

Social Welfare Reforms in Michigan: Intent and Implications for the Poor

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Research Report No. 17

December 1996

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes laws and conditions of social welfare reform up to December 1996. It describes and evaluates Michigan reforms, including the termination of General Assistance Program, creation of new program to strengthen Michigan families, and creation of new rules of eligibility for the recipient of AFDC/Family Independence Program, Food Stamps, and Medicaid. It describes socioeconomic characteristics of the population in Michigan, the main features of the traditional and new social welfare system, and critically examines these reforms and their underlying assumptions. He indicates that these reforms do not address poverty and its increase in the past few decades, especially the large number of innocent children and hardworking single women who are living in poverty. Also the reforms do not mention historical processes leading to the structural determinants of poverty beyond the control of an individual. These reforms do not address the fact that an overwhelming majority of people on welfare are minority populations of blacks, Native Indians, and Hispanics, unemployed, retired, sick, disabled, and mentally retarded people. These reforms do not address the fate of children whose parents do not fulfill the requirements of social contract, job training, and responsibility.