 2011, para 3-5)

Gingrich's sentiments presume a level playing field in society, negating current and historic social forces, such as racial oppression and white privilege that have consistently given one group an unfair advantage for centuries.

Perhaps one of the most significant federal laws to be passed in years is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) signed into law by President Obama in March 2010 after a fierce public relations war waged by many Republicans and health insurance companies designed to prevent its passage. The ACA, which took effect incrementally from 2010 to 2014, is a comprehensive healthcare reform bill. Overall this legislation is designed to make it easier for individuals and families to obtain quality lower-cost health insurance by applying through a central exchange, making it more difficult for health insurance companies to deny coverage. It also expands Medicare in a variety of ways, including bolstering community and home-based healthcare services, and provides incentives for preventative, holistic, and wellness care. With respect to behavioral and mental healthcare, the ACA provides increased incentives for coordinated care and school-based care including mental health care and substance abuse treatment. It also includes provisions that will require the inclusion of mental health and substance abuse

Assess your comprehension of "A Time for Change: The Election of the First African American President" by completing this quiz.

coverage in benefits packages, including prescription drug coverage, and wellness and prevention services. Although the government healthcare marketplace website initially experienced problems making it difficult for people to sign up, according to an April 2014 White House press release, an estimated 8 million people have signed up for private health insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace (formerly called the exchange).

Summary

As often happens in broad-based economic downturns, the 2007 recession seemed to have led to a softening of antipoverty rhetoric and a political discourse that recognizes the importance of an effective social welfare system for all Americans, yet that empathy appears to be waning, reflected in an increase in discussions of class warfare among politicians in the 2012 presidential election cycle. Discussions of the need for universal healthcare, a federal living wage, and other policies designed to address the economic inequality in the United States will no doubt be ongoing. The debate regarding how capitalism and a free market economy can be balanced with a social safety net for all members of U.S. society

continues among politicians (and the public) and shows no signs of abating. Only time will tell where U.S. society ultimately will fall in the philosophical spectrum of individual responsibility and social equity.

Social movements appear to be on the rise, with passionate supporters of both liberal causes, such as marriage equality, and more conservative social movements, such as demands for smaller government and increased restrictions on social welfare programs. Social workers can positively engage in a variety of social movements by advocating for social equality in productive ways that do not contribute to existing polarization.

Recall what you learned in this chapter by completing the Chapter Review.

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