



*The* **State** *of the*  
**Family**

*in Connecticut*

**2002**

*Family Decline,  
Family Promise*

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**Family**  
*in Connecticut*  
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*Nothing herein should be construed as an  
effort to aid or hinder the passage of any  
specific legislation.*

# **Table of Contents**

	<i>page</i>
<b>I. A Message from the Executive Director</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II. Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III. The Social Benefits of Traditional Families</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IV. The Decline and Promise of Traditional Families</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Father-Absence in Connecticut</i>	
<i>Births to Unmarried Mothers in Connecticut</i>	
<i>Divorce in Connecticut</i>	
<b>V. The Social Costs of Family Decline</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Total Crime in Connecticut</i>	
<i>Violent Crime in Connecticut</i>	
<i>Murders in Connecticut</i>	
<i>Prison Population of Connecticut</i>	
<i>Juvenile Crime in Connecticut</i>	
<i>Child Poverty in Connecticut</i>	
<b>VI. The Need to Strengthen Traditional Families</b>	<b>32</b>
<i>Guiding Principles for Strengthening Traditional Families</i>	<b>33</b>
<i>The Urgent Need for Public Policies to Strengthen Traditional Families</i>	<b>36</b>

# I A Message from the Executive Director



The decline of the two-parent traditional family over the last forty years is one of the most significant social transformations in world history. Connecticut and the nation as a whole have seen the traditional fabric of social order torn asunder by high rates of divorce, fatherlessness, and other social pathologies. We cannot say that we were never warned. Prophetic voices in defense of the family's crucial importance have been raised in many quarters, from Daniel Patrick Moynihan to William Bennett.

Today, the overwhelming mass of social science evidence makes clear that this decline in family life has had profound

social costs. From crime rates to juvenile drug abuse, the correlations between a broken home and a broken society are clear. In fact, very little debate is left in social science quarters over the dire effects of family decline.

So what are we to do? It is easy to bemoan the breakup of the family, but much more difficult to answer how we are to address it. At the Family Institute of Connecticut, we believe that clear steps must be taken to encourage and strengthen our families, based upon the overwhelming evidence of social science, common sense, and traditional values.

The most important first step is to simply know where we are. What is the current state of the family in Connecticut? How have families changed in our state over the last 40 years?

*The State of the Family Report in Connecticut, 2002* seeks to answer these questions by providing the latest data on a number of important measures of family health in our state. Given the obvious magnitude of the problem, it is disturbing that this information has not already been widely disseminated to the public.

Second, we must know the effects of these changes. Over the last 15 years, social scientists have come to an unusual consensus that the breakup of the family has had lasting negative consequences on our society. As we show in this report, the lack of an intact two-parent family increases the chances of crime, poverty, drug abuse and a wide array of other social ills.

Finally, we must work toward rebuilding our families and a culture that can sustain them. "Traditional values" often come under attack by those who

believe that such notions are outdated or old-fashioned. Yet, as this report highlights, it is clear from the last 40 years that the traditional family is the basic building block of a good society—and a culture that fails to accept this fact does so to its own ruin.

The picture, however, is not wholly bleak. Over the last few years many traditional markers of family health have actually stabilized or improved. Family decline has not been uniform and direct, but has shown periods of intermittent improvement. We are currently in one of those periods of promise for the family. Whether we look at rates of divorce, teen pregnancy, or crime in the last decade, there are clear, though tentative signs of improvement for family life.

This should give hope to the growing number of Connecticut citizens who are convinced that something must be done to improve family life in our state. Today a growing movement throughout the country (of which the Family Institute of Connecticut is a part) is working toward using both cultural and political means to get the family back on track. Culturally, the so-called Marriage Movement is seeking to make marriages more stable and lasting by taking seriously the commitment that marriage entails. Communities across the nation have signed marriage agreements promising to strengthen their commitment to this most fundamental institution. A number of national and state politicians have begun to pay serious attention to the correlation between broken homes and broken societies and have focused both money and energy on supporting intact, two-parent families.

Connecticut has only begun to make this journey toward a serious societal commitment to marriage and the family. In the coming years, the Family Institute of Connecticut intends to move us forward in this journey through its research, education, and support. This *State of the Family Report* is a crucial first step to rebuilding a culture committed to intact families and the values that help them flourish.

Sincerely,

Brian S. Brown  
*Executive Director*

## II *Executive Summary*

***Social science data strongly indicate that traditional families provide the best environment in which to raise children.***

### **TRADITIONAL FAMILIES ARE THE BEST FOR CHILDREN**

Although the debate over the relative merits of traditional families still rages in some sectors of society, most social scientists now acknowledge that the scholarly debate surrounding the issue of the family structure has ended. Social science data strongly indicate that traditional families provide the best environment in which to raise children. Indeed, the findings of numerous studies have produced a clear consensus among social scientists that children need both a mother and father in order to have the best chance of success in life. In short, these studies show that traditional families are the social equivalent of a balanced diet: they give children what they need to grow up to be healthy and productive adults.

### **TRADITIONAL FAMILIES ARE THE BEST FOR SOCIETY**

It should come as no surprise that the family structure which is best for children is also best for society as a whole. In fact, no other public or private social institution can compare with the tremendously positive impact that traditional families have on the society around them. As this report documents, a large body of social science data strongly indicates that traditional families produce all of the following social benefits:

- ✓ Lower total crime rates
- ✓ Lower rates of violent crime
- ✓ Lower rates of youth crime
- ✓ Lower rates of drug abuse by young people
- ✓ Lower rates of child poverty
- ✓ Healthier and more productive citizens

### **THE DECLINE AND PROMISE OF THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY**

A number of social trends have combined to produce a dramatic decline in the percentage of traditional families in Connecticut over the past three decades. After adjusting for changes in population, the charts in this report reveal:

- The divorce rate in Connecticut has more than tripled since 1960.
- The percentage of births to unmarried mothers has increased tenfold since 1960.

- The percentage of fatherless families in Connecticut has almost quadrupled since 1960.
- Nationally, the number of cohabitating couples increased from 439,000 in 1960 to 4.24 million in 1998 — an almost tenfold increase.

In the last decade, however, we have seen some small improvements. Though these positives far from make up for the precipitous decline of the last forty years, they do show quite clearly that family decline is far from inevitable.

- The divorce rate in Connecticut has declined over 35% since its historic high point in 1979.
- The teen pregnancy rate in Connecticut has declined over 19% since its historic high in 1989.
- In the last 5 years the rate of increase of both out-of-wedlock births and fatherlessness has slowed.

We need to have a statewide commitment to furthering these improvements from the highest levels of government down to our own families.

## **THE SOCIAL COST OF FAMILY DECLINE**

Studies strongly suggest that there is a connection between the decline in the percentage of traditional families in Connecticut and the following disturbing statistics documented in this report:

- The total crime rate has more than doubled since 1960.
- The violent crime rate is more than 9 times higher than in 1960.
- The homicide rate has more than doubled since 1960
- The adult prison population has more than tripled since 1980.

Mirroring the cautious improvements in family life over the last few years, however, has been some good news on the crime front:

- The violent crime rate has decreased over 37% since its historic high point in 1990.
- The homicide rate has decreased 50% since its historic high in 1994.

These cautious improvements not only highlight the correlation between the state of our families and the state of our society, but they should encourage our state to understand that family decline is far from inevitable.

***The percentage of fatherless families in Connecticut has almost quadrupled since 1960.***

*This report is intended... to encourage community leaders, business leaders and religious leaders to pursue reforms that will help to continue and increase the positive trends that have occurred over the last few years in Connecticut.*

## **STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL FAMILIES: A BIPARTISAN GOAL**

Obviously, all sectors of society, including local communities, businesses and religious communities, have a critical role to play in the effort to build strong families in Connecticut. Nothing in this report is intended to imply that social reforms designed to strengthen families must come primarily or exclusively from the public sector. On the contrary, this report is intended, in large part, to encourage community leaders, business leaders and religious leaders to pursue reforms that will help to continue and increase the positive trends that have occurred over the last few years in Connecticut.

At the same time, in light of the grave social emergency posed by the decline in the percentage of traditional families, there is also an urgent need for a reorientation of public policy in the direction of legislation that is specifically designed to encourage and support traditional families in Connecticut. There is a great deal that state government can do to protect and strengthen families. If private businesses were failing at the same alarming rate at which traditional families are declining in Connecticut, public officials would mobilize to confront the economic emergency that such a development would present. But the tragic reality is that the decline in the percentage of intact families in Connecticut poses an even greater threat to the well-being of the state than the specter of widespread business failure.

As a result, public officials in Connecticut should recognize that they can best serve the public interest by actively encouraging and supporting the vital social institution of the two-parent family. In past periods of economic and military emergency, the full resources of the state government have been mobilized to confront grave threats to the security and prosperity of the state. In the same manner, public officials at every level of state government should do everything within their power to reverse the dynamic of family decline which is threatening to damage the fabric of our society beyond repair. To this end, state legislators and state government officials should undertake a bipartisan effort to pursue a wide range of public policies specifically designed to protect and strengthen traditional families in Connecticut.

# *The Social Benefits of Traditional Families* III

*If we were asked to design a system for making sure that children's basic needs were met, we would probably come up with something quite similar to the two-parent family idea...While we recognize that two-parent families frequently do not live up to this ideal in all respects, nevertheless we would expect children who grow up in two-parent families to be doing better, on average, than children who grow up with one parent.*

Sara S. McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 38.

**I**magine a government agency capable of significantly reducing child poverty in Connecticut. Imagine an educational program able to lower crime rates by dramatically reducing the number of young people who enter the criminal justice system. Imagine a public-private partnership with the power to significantly reduce the need to spend large amounts of public money on massive social welfare programs. All would be welcomed by public officials and celebrated by the media for their positive impact on society.

A large body of social science research indicates that traditional families provide all of these social benefits. Indeed, no other public or private social institution can compare with the tremendously positive impact that intact families have upon the society around them. Although not all children in America are raised with a mother and father in the home, this report focuses on the social benefits of intact, traditional families for two important and related reasons. First, traditional families are by far the best environment in which to raise children. Second, traditional families provide the family configuration which is best for society as a whole.

***...no other public or private social institution can compare with the tremendously positive impact that intact families have upon the society around them.***



**...families produce all of the following social benefits: lower total crime rates, lower rates of violent crime, lower rates of youth crime, lower rates of drug abuse by young people, lower rates of child poverty, and healthier and more productive citizens.**

## **TRADITIONAL FAMILIES ARE BEST FOR BOTH CHILDREN AND SOCIETY**

Empirical data strongly indicate that traditional families provide the best environment in which to raise children. Although the informal debate over the relative merits of traditional families still rages in some sectors of society, most social scientists now acknowledge that the scholarly debate surrounding the issue of family structure has ended. The cumulative weight of the empirical data which supports the conclusion that traditional families provide the best environment for children is overwhelming. Indeed, the debate on the issue of the family structure has been resolved so conclusively in favor of traditional families that David Popenoe, Social Sciences Dean at Rutgers University, has stated:

*I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue: on the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable... If our prevailing views on family structure hinged solely on scholarly evidence, the current debate would never have arisen in the first place.*

Dr. David Popenoe, "The Controversial Truth: Two Parent Families Are Better," *The New York Times* (1992).

It should come as no surprise that the family configuration which is best for children is also best for modern industrial society as a whole. As this report documents, social science data strongly indicate that intact families produce all of the following social benefits: lower total crime rates, lower rates of violent crime, lower rates of youth crime, lower rates of drug abuse by young people, lower rates of child poverty, and healthier and more productive citizens.

## **CHILDREN DO BEST WITH BOTH A MOM AND A DAD**

How important is it for a child to have both a mother and a father in the home? After examining over one hundred studies that speak to this subject, we conclude that it is very important. In fact, it is so important that parents considering divorce should take a step back to examine whether separating, though tempting in the short run, is truly in the best interests of their children.

The studies we examined covered children being raised with either a natural mother or a natural father, but not both. Here are a few of the representative findings:

- ***Delinquency***

In a study at the University of Pittsburgh, researchers followed the behavior over three years of the "30 percent most disruptive children in kindergarten from low socioeconomic neighborhoods." Among those who were rated as

“high fighters” at ages 6, 8, and 9 (“stable high fighters”) the researchers detected a pattern in home backgrounds. These trouble-prone boys not only tended to come from particularly “disadvantaged” homes, they also “tended to come from non-intact families.” The researchers interpreted their findings as evidence that “family disadvantage is strongly associated to physical aggression in young boys.”

The researchers noted that the boys who were “stable high fighters also tended to report having generally been involved in more antisocial behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, alcohol and drug use.”

Tremblay et al., “Disruptive Boys with Stable and Unstable Fighting: Behavior Patterns During Junior High Elementary School,” *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 19 (1991), 285.

### • **Drug Abuse**

Inner city youth who live in intact families are much less likely to have seen drugs in their homes than inner-city youth who do not live with both parents. In a study in Baltimore, researchers from John Hopkins University investigated the relationship between teen drug use and a history of drug use in the family. The analysis focused on 88 youth (ages 12 to 17) all drawn from the same school and neighborhoods which are “referred for participation in the substance abuse prevention program for high risk adolescents.” Despite the similarities in student backgrounds, the researchers discovered that students living in intact families were much less likely to have a history of drug use in their homes than students who live in single-parent households or other non-traditional household arrangements. Less than one quarter (24 percent) of the students with a history of drug use in their homes lived in intact families, compared to half (50 percent) of students from households with no history of drug use in the household.

Janet Gross and Mary E. McCauley, “A Comparison of Drug Use and Adjustment in Urban Adolescent Children of Substance Abusers,” *International Journal of the Addictions* 25 (1991), 495.

### • **Poverty**

“Why,” James Smith asks, “has the likelihood of children being among the poor risen over time? The greater likelihood stems completely from the growth of female-headed families. In all census years, in intact families children were no more likely than adults to be poor when a fully standardized measure was used.” The overall pattern, Smith points out is “the increasing concentration of children’s poverty in female headed families.” Whereas only 16 percent of children live in these families headed by women, half of all poor children do.

James P. Smith, “Children Among the Poor,” *Demography* 26 (1989), 235.

**...students living in intact families were much less likely to have a history of drug use in their homes than students who live in single-parent households or other non-traditional household arrangements.**

**...adolescents from disrupted families reported higher levels of general health problems, were more neurotic, less extroverted, had poorer perceptions of their bodies, were more impulsive, and had more negative views of their school performance.**

- **Depression**

Teens living in single-parent or stepparent households are more likely to suffer from persistent depression than teens living in intact families. In a study completed at the University of South Carolina, researchers surveyed almost 700 junior high school students to investigate the prevalence of depression. Persistent symptoms of depression showed up significantly less often with teens living with both natural parents than among peers living with only one-parent or with one-parent and a stepparent.

Carol Z. Garrison, "Epidemiology of Depressive Symptoms in Young Adolescents," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 28 (1989), 343.

- **Abuse**

In a study supported by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, researchers discovered that the men and women in the survey were particularly likely to report childhood sexual abuse "if their predominant family situation had been one without one of their natural parents." Boys were "primarily at risk only in two family constellations": when they lived with their mothers alone or with two non-natural parents. "Girls showed markedly higher risk under all family circumstances except that of living with two natural parents."

David Finkelhorn, et al., "Sexual Abuse in a National Survey of Adult Men and Women: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Risk Factors," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 14 (1990), 19.

- **Early Sexual Activity**

Teens living in single-parent or stepparent households suffer from a number of serious problems less commonly seen among peers in intact families. In a study in Australia, psychiatrists investigated the well-being of over 2,100 Australian adolescents, many of whom had lost a parent through death or, more commonly, divorce. As in the United States, teens were much more likely (almost three times as likely) to have lost a father through death or divorce than a mother. Among youth who had lost a parent, the most common household situation was that of a teen living with his or her natural mother and "alternative father figure" (normally a stepfather). Overall, the researchers found that "adolescents from disrupted families reported higher levels of general health problems, were more neurotic, less extroverted, had poorer perceptions of their bodies, were more impulsive, and had more negative views of their school performance. They were also more likely to report both alcohol-related and psychological problems in their families, to have consulted a health professional regarding emotional problems, and to be sexually active." In short, the Australian researchers

interpret their findings as evidence that “adolescents who have lost a parent are in many ways different from those from intact families.”

Beverly Raphael et al., “The Impact of Parental Loss on Adolescents’ Psychological Characteristics,” *Adolescence* 25 (1990), 689.

- **Motherhood**

In observing 40 children (20 sibling pairs) at play in their mother’s presence and in their mother’s absence, researchers found a clear pattern: “When mothers were present, siblings engaged in more attending, helping, interacting and receiving. When mothers were absent, siblings engaged in more disapproval, independent play, ignoring, negative physical contact, talking and teasing.” Musun-Miller reasons that mothers may help foster “prosocial or proper behavior” among their children so that when she is present “they are more likely to be attentive, helpful and . . . cooperative” than when she is absent. In short, the evidence suggests that “who is present does make a difference” in children’s lives.

Linda Musun-Miller, “Effects of Maternal Presence on Sibling Behavior,” *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 12 (1991), 145.

- **Relationships**

In a study at the University of Michigan and the University of Massachusetts at Boston, researchers investigated the mental health of over 1200 high school students. The researchers discovered that, compared to students in intact families, “children in both step- and single-parent households tend to experience more life stresses and less supportive, more troubled relationships.” Compared to their peers in step- and single-parent households, teens in intact families generally suffered from fewer “strained or conflictual family relationships,” while enjoying higher levels of “parental affection and support.” The researchers also found that “youths in step-parent households report significantly more relationship problems with friends than do those in either single-parent or intact parent households.”

Susan Gore, Robert H. Aseltine, Jr., and Mary Ellen Colton, “Social Structure Life Stress and Depressive Symptoms in a High School Aged Population,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 33 (1992), 97.

- **Academics**

Adolescents who live in a stepfamily or with a single parent are much more likely to drop out of high school than peers who live in intact families. In a study at Princeton, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Louisiana

**...children in both step- and single-parent households tend to experience more life stresses and less supportive, more troubled relationships.**

***...remarriage does  
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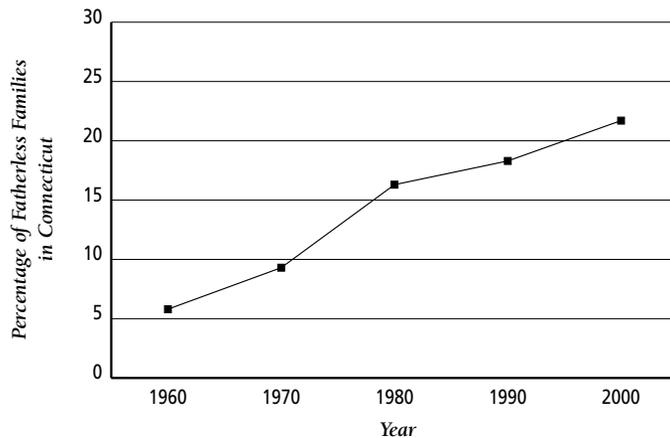
State University, researchers analyzed national statistics to determine the link between family background and high school graduation. Analysis revealed that not living with both parents at age 14 has negative consequences for children's high school graduation regardless of whether the child lives with a single parent, a parent and stepparent, or neither parent. "85 percent of adolescents who live in intact families between ages 14 and 17 graduate from high school, compared to just 67 percent of peers living in single-parent homes, 65 percent of peers living in stepfamilies and 52 percent living with either parent." The effects of family structure on high school graduation rates persisted even when more sophisticated statistical analysis took into account household income. Differences in household income could account for only a small part (15 percent) of the wide gap between graduation rates among teens in intact homes and teens not in intact homes. And since household income in stepfamilies was close to that of intact families, the researchers concluded that "remarriage does not recreate the same family situation that exists in stable two-parent families." The researchers view their findings as "consistent with the view that family disruption has harmful effects on educational performance and high school graduation."

Gary D. Sandefur, Sara McLanahan and Roger A. Wojtkiewicz, "The Effects of Parental Marital Status During Adolescence on High School Graduation," *Social Forces* 71 (1992), 103.

# The Decline and Promise of Traditional Families IV

## FATHER ABSENCE IN CONNECTICUT

*Fatherless Families in Connecticut  
1960-2000*



Source: *Census of the Population*, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

*The United States is now the world's leader in fatherless families.*

Alisa Burns, "Mother-Headed Families: An International perspective and the Case of Australia," *Social Policy Report* 6.1 (Spring 1992).

The percentage of fatherless families in Connecticut in 2000 was almost four times greater than in 1960. Whereas fatherless families only accounted for 5.8 percent of all families with children under 18 in 1960, they accounted for 21.7 percent of all families with children under 18 in 2000. Studies show that this dramatic increase in the percentage of fatherless families over the past 40 years has extremely negative implications for the health of our society.

For example, numerous studies indicate that there is a strong connection between criminal behavior and being raised in a fatherless family. A recent federal government study is typical in its conclusion that fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of engaging in criminal behavior.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, the empirical evidence shows that this strong connection between family structure and criminal behavior remains after controlling for other variables such as race, education, income level and neighborhood environment. Research has found that the proportion of fatherless families in a com-

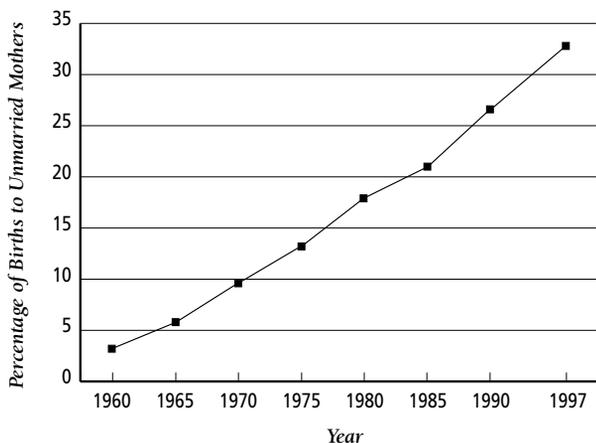
***...there is a dramatic correlation between being raised in a fatherless home and becoming a welfare recipient later in life.***

community predicts its rates of violent crime, but the community's poverty level does not.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, studies show that a strong correlation exists between the increase in fatherless families and the growth in the number of welfare recipients in the United States over the past 30 years. A study by the federal government in 1994 revealed that 90 percent of the current Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) caseload involves families with no father present in the home.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, research indicates that there is a dramatic correlation between being raised in a fatherless home and becoming a welfare recipient later in life. This correlation is all the more significant because it appears repeatedly in research data after controlling for other variables such as race and socio-economic status. For example, researchers in one major study found that being raised in a fatherless family triples the probability of becoming a welfare recipient for both Anglo-Americans and African-Americans.<sup>4</sup>

## BIRTHS TO UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN CONNECTICUT

### *Births to Unmarried Mothers in Connecticut 1960-1997*



*Source of Data:* Annual Registration Reports, Connecticut Department of Public Health.

*A study of neighborhoods in Cleveland, Ohio, found that the rate of out-of-wedlock births in a neighborhood was the single strongest predictor of six measures of childhood risk including low birth weight, infant death rate, teen birth rate, juvenile delinquency rate, and school reading performance.*

Claudia J. Coulton and Shanta Pandey, "Geographic Concentration of Poverty and Risk to Children in Urban Neighborhoods," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 35 (1992) pp.238-257.

The percentage of births to unmarried mothers in Connecticut in 1997 was over ten times greater than in 1960. Studies show that this dramatic increase in out-of-wedlock births has had negative implications for the health of our society in a number of areas.

First, the increase in the percentage of births to unmarried mothers has contributed to the dramatic increase in the fatherless families in Connecticut. It can also be assured to have contributed to the rising levels of those social pathologies, which studies have shown to be related to a decline in the percentage of traditional families.

Second, studies have shown that children who are born out-of-wedlock are significantly less likely to become healthy and productive adults than children born to traditional families. Research conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics shows that "both black and white unmarried women have a substantially higher risk of having infants with a very low birth rate" which in turn creates a high risk that children will suffer medical complications.<sup>5</sup>

***The percentage of births to unmarried mothers in Connecticut in 1997 was over ten times greater than in 1960.***

Another study found that children born out-of-wedlock are 50 percent more likely to suffer from such psychological problems as anxiety, depression, and hyperactivity.<sup>6</sup>

Third, national studies have found that births to unmarried mothers are the primary cause of the dramatic growth of the number of welfare recipients in the United States over the past 30 years.<sup>7</sup> In fact, over 50 percent of all new welfare cases nationally are due to the births to unmarried women.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, research studies show that young women are especially likely to bear children out-of-wedlock if they were born out-of-wedlock themselves. For example, in a comprehensive study of fatherless families published by Harvard University Press, researchers found that the risk of an out-of-wedlock birth ranged from 11 percent for teenage girls in two parents families to 31 percent for teenage girls in fatherless families. These results were calculated after adjusting for factors such as race, education, and place of residence.<sup>9</sup> According to other research studies, the primary reason for disparity in the rate of out-of-wedlock births is the fact that the onset of sexual activity tends to be delayed in the case of teenage girls from traditional families. Researchers at Columbia University found the “the risk of first sex prior to age 16 is 36 percent greater for women living in a non-intact family at age 14 than for those living with both biological parents.”<sup>10</sup> A similar study of teenage girls in the African-American community by researchers at the University of Chicago found that “girls from non-intact families have rates of initial intercourse that are one-third higher than those from intact families.”<sup>11</sup>

***...young women are especially likely to bear children out-of-wedlock if they were born out-of-wedlock themselves.***

### ***A Word on Abortion...***

The Family Institute of Connecticut is an organization that upholds the sanctity of human life and the dignity of women. It is therefore important to note that a life born out-of-wedlock is a blessed outcome in contrast to the elective destruction of unborn children that is an epidemic throughout the United States. Furthermore, the comparatively high incidence of abortions in Connecticut at least partially accounts for the fact that Connecticut is slightly below the national average in the percentage of out-of-wedlock births. For example, in Connecticut in 1996, 50 percent of teenage pregnancies ended in abortion, a proportion exceeded only by three other states and the District of Columbia.

### ***States with the Highest Abortion Ratio Among 15 to 19 Year Old Girls, 1996***

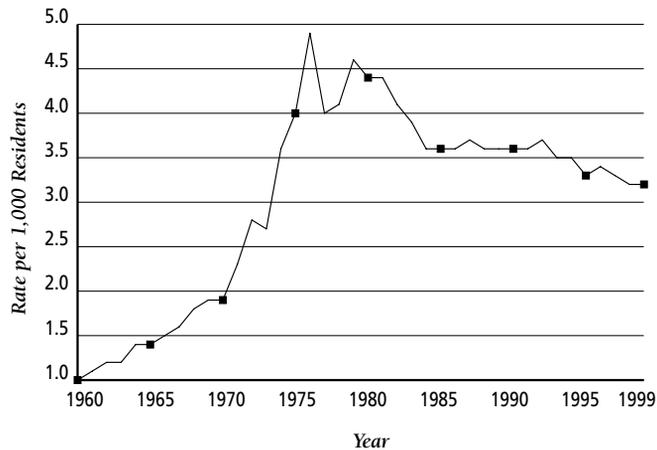
<b>STATE</b>	<b>ABORTIONS (per 100 teen pregnancies)</b>
New Jersey	58
New York	56
District of Columbia	54
Massachusetts	53
Maryland	50
<b>Connecticut</b>	50
U.S. Total	35

***...the comparatively high incidence of abortions in Connecticut at least partially accounts for the fact that Connecticut is slightly below the national average in the percentage of out-of-wedlock births.***

*Source of Data:* Alan Guttmacher Institute, "Teenage Pregnancy: Overall Trends and State-by-State Information," April, 1999.

## DIVORCE IN CONNECTICUT

### *Divorce Rate in Connecticut 1960-1999*



*Source: Annual Registration Reports, Connecticut Department of Public Health. Unlike most states, Connecticut doubles its divorce rate to show all persons divorced, rather than total divorces. For comparative purposes the rates shown here are for the total number of divorces.*

*Compared with children in intact families, children of divorced parents:*

- *Have higher rates of crime, drug use, child abuse, and child neglect;*
- *Perform poorly on reading, spelling, and math tests, and repeat grades and drop out of high school and college more frequently;*
- *Have higher incidents of behavioral, emotional, physical, and psychiatric problems, including depression and suicide; and*
- *Have an increased probability of divorce as adults and cohabit more frequently.*

Patrick F. Fagen and Robert Rector, "The Effects of Divorce on Children," *Heritage Foundation Backgrounders*, No. 1372, June 5, 2000, 1-2.

Although the divorce rate has declined since 1979, the fact remains that the divorce rate in Connecticut more than tripled between 1960 and 1998. Studies show that this tripling of the divorce rate has serious implications for the health of our society in a number of areas.

First, the increase in the divorce rate has contributed to the dramatic increase in fatherless families in Connecticut. It can also be assumed to have contributed to the rising level of those special pathologies which studies have found to be related to a decline in the percentage of traditional families.

Second, research shows that the divorce of parents inflicts significant long-term trauma on children. Dr. Judith Wallerstein's pioneering study of the social consequences of divorce found that over one third of all children whose parents' marriage ends in divorce experience clinical depression, difficulty relating to their peers, and lowered educational achievement.<sup>12</sup> Other studies show that children from divorced families are twice as likely to exhibit a wide range of problems as those who come from intact families, even after controlling for demographic and other socioeconomic differences.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, research shows that children of divorce share many of the emotional problems experienced by children who went through the Great Depression.<sup>14</sup>

Third, federal government studies show that divorce is second only to out-of-wedlock births as a contributor to the dramatic growth in the number of welfare recipients in the United States over the past 30 years.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, as in the case of births to unmarried mothers, studies show that divorce correlates heavily with the socially devastating phenomenon of child poverty in America. Researchers at the Social Science Research Council have found that on average women face a 27 percent decline in their standard of income after divorce.<sup>16</sup> Not surprisingly, a recent national survey revealed that four times more divorced women with children live under the poverty line than married women with children.<sup>17</sup>

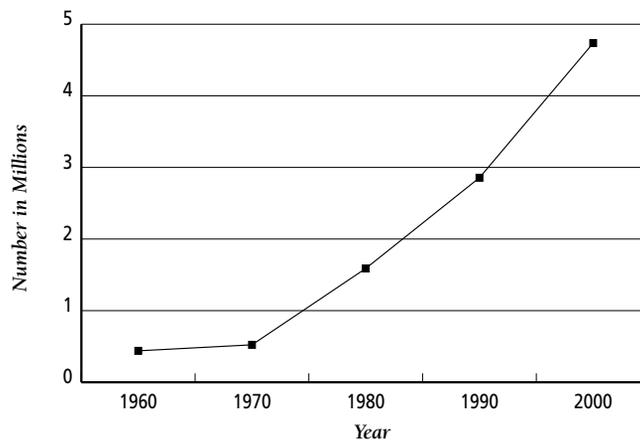
***Although the divorce rate has declined since 1979, the fact remains that the divorce rate in Connecticut has more than tripled between 1960 and 1998.***



### ***A Word on Unmarried Cohabitation...***

Over the past thirty years, cohabitation—living together before or in place of marriage—has emerged as a major social trend in Connecticut and the nation. Researchers have found that more than half of all first marriages are now preceded by living together, a residential pattern that was uncommon for most of the 20th century.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, polls have revealed increasing societal acceptance of this practice. For example, a poll conducted in March 2000 found that 56 percent of Americans believe that it is acceptable for an engaged couple to live together prior to marriage (March 15, 2000 Zogby America poll of 1,213 adults). Ironically, while many people advocate cohabitation as a means to giving marriage a safe “trial”, research reveals that the practice actually makes divorce more probable.<sup>19</sup> The latest estimates suggest about 1.5 million (36 percent) cohabitating households have children under the age of 15 in their homes.<sup>20</sup> Researchers have found that living in a cohabitating household negatively affects children. As an example, the 1996 poverty rate for children living in married-couple households was approximately 6 percent, compared to 31 percent for children living in cohabitating households.<sup>21</sup>

**Number of Unmarried, Cohabiting Adults  
in the United States**

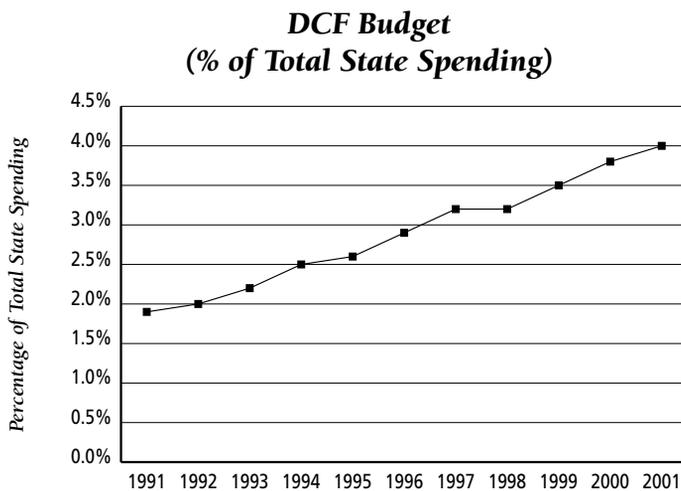


Source: *Census of the Population*,  
U.S. Department of Commerce,  
Bureau of the Census.

***Virtually all research has concluded that the chances of divorce are significantly greater for couples who cohabit before marriage than for those who do not.***

Alfred DeMaris and K. Vaninadha Roa, “Premarital Cohabitation and Subsequent Marital Stability in the United States: A Reassessment,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54 (1992).

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SPENDING



*Source:* Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

A final indication of the continued problems facing the traditional family in Connecticut is the total annual expenditures for Connecticut's Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF is a last resort program — DCF enters the picture when children have fallen through the cracks and when family deterioration has entered a crisis stage.

DCF expenditures serve as an important barometer of Connecticut family health. Rising expenditures signify a growing number of families in crises; conversely, falling DCF expenditures would be an important and heartening sign of family improvement.

With that barometer in mind, we researched DCF expenditures for the decade 1991 – 2001. Over the last decade, DCF expenditures more than doubled to \$479 million — an increase of 11.7 percent compounded annually. During the same period, overall Connecticut expenditures rose approximately 4 percent compounded annually. Viewed another way, the proportion of state spending on DCF rose from 2 percent in 1991 to 4 percent in 2001.

These are very troubling signs which indicate that Connecticut has a growing trend in worse-case family situations.

**...the proportion of state spending on DCF rose from 2 percent in 1991 to 4 percent in 2001.**

***A small fraction of the \$479 million spent in 2001 on DCF's last resort measures could make a significant difference in improving marriages...***

The Family Institute of Connecticut will work in the coming months and years to advocate for preventative measures such as Marriage Savers, the Fatherhood Initiative and conflict resolution programs. A small fraction of the \$479 million spent in 2001 on DCF's last resort measures could make a significant difference in improving marriages, assuring that more children are born into intact families, and ensuring that more Connecticut children have both a mother and a father in a lasting relationship. In the long run, these steps will lead to declining DCF expenditures and, more importantly, improve children's lives.

# The Social Costs of Family Decline

*The breakdown of the family contributes significantly to the major problems confronting our society today. Research data make unmistakably clear a strong relationship between broken families and the drug epidemic, the increase of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, the rise in violent crime and the unprecedented epidemic of suicide among children and adolescents.*

Dr. Armand Nicholi, Jr., Harvard Medical School, "The Challenge of Corporate Leadership as We Enter the New Century," Address to the Business Council, Williamsburg, VA, Oct. 17, 1996.

**I**t is almost impossible to establish conclusive proof of causation for most social pathologies. It is possible, however, to determine when there is a high degree of correlation between specific pathologies and environmental factors such as family configuration. With respect to the social pathologies examined in this report, a large number of social science research studies support the conclusion that a family decline is at least a significant cause (if not the primary cause) of the rising level of these social pathologies in Connecticut. Indeed, research studies have linked a decline in the percentage of traditional families to all of the following social pathologies currently confronting Connecticut: violent crime, juvenile delinquency, high rates of adult and youth incarceration, increasing levels of criminal behavior among girls, youth drug abuse and child poverty.

Significantly, the empirical evidence establishing a connection between the decline in the percentage of traditional families and the wide range of social pathologies in America is so compelling that there is now a clear consensus among researchers in both the public and private sectors who have studied the issue of family decline. For example, researchers at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have concluded that children who are raised in broken homes are at "dramatically greater risk" of drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness, suicide, low educational achievement, teenage pregnancy, and criminality.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, scholars at Harvard Medical School have reported observing an "unmistakably clear and strong relationship" between family decline and social pathologies such as drug abuse, violent crime, teenage pregnancy and youth suicide.<sup>23</sup>

Although some commentators have suggested that the decline of the traditional family in our society is evidence of a positive evolution of family structure in the direction of new "alternative" family forms, a large body of social science research supports the popular opinion that the erosion of the

**...children who are raised in broken homes are at "dramatically greater risk" of drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness, suicide, low educational achievement, teenage pregnancy, and criminality.**

**...the structure of the vital social institution of the family should be defined according to what configuration most benefits children and society as a whole.**

traditional family unit made up of a man and a woman is evidence of serious dysfunction in our society. Indeed, if the available social science data indicate anything at all, it is the reality that the decline in the percentage of two-parent families has been a catastrophe rather than a positive development for our society. Moreover, the same body of data supports the common-sense idea that the structure of the vital social institution of the family should be defined according to what configuration most benefits children and society as a whole. As explained previously, the family configuration which provides the best environment for children and the most stable foundation for society is a traditional family made up of a man and a woman united by marriage and living in the same household.

The same conclusion regarding the fallacy of attempts to characterize the decline in the percentage of traditional families in America as a positive evolution of family structure in the direction of new “alternative” family forms has been reached by commentators across the political and ideological spectrum. In warning of the danger of attempting to legitimize the decline of the traditional family under the euphemism of “alternative lifestyles,” sociologists Peter Berger and Brigitte Berger have remarked:

***The (two-parent) family... and no other conceivable structure... is the basic institution of society. If we have learned anything from the tumultuous activities surrounding the family in recent decades, it is that there are no alternatives or substitutes.***

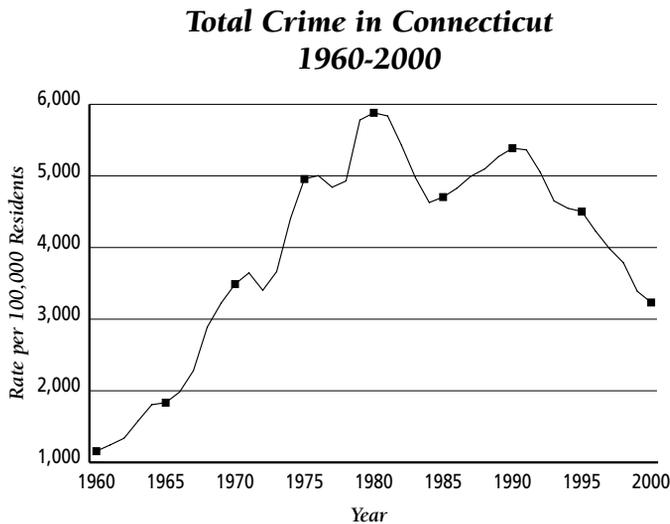
Peter Berger and Brigitte Berger, *The War Over the Family* (Anchor Press, 1983), 204.

Similarly, scholars associated with the research arm of the Democratic Leadership Council have offered this blunt assessment of the notion that the decline in the percentage of two-parent families in America represents the development of “alternative” family forms:

***Sharply rising rates of divorce, unwed mothers, and runaway fathers do not represent “alternative lifestyles.” They are rather patterns of adult behavior with profoundly negative consequences for children.***

Elaine Kamarack and William Galston, *Putting Children First: A Progressive Family Policy for the 1990s* (Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute, Democratic Leadership Council, 1990), 4.

## TOTAL CRIME IN CONNECTICUT



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

*Such family measures as the percentages of the population divorced, the percentages of the households headed by women, and the percentage of unmatched individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates.*

Michael R. Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, *A General Theory of Crime* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 103.

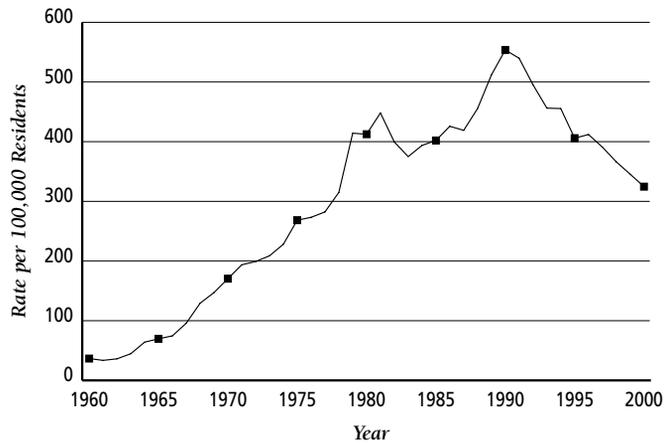
The total crime rate in Connecticut has more than doubled since 1960. The fact is that Connecticut as a whole is far less safe than it was thirty-nine years ago. However, the relative improvement in the last five years in many areas of family life have been mirrored by a significant decline in total crime over the last 10 years.

Significantly, a large body of social science data links the modern epidemic of crime in our society to the decline in the percentage of traditional families. For example, sociologists have found repeatedly that the relationship between family structure and crime is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime.<sup>24</sup> It is encouraging then, that as family life has shown cautious improvements over the last decade, crime figures have followed suit.

**...a large body of social science data links the modern epidemic of crime in our society to the decline in the percentage of traditional families.**

## VIOLENT CRIME IN CONNECTICUT

*Violent Crime Rate in Connecticut  
1960-2000*



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

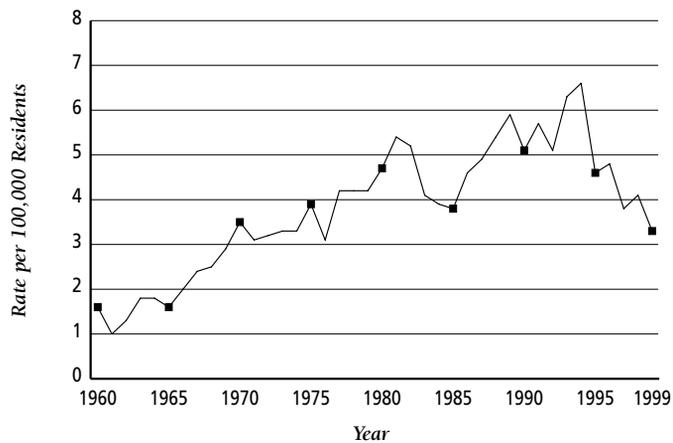
*The proportion of single-parent households in a community predicts its rates of violent crime...but the community's poverty level does not.*

Douglas A. Smith and G. Roger Jarjoura, "Social Structure and Criminal Victimization," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 25 (February, 1988), 27-52.

The violent crime rate is more than 9 times higher than in 1960.

## MURDERS IN CONNECTICUT

*Homicides in Connecticut  
1960-1999*



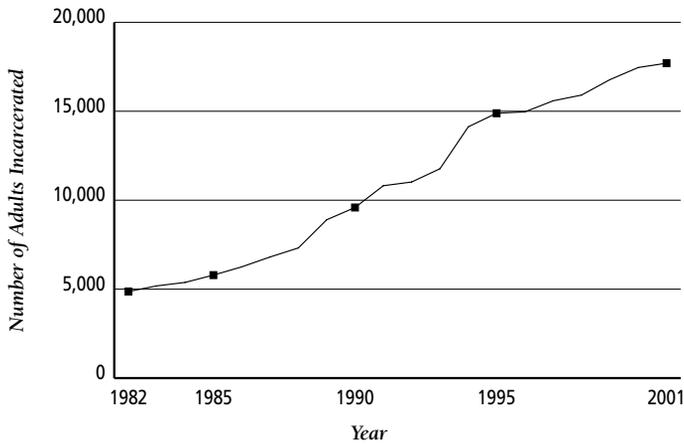
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

*Seventy-two percent of America's adolescent murderers, 70 percent of the long term-prison inmates, and 60 percent of the rapists come from fatherless homes.*

David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 124.

## PRISON POPULATION OF CONNECTICUT

### *Adults Incarcerated in Connecticut 1980-2000*



Source: Connecticut Department of Corrections.

*A 1991 survey of 13,986 state prison inmates found that 43% grew up in a single-parent household. An estimated 14% have lived in a household with neither biological parent. About 14% have lived in a foster home, agency, or other institution at some time during childhood.*

Father Facts 11, The National Fatherhood Initiative (Gaithersburg, MD, 1996) citing U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Survey of State Prison Inmates 1991*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1993).

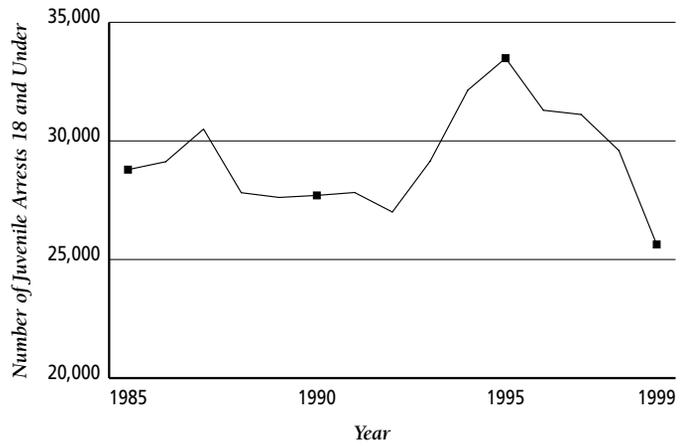
Many research studies link the modern epidemic of crime in our society to the decline in the percentage of traditional families. In fact, a number of studies have independently shown that there is a strong correlation between being raised outside of a two-parent family and being incarcerated as an adult. For example, 1991 survey of state prison inmates found that a total of 71 percent had spent their childhood outside of an intact, traditional family.<sup>25</sup>

***...1991 survey of state prison inmates found that a total of 71 percent had spent their childhood outside of an intact, traditional family.***

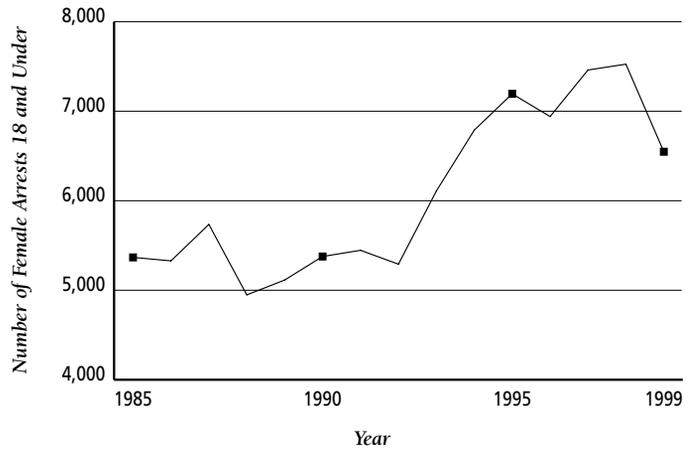
Source: Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Crimes Analysis Division and the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

## JUVENILE CRIME IN CONNECTICUT

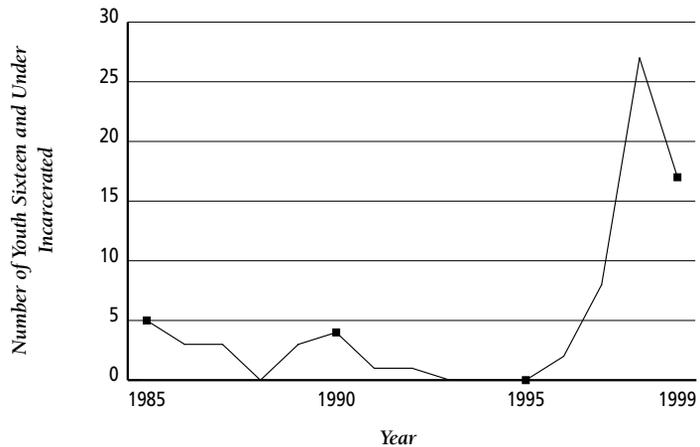
*Juvenile Crime in Connecticut  
1985-1999*



*Crime by Girls in Connecticut  
1985-1999*



*Children Incarcerated in Connecticut  
1985-1999*



***The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families.***

M. Anne Hill and June O'Neil, *Underclass Behaviors in the United States: Measurement and Analysis of Determinants*, (New York: City University of New York, 1993), 150.

***Studies reveal that even in high-crime inner-city neighborhoods, well over 90% of children from safe, stable, two-parent homes do not become delinquents.***

John E. Richters and Pedro E. Martinez, "Violent Communities, Family Choices, and Children's Chances: An Algorithm for Improving the Odds," *Development and Psychopathology*, 5 (1993), 609-627.

***Girls whose parents had divorced reported in engaging in a significantly greater number of delinquent acts than did their counterparts from intact families... These behaviors included, the use of illicit drugs... skipping school, and larceny.***

N. Kalter, B. Riemer, A. Brickman, and J.W. Chen, "Implications of Parental Divorce for Female Development," *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* 24, 5 (1985), 538-544.

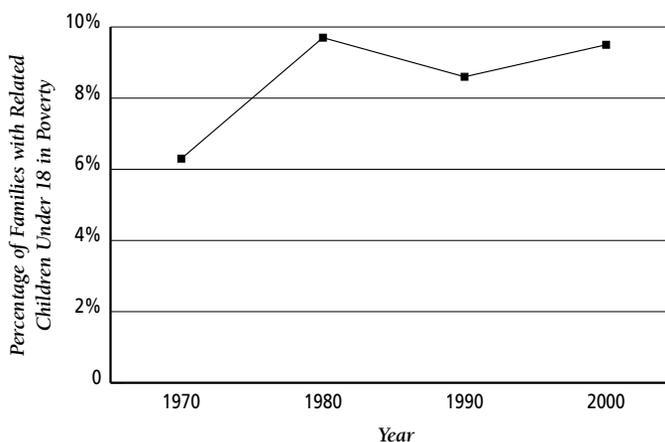
Unfortunately, state data on juvenile crime only stretches back two decades—to a time when family breakup was already close to its peak. However, national figures and incomplete data from Connecticut suggest that juvenile crime increased dramatically from 1960 to 1979 in our state.

Though total juvenile crime remains at close to the same level of 1985, crime by juvenile females and serious crimes by Connecticut's youngest residents have dramatically increased. This increase highlights the connection between family dissolution and serious social pathologies. Numerous studies have established a strong connection between the decline in the percentage of two-parent families and increased levels of criminal behavior by young people.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, the empirical evidence shows that this strong connection between family structure and criminal behavior by young people remains after controlling for other variables such as race, education, income levels and neighborhood environment.<sup>27</sup>

***Numerous studies have established a strong connection between the decline in the percentage of two-parent families and increased levels of criminal behavior by young people.***

## CHILD POVERTY IN CONNECTICUT

### *Children with Families in Poverty in Connecticut 1970-2000*



Source: Census of the Population,  
U.S. Department of Commerce,  
Bureau of the Census.

*Almost 75% of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11 years old. Only 20% of children in two-parent families will do the same.*

National Commission on Children, *Just the Facts: A Summary of Recent Information on America's Children and Their Families* (Washington, DC, 1993).

*It is no exaggeration to say that a stable, two-parent family is an American child's best protection against poverty.*

Elaine Kamarack and William Galston. *Putting Children First: A Progressive Family Policy for the 1990's*. (Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute, Democratic Leadership Council, 1990), 12.

**Approximately 9.5 percent of all families with children in Connecticut are currently living in poverty, up from 6.3 percent in 1960.**

Approximately 9.5 percent of all families with children in Connecticut are currently living in poverty, up from 6.3 percent in 1960.

It is important to understand the changing nature of child poverty in America. Historically, child poverty in America has been caused primarily by economic factors such as unemployment and low wages. Today, a large number of research studies indicate that the modern epidemic of childhood poverty is primarily the result of a decline in the percentage of traditional families. This data is so striking that David Ellwood, Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University, has declared that the vast majority of American children who spend any time in a single-parent home will experience poverty.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, child poverty in America today correlates more closely with family structure than it does with race. For example, a national survey revealed that white single mothers are two-and-a-half times more likely to have children living in poverty than traditional black families.<sup>29</sup>

The increased level of child poverty produced by the decline in the percentage of traditional families is especially harmful to society because it tends to have a devastating effect on the future prospects for children. For example, sociologists have found that “poverty during childhood affects both educational attainment and adult socioeconomic achievement.”<sup>30</sup> As a result, child poverty has pronounced ripple effects across generations. This in turn means that “child poverty is likely to be reproduced from generation to generation.”<sup>31</sup>

### ***Youth Drug Abuse in Connecticut***

Connecticut sorely lacks an integrated method of collecting drug-abuse data. Whereas other states, including Massachusetts, have survey data showing rates of teen and youth drug abuse going back to 1984, Connecticut has only recently begun to collect these important figures. Nationally, however, recent figures collected by the National Survey on Drug Abuse show that Connecticut continues to face a serious problem with youth drug addiction and abuse:

- 11.5% of 12-17 year olds in Connecticut reported use of any illicit drug in the last month in 1999, while the national average was 9.9%.
- In 1999, an estimated 7.7% of those living in Connecticut age 12 and older used an illicit drug in the last month.
- 12.4% of the high school students surveyed in Connecticut during 1999 reported using inhalants at some point in their lives.
- Of federally-sentenced offenders in Connecticut during 2000, 35.3% were charged with a drug offense.

### ***A Word on Government Spending...***

Although the population of Connecticut has grown by fewer than one million since 1960, combined federal and state government expenditures on a number of social programs has risen dramatically during this same period. Both the federal government and the State of Connecticut have spent unprecedented amounts of public money over the past 30 years on social programs intended to provide women and children with better education, better nutrition, better health care and an increased standard of living. In fact, the level of many social pathologies related to the two-parent family decline has risen in Connecticut during much of the same period that government social spending in a wide range of areas has also increased.

***Over 50 percent of all new welfare cases are due to births to unmarried women. Ninety percent of the current Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) caseload are families with no father present in the home.***

U.S. Congress, Committee on Ways and Means, *The Green Book*, Table 10-27 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 401-402.

***...poverty during childhood affects both educational attainment and adult socioeconomic achievement.***

## VI *The Need to Strengthen Traditional Families*

*The principal social objective of American government at every level should be to see that children are born to intact families and that they remain so.*

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, interview on *Meet the Press*  
(Sept. 19, 1993).

Obviously, all sectors of society, including local communities, business and religious communities have a critical role to play in building strong traditional families in Connecticut. Nothing in this report is intended to imply that reforms designed to strengthen traditional families must come primarily or exclusively from the public sector. On the contrary, this report is intended in significant part to encourage community leaders, business leaders and religious leaders to pursue reforms that will help to reverse the destructive dynamic of the decline of the traditional family in Connecticut.

At the same time, in light of the grave social emergency posed by the decline in the percentage of traditional families, there is also an urgent need for a bipartisan campaign to encourage and strengthen traditional families in Connecticut. If private businesses were failing at the alarming rate that traditional families were declining in Connecticut, public officials would mobilize to confront the economic emergency that such a development would present. But the tragic reality is that the decline in the percentage of traditional families in the state poses an even greater threat to the well-being of Connecticut than the specter of widespread business failure. This section is intended to provide public officials with a positive framework for pursuing public policies that protect and strengthen the critical social institution of the traditional family.

# ***Guiding Principles for Strengthening Traditional Families***

## ***1. Traditional Families are our Most Important Resource***

Two-parent families composed of a man and a woman united by marriage and a mutual commitment to raising biological or adopted children are the foundation of a healthy society. No other public or social institution can compare with the tremendously positive impact that traditional families have upon the society around them. Traditional families produce more productive citizens, lower crime rates, lower rates of child poverty, more stable communities, and less drain on the social welfare system of our commonwealth.

## ***2. Children Have the Best Chance of Success in a Traditional Family***

Social science research strongly indicates that children have the best chance of success when they are raised by a mother and a father in an intact family. Although a small minority of traditional families are seriously dysfunctional, the vast majority of traditional families provide the best environment for raising children to become healthy and responsible citizens.

## ***3. Parents Should be the Primary Care Givers and Educators in their Children's Lives***

Parents have the primary responsibility to provide for and protect the physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual health and well-being of their children. They also have the right not to be challenged or usurped in that role unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the physical, emotional or psychological health of the child is in imminent danger.

## ***4. Traditional Families are Vital to the Social Health of Connecticut***

In the economic sphere, most public officials recognize that the public policies which undermine private enterprise in Connecticut have a negative economic impact on the entire state. Public officials should recognize that a similar dynamic holds true in the social sphere with respect to traditional families. Public policies which undermine traditional families in Connecticut have a negative social impact on the entire state.

## ***5. Public Policies that Strengthen Traditional Families Strengthen All of Society***

Social science research strongly indicates that a wide range of social pathologies are directly related to a decline in the percentage of traditional families. For this reason, public policies which strengthen traditional families simultaneously strengthen all of society. Indeed, government has a compelling interest in pursuing public policies which strengthen traditional families because of the social benefits that traditional families provide to our entire society.

## ***6. State Welfare Agencies are a Poor Substitute for Parents***

In most sectors of the economy, state government agencies are a poor substitute for private enterprises. Similarly, in the vast majority of cases, parents are far better guardians of the health and well-being of their own children than any state government agency. For this reason, public policies that seek to replace parental authority with the impersonal authority of a government agency (except in the small minority of cases where there is clear and convincing evidence that the physical, emotional or psychological health of the child is in imminent danger) are harmful both to the children and to the social prosperity and well-being of state.



## ***7. The State Should Seek to Support Parents Rather than to Replace Them***

The State government should do everything within its power to support parents in their social role as primary caregivers for their own children rather than to seek to replace them. For example, state agencies should never use any limited delegation of parental authority over children (such as the limited delegation of authority over the education of children during school hours) to usurp parental authority in other areas unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the physical, emotional or psychological health of the child is in imminent danger

## ***8. No Legislation Should be Passed Without Considering the Impact on Families***

In the same manner that studies are prepared to evaluate the impact of proposed legislation on private enterprise or the environment, the government should carefully consider the impact that proposed legislation will have on families. To this end, proposed legislation which may have a significant impact upon families should be accompanied by a “Family Impact Statement” that will explain the direct and indirect effects of the proposed policy on families in Connecticut. At a minimum, this impact statement should examine whether the proposed legislation will tend to encourage and strengthen traditional families or will further exacerbate the decline of traditional families. Anticipating the impact of public policy on families is the first step to ensuring that the health and well-being of families are top priorities of state government.

# ***The Urgent Need for Public Policies to Strengthen Traditional Families***

**I**n keeping with these principles, state legislators and government officials should reject public policies that weaken and undermine the critical social institution of the two-parent family. This is the absolute minimum level of administrative and legislative action that public officials should take to stem the dramatic increase in social pathologies related to the decline in the percentage of traditional families in Connecticut. Indeed, in light of the grave social emergency facing Connecticut, it is not acceptable to pursue public policies that weaken two-parent families. Public policies that weaken or undermine intact families are clearly contrary to the public interest and extremely harmful to the security and prosperity of this state.

More important, public officials in Connecticut should recognize that they can best serve the public interest by actively encouraging and supporting the vital social institution of the traditional family. In the past periods of economic and military emergency, the full resources of state government have been mobilized to confront grave threats to the security and the prosperity of the Commonwealth. In the same manner, public officials at every level of the state government should do everything in their power to reverse the dynamic of two-parent family decline which is threatening to damage the fabric of our society beyond repair. To this end, state legislators and government officials should undertake a bipartisan effort to pursue a wide range of policies specifically designed to protect and strengthen traditional families. As a part of this effort, state legislators and government officials should consider action in the following public policy areas:

- ***Support for Marriage***

State and local officials should make supporting and strengthening marriage a top priority.

- ***Family-Friendly Government Reform***

Public policies that will make public officials more sensitive to the impact of legislation upon traditional families and help to ensure that the health and well-being of families are a top priority of state government.

- ***Fatherhood Initiatives***

Fatherhood campaigns to alert the public as well as business, community and religious leaders to the urgent need to actively address the social crisis of father absence and the decline of the traditional family.

- ***Welfare Reform***

Reforms to help encourage marriage by those receiving public assistance.

- ***Divorce Reform***

Public policies that will help to reduce the risk of divorce and restore justice to divorce proceedings for all adults and children involved.

- ***Tax Relief for Families***

Reforms to reduce the heavy tax burden on families so that a more reasonable share of family economic resources is available to parents raising children.

- ***Adoption Reform***

Public policies that will encourage and facilitate the adoption of children into traditional families rather than into foster care.

- ***Child Support Enforcement Reform***

Reforms to raise child support collections closer to the 100 percent level and to make it clear to all fathers that they cannot escape financial responsibility for their children.

In short, public officials at every level of state government should do everything within their power to strengthen the social institution that offers the most promise of reducing crime, lowering drug rates, and improving social health in Connecticut—the traditional family.

***...public officials in Connecticut should recognize that they can best serve the public interest by actively encouraging and supporting the vital social institution of the traditional family.***

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