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**Immigrants, Welfare Reform, and the U.S. Safety Net**

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## Executive Summary

### Immigrants, Welfare Reform, and the U.S. Safety Net

Beginning with the 1996 federal welfare reform law - the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) - legal, non-citizen immigrants became ineligible for many federal safety net programs. Prior to the passage of welfare reform, these legal, non-citizen immigrants had been eligible for many of these safety net programs on the same terms as citizens.

A central tenet of welfare reform was the devolution of responsibility by the federal government to the states for certain aspects of the safety net. One component of this power transfer gave states the responsibility to set eligibility rules for many safety net programs for legal, non-citizen immigrants (unauthorized immigrants are generally ineligible for almost all safety net programs both before and after welfare reform). In the wake of welfare reform, many states took advantage of this new power and restored access to the safety net for immigrants that had been cut out in the federal welfare reform law. Other states used this new power to *further reduce* eligibility for legal non-citizen immigrants. Now 15 years after welfare reform, states are legislating immigration policies in wide ranging areas including law enforcement, identification/driver's licenses, and hiring practices/employment. Thus, with hindsight it is clear that the 1996 welfare reform ushered in a new period of active state immigration policy and "immigration policy federalism."

All of these changes have led to considerable confusion about immigrant eligibility for safety net programs. In the years since the welfare reform of 1996, participation in the safety net has decreased for authorized immigrants compared to citizens, and immigrants below the poverty line have had to rely on their own earnings (vs. the safety net) to an increasing degree compared to similarly poor citizens. Even immigrants who suffered no change in eligibility may have reduced their utilization of safety net programs in what some studies have referred to as a "chilling effect". Perhaps in part due to these changes, the recent recession led to larger increases in child poverty in immigrant-headed households compared to native-headed households.

Using a sample of approximately 150,000 persons from the 1995 to 2010 Current Population Survey, Marianne Bitler and Hilary Hoynes examine the status of the U.S. safety net for immigrants and their family members. In some analyses, they separate out naturalized immigrants who are citizens from other non-citizen immigrants. They pay particular attention to the participation of immigrant households vs. native households in the central means-tested programs for families with children. These programs include:

- Aid to Families with Dependent Children/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)

### **Declining Safety Net Participation among Immigrants**

Immigrants generally participate in the safety net at *lower* rates than do natives of similar income levels. This is true both before and after welfare reform for TANF, food stamps, and SSI. The main exception is the school lunch program where immigrants have consistently participated at higher rates than citizens. For Medicaid/SCHIP participation, the results depend on the household mix: immigrant children of immigrant parents are less likely to participate in Medicaid/SCHIP across the entire time period, and citizen children of immigrant parents are about as likely as children of citizen parents to participate. This last result is an important indicator that, at least in the case of Medicaid/SCHIP, citizen-children in mixed homes did not reduce safety net utilization when the eligibility status of their parents changed.

National trends in safety net participation are broadly consistent with the finding of reduced immigrant access to the safety net in the wake of welfare reform. In Table 1, difference-in-difference estimates of the change in safety net participation for immigrants versus natives in 2008-2009 compared to 1994-1995 are presented. These simply take the change in participation for immigrants and subtract the change in participation for native residents (those born in the US or those born abroad to citizen parents). The results show that immigrant food stamp participation has declined by 5.7 percentage points relative to citizens; immigrant SSI participation has declined by 1.6 percentage points relative to citizens; School lunch participation declined by 1.2 percentage points, and cash welfare increased by 3.2% for immigrants relative to citizens, but the differences are not statistically significant. Medicaid/SCHIP provides the main exception to the pattern, with an *increase* of 4.2 percentage points for immigrants relative to citizens. This may reflect SCHIP’s outreach efforts aimed at immigrant families.

Table 1.

	Immigrant vs. Native Safety Net Participation Trends 2008/2009 vs. 1994/1995
Food Stamps	-5.7%*
Cash Welfare for families with children	3.2%
SSI	-1.6%*
School Lunch	-1.2%
Medicaid/SCHIP	4.2%*

\*statistically significant at 10% level

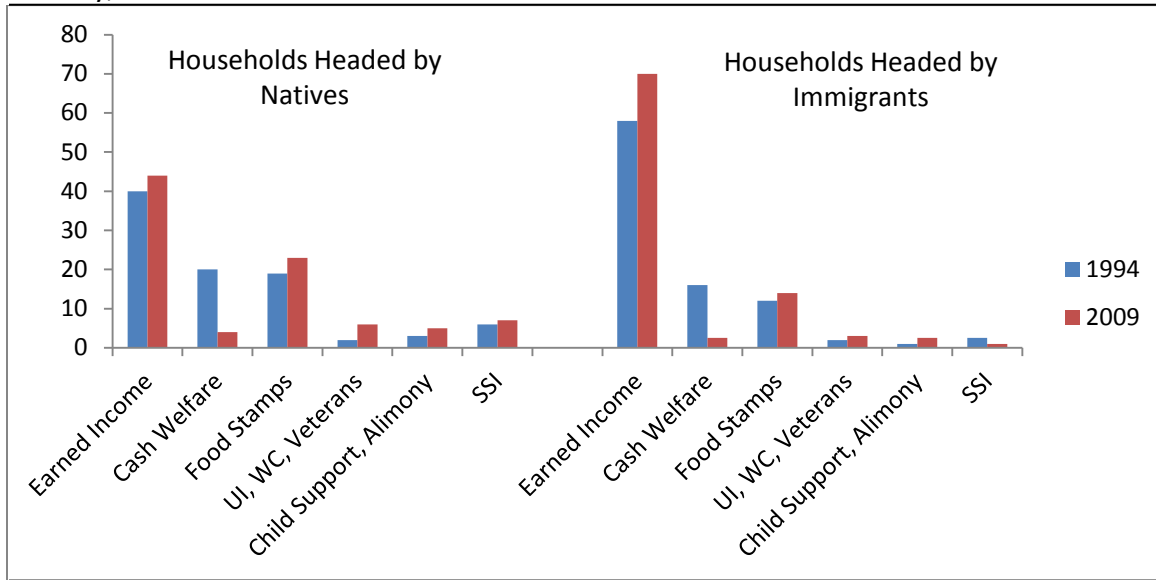
The trends shown in Table 1 do not take into account *when* the immigrants arrived in the U.S. Post-welfare reform immigrant eligibility rules are more generous to longer term residents. As would be expected given this fact, recently arrived immigrants have larger reductions in use of cash welfare and food stamps, and significantly smaller increases in use of Medicaid/SCHIP than are reflected in this table.

### **Increasing Reliance on Earnings for Immigrant-Headed Households**

Households headed by low-income immigrants rely more on their own earnings compared to households headed by low-income citizens and the gap has grown following welfare reform. To see this trend, refer to Figure 1 which shows the share of the quantity of household cash income plus food stamps contributed by several sources for children in poverty. Sources are compared for a year before welfare reform (1994) and a year following welfare reform (2009). The left side of Figure 1 shows results for households headed by natives, the right side of Figure 1 shows results for households headed by immigrants.

Figure 1 makes clear that households headed by low-income immigrants rely much more heavily on their own earnings compared to similarly poor native-headed households. In 2009, for example, almost 70% of household income comes from earned income for immigrants compared to roughly 45% for citizens. This difference was present before welfare reform, but has grown since that time. In addition, Figure 1 shows the declining role of cash welfare, and the increasing role played by food stamps and household earnings for both immigrants and citizens.

Figure 1: Share of Income by Various Sources for Households with Children Below 100% Official Poverty, 1994 & 2009



### Immigrant Child Poverty More Severe During the Great Recession

Children from immigrant-headed households fared worse than children from native-headed households during the recent recession. The Great Recession of 2007-2009 affected different states with varying degrees of severity. Taking advantage of this variation, the authors reached several conclusions:

- First, states experiencing a more severe recession also experienced a greater increase in child poverty.
- Second, child poverty rates were higher for children in immigrant-headed households compared to native-headed households in every state.
- Third, an increase in state unemployment led to larger increases in poverty for children from immigrant-headed households compared to native-headed households.
- Fourth, the safety net acted to dampen the effects of the recession on child poverty for native-headed households but offered measurably less protection for children in immigrant-headed households.

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## I. Introduction

Beginning with the 1996 federal welfare reform law-the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act or PRWORA-many of the central safety net programs in the U.S. eliminated eligibility for legal immigrants, who had been previously eligible on the same terms as citizens. These dramatic cutbacks affected eligibility not only for cash welfare assistance (Aid to Families with Dependent Children/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF) for families with children, but also for food stamps (now Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or SNAP, Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Subsequent federal legislation passed over the next decade reinstated immigrant eligibility for some, but not all, of these programs leading to a confusing patchwork of eligibility rules varying by immigrant status, arrival year, and program.

A central tenet of welfare reform was the devolution of responsibility to states for designing their TANF programs. But a component of this that was not widely discussed in the context of welfare reform is that the 1996 law also gave states the responsibility to set eligibility rules for many safety net programs for legal immigrants, policy previously solely in the federal realm. In the wake of welfare reform, as we discuss below, many states took advantage of this new power and restored access to the safety net for immigrants that had been cut out in the federal welfare reform law. Now 15 years after welfare reform, states are legislating immigration policies in wide ranging areas including law enforcement, identification/driver's licenses, and hiring practices/employment (for example see National Conference of State Legislatures 2011). Thus, with hindsight it is clear that the 1996 welfare reform ushered in a new period of active state immigration policy and "immigration policy federalism."

The focus in the welfare reform legislation on scaling back the safety net for immigrants was, in some part, a response to concerns that generous public benefits lead to in-migration to the U.S. and interstate flows of immigrants responding to “welfare magnets” (e.g., Borjas 1999) although the empirical evidence does not uniformly support this theory (e.g., Zavodny 1999, Kaushal 2005, Van Hook and Bean 2009). Further, the scaling back of immigrant access to the safety net was also a response to concerns about higher participation among immigrants compared than natives (Borjas 1995) although other studies find lower participation rates (Capps, Fix, and Henderson 2009). Higher rates of participation by immigrants are in part explained by immigrants’ lower incomes, and are concentrated among the elderly (Borjas and Hilton, 1996; Hu, 1998) and refugee populations (Fix and Passel 1994). Notably, noncitizen use of Supplemental Security Income (cash welfare for the aged and disabled) rose by 80 percent between 1990 and 1995 (Social Security Administration 2010).<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, we comprehensively examine the status of the U.S. safety net for immigrants and their family members. In doing so, we examine the central means tested programs for families with children including TANF, SNAP, SSI, Medicaid, SCHIP, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) as well as Unemployment Insurance (UI). We begin by documenting the policy changes that affected immigrant eligibility for these programs. We then use the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey for survey years 1995-2010 along with administrative data (where available) to analyze trends in program participation, income and poverty among immigrants (and natives). We pay particular attention to the recent period and examine how immigrants and their children are faring in the “Great

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion of the political context for the immigrant policy changes is based on Haskins (2009).



Recession” with an eye toward revealing how these policy changes have affected the success of the safety net in protecting this population. While we analyze data pre- and post- welfare reform, our analysis is descriptive and we cannot necessarily claim to identify the causal impacts of reform.

Ours is not the first study to examine the impacts of welfare reform on immigrants. Many studies document a decline in immigrant use of the safety net following passage of PRWORA<sup>2</sup>. This reflects the direct effect of limiting eligibility to groups of previously covered immigrants. However, some results indicate that the relative decline in immigrant participation is in part due to a differential response to the strong labor market of the late 1990s due to immigrant’s being located in different states and having lower skill levels, compared to natives (Lofstrom and Bean 2002, Haider et al. 2004). In addition, many papers argue that there has been a “chilling effect” (Fix and Passell 1999) of the policy change, leading to reductions in program participation for groups and programs even where there was no change in program eligibility. A growing literature examine impacts of these policy changes on outcomes including naturalization (Van Hook 2003), employment (Kaestner and Kaushal 2005, Lofstrom and Bean 2002), food insecurity (Borjas 2004), health insurance (Borjas 2003, Kaushal and Kaestner 2005), birth outcomes (Joyce et al 2001), poverty status (Borjas, 2011), and location (Kaushal 2005).

Given this existing literature, our study makes three contributions. First, we update the descriptive evidence on program participation among immigrants and natives using data through 2009. Second, we explore how the composition of income differs between lower-

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<sup>2</sup> For a recent and comprehensive review of the literature on welfare reform and immigration see Fix, Capps, and Kaushal (2009).

income immigrants and natives before and after welfare reform. Finally, we examine trends in poverty and extreme poverty with a focus on the differences in the recent Great Recession.

Our analysis yields several interesting and important findings for families with children. First, we show that immigrants generally participate in the safety net at lower rates than natives once we restrict ourselves to comparisons within the set of lower-income families.<sup>3</sup> This is true for almost all programs we consider and is true both before and after welfare reform. Second, the national trends in safety net participation are broadly consistent with the finding of reduced immigrant access to the safety net post welfare reform. Similarly, our results show that immigrants rely more on earnings as a source of income (than do natives) and the degree of reliance has increased post-welfare reform. Finally, using variation in state labor market conditions, we find that child poverty rates for immigrant-headed households have risen with unemployment in the Great Recession at rates far exceeding the rise for children in native-headed households. That is, a given increase in unemployment causes a larger increase in poverty for children in immigrant headed than native headed households. In addition, the safety net has acted to dampen the effect of the Great and 2001 recessions for children of the native born but not for children of immigrants.

The remainder of the paper is as follows. In section II we describe the safety net pre- and post- welfare reform for immigrants and natives. In section III we describe our data, sample, and the definitions used in our analysis. We present the results for program participation in section IV and income and poverty in section V. We conclude in section VI.

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<sup>3</sup> Since immigrant families are less advantaged than the native born, and most safety net programs condition on being low income, a comparison of participation rates in the full population is not “apples” to “apples.” We discuss this further below.

## II. U.S. Safety Net Programs, Immigrants and Policy Changes

### *A. Overview of the Safety Net*

In this paper, we focus on the means-tested safety net for families with children. Our definition of “safety net” programs encompasses programs that insure against short-term or long-term negative shocks to income. By “means tested” programs, we mean those that are limited to households, families, and individuals with low income (and sometimes low assets). Using this definition, Table 1 presents an overview of the central safety net programs for families with children, split by cash versus non-cash transfers. The two primary programs for low income families include cash welfare (previously called Aid to Families with Dependent Children or AFDC, and now called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF) and food assistance through the Food Stamp Program (now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP). Food Stamps is by far the larger program of the two (especially post welfare reform): in 2009, 15 million families (or single individuals) received food stamps at a cost of \$50 billion (2009 \$) compared to fewer than 2 million families receiving cash welfare at a cost of \$9 billion. Food stamps are also available more universally, with all types of families being eligible. The Earned Income Tax Credit provides tax based aid for low income working families with children and in 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 25 million families received the EITC at a cost of \$51 billion (2008 \$).<sup>4</sup> Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is another cash “welfare” program, which primarily serves poor elderly and disabled adults, but also is received by disabled children in poor families. Finally, although not means tested, unemployment compensation is obviously a critical element of the safety net and the central

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<sup>4</sup> There is also a small EITC for childless individuals.

income replacement program in recessions. The program differs from the programs above because it is a social insurance program, determined by work history, and not conditioned on current income. In 2009, on average, about 6 million persons per week received some form of unemployment compensation at a cost of nearly 131 billion dollars (2009 \$).

The average monthly payment per recipient family in 2009 is \$397 for cash welfare (TANF) and \$276 for food stamps. Earned Income Tax Credit payments in 2008 averaged \$2,046 per year, or \$171 per month. In the final column in the table, we report results from a recent Center for Budget and Policy Priorities study (Sherman 2009) on the number of children that these programs lifted out of poverty (in 2005). The EITC leads, having lifted 2.6 million children out of poverty, followed by food stamps at 2.2 million, and then by SSI and TANF which each removed about 1 million children from poverty.

Beyond these cash or near cash programs, important in-kind programs are also part of the safety net for low income families. Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) provide health insurance to low income children (both) and families (Medicaid). In 2007, Medicaid served 27.5 million children at a cost of 53.7 billion dollars (2009 \$).<sup>5</sup> The National School Lunch Program provides free and reduced price meals for nearly 20 million children under 185% of the Federal Poverty Level every day at the cost of 7.5 billion dollars, and subsidizes hot lunches for another 11 million paying students. The School Breakfast program provides around 9 million students each day meals for a cost of about 2.5 billion dollars. Although not in the table, we consider other in-kind safety net benefits such as public

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<sup>5</sup> SCHIP was created in 1997 to provide insurance coverage for low- to moderate-income children, that is, those in families with incomes just above states' Medicaid eligibility threshold. Some states have SCHIPs that are expansions of their Medicaid programs for children, and others have stand-alone programs.

housing/rental vouchers and low income energy assistance program (LIHEAP).<sup>6</sup> The CBPP study cited above does not provide estimates of the number of children lifted from poverty by these in-kind programs. However, the recent Census Bureau study on the new supplemental poverty measure (details discussed below) does calculate the reduction in the new supplemental measure from including many of these in-kind programs in resources. Here, the EITC causes the largest reduction in the supplemental poverty measure, bringing the 2010 child poverty rate from 22.4% to 18.2%. SNAP also leads to a relatively large reduction from 21.2% to 18.2%. Smaller reductions occur for housing subsidies, the school lunch program, and LIHEAP (Short 2011).

### *B. Eligibility Rules and Benefits*

Before outlining the changes in immigrant eligibility post-welfare reform, we review the eligibility and benefit rules for the main safety net programs. Cash welfare for low income families started with AFDC, a program created by the Social Security Act of 1935. The program was jointly funded by the state and federal governments (with a higher federal matching rate for expenditures made by lower income states). States had the authority to set benefit levels, while federal rules dictated most of the remaining eligibility and benefit rules. A family was eligible if they satisfied income and asset tests and assistance was primarily limited to single women with children. The benefits were structured in a manner typical for income support programs: if a family had no income, they received the maximum benefit or “guarantee.” As their earnings (or allowable income) increased, their benefit was reduced by the benefit

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<sup>6</sup> Another element of the safety net is Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) which provides food packages and nutritional counseling to income-eligible pregnant and post-partum women and children up to age 5. Some states also provide general assistance to low-income individuals or have state-specific supplements to the EITC or SSI.

reduction rate, leading to an implicit tax rate on earned income. Historically, this rate has varied between 67% and 100%, providing strong disincentives for work (Moffitt 1983). Due to high benefit reduction rates and relatively low maximum benefits, AFDC transferred income to families substantially below the poverty line. For example, prior to welfare reform under AFDC, the median state provided benefits to families with income up to 68 percent of poverty and the median state's benefit level for a family of three was about 36% of the 1996 poverty guideline (U.S. House of Representatives 1996).

Welfare reform began in the early 1990s, when many states were granted waivers to modify their AFDC programs from existing federal rules. About half of the states implemented some sort of welfare waiver between 1992 and 1995. This was followed by federal welfare reform with passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in 1996, replacing AFDC with TANF. The key elements of state waivers and TANF legislation include: work requirements, lifetime time limits on the duration of welfare receipt, financial sanctions for failing to adhere to work requirements or other rules, and enhanced earnings disregards. These changes were designed to facilitate the transition from welfare to work and to reduce dependence on cash welfare. States have considerable discretion in setting TANF policies, but by federal law, programs must include work requirements and lifetime time limits of 5 years or less.<sup>7</sup>

Food Stamps or SNAP is also a means-tested program (whereby eligible families and individuals must satisfy income and asset tests) and benefits are also assigned using maximum benefits and tax rates on earned income. The similarities with AFDC/TANF end there. First, food

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about reform, including the considerable variation across states in the timing and specifics of policy changes, see Bitler and Hoynes (2010) and Grogger and Karoly (2005).

stamps is a federal program with all funding (except for 50 percent of administrative costs) provided by the federal government. Second, unlike virtually all cash programs in the U.S., food stamp eligibility is not limited to certain targeted groups such as families with children, aged, and the disabled.<sup>8</sup> Third, the benefit reduction rate is relatively low (30%) and the income eligibility threshold is relatively high (130 percent of the poverty guideline). The lower benefit reduction rate means that the food stamp program serves not only the nonworking poor (those receiving cash welfare) but also the working poor. Using benefits dispersed on debit cards (which replaced paper vouchers) recipients are allowed to use their benefits to buy a wide array of food items (although not prepared foods) yet the behavioral response of food expenditures to food stamps is similar to the response to cash (Fraker et al., 1992; Ohls et al., 1992; Hoynes and Schanzenbach, 2009). Post-welfare reform, food stamps is the key safety net program in the U.S., and the only one that is both “universal” (based almost exclusively on economic need) and that has a fully funded entitlement. Caseloads and benefits adjust automatically with increased eligibility for the program (recessions) and costs are uncapped.

The EITC is a federal tax credit for low income working families; more than half the states have supplemental EITC credits. The EITC is primarily available to families with children although there is a small credit for childless tax filers. The credit is a function of earnings and number of children and, due to a relative low phase-out rate of about 20 percent, extends relatively high in the income distribution. For example, in 2011 the maximum credit is \$3,094

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<sup>8</sup> Post PWRORA, the only general limitation on eligibility is for able bodied adults without dependents, who were limited in how many months of food stamps they could get in a given time period. These restrictions for some adults have been lifted in many states during the Great Recession.

(\$5,112) and eligibility extends to earnings of \$36,052 (\$40,964) for families with one child (two or more children).

The other safety net programs (public housing and vouchers/rent subsidies, free and reduced price school lunch and breakfast, SSI, Medicaid, WIC and LIHEAP) are income and (in some cases) asset tested and targeted. For example, SSI is only available to disabled adults and children while school lunch and breakfasts are available only for school aged children.

### *C. Immigrants and the Safety Net*

Prior to welfare reform, there was a “bright line” that distinguished between legal immigrants and unauthorized residents in determining eligibility for safety net programs. Legal immigrants (lawful permanent residents or LPRs) were eligible for most safety net programs on the same terms as citizens while unauthorized immigrants were not. Those in the country legally, but temporarily, such as residents on student visas were also generally ineligible for these programs. There were exceptions: unauthorized immigrants maintained eligibility for free and reduced price School Lunch and Breakfast, WIC, emergency Medicaid, and state funded emergency programs. In addition, refugees and asylum seekers also sometimes faced different rules than others. For the tax-based safety net, EITC recipients are required to have valid social security numbers; so again LPRs are eligible while unauthorized immigrants are not.<sup>9</sup>

The landscape for authorized immigrant eligibility for the safety net changed dramatically with passage of PRWORA and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). New bright lines separated eligibility for LPRs versus naturalized citizens and for LPRs in the country prior to PRWORA (known as pre-enactment immigrants)

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<sup>9</sup> Unauthorized immigrants can file and pay taxes using an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN). They are not, however, eligible to receive the EITC.



versus those entering the country after PRWORA (post-enactment immigrants). Further, these new rules affected not only eligibility for TANF (the main subject of the PRWORA legislation) but also eligibility for SSI, food stamps, Medicaid, and when it was introduced in 1997, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

The PRWORA and IIRIRA policy changes are summarized in Table 2. For each of the main safety net programs, we document eligibility for pre- and post-enactment immigrants, and within those groups for “qualified” immigrants (consisting of LPRs, refugees, asylum seekers, and certain battered spouses and children) and for “exempted” immigrants among the qualified that faced (in some cases) more lenient eligibility requirements (refugee and asylum seekers, those with 40 quarters of work in the U.S., and military). Not included in the table are “unqualified” immigrants (all other immigrants including unauthorized immigrants and those with permission to remain in the United States but without legal permanent resident status) who before and after welfare reform are ineligible for the programs in Table 2.

As noted above, prior to welfare reform citizens and LPRs were treated identically in terms of eligibility for these safety net programs; thus in the first column of Table 2 all groups are identified as eligible. Following welfare reform, as shown in column 2 of Table 2, federal law extended eligibility for TANF and Medicaid to pre-enactment immigrants while post-enactment immigrants were barred from receiving benefits in those programs until they had been in the U.S. five years.<sup>10</sup> The eligibility changes were even more severe for food stamps and SSI—for

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<sup>10</sup> As documented in the table, refugees and asylum seekers and those in the military face different rules. Given they are a relatively small share of total qualified immigrants, we do not discuss these rules in the text.

those programs qualified non-exempt pre- and post-enactment immigrants (LPRs) were barred from receiving benefits until they had accumulated 10 years of work history.<sup>11</sup>

Eligibility was unchanged for school lunch and breakfast, where access is dictated by court decision for school based programs (Wasem 2010) and the EITC. Notably, U.S. born children of immigrants, who constitute the great majority of children in immigrant-headed families, are citizens and remain eligible for all programs.

In addition to these new rules, PRWORA essentially devolved responsibilities governing immigrants' rights for public benefits to the states. As a result, states gained the authority to deny benefits to qualified immigrants. This is indicated in the table by noting that the "state option to bar" is permissible. States also gained the authority to grant eligibility to immigrants who were made ineligible by the federal welfare reform law. Interestingly, PRWORA and IIRIRA seemed to have set in motion a movement whereby states are increasingly involved in immigration policies, a realm historically governed by federal policies. As of 2011, states are not only passing laws concerning immigrant access to public benefits, but also passing laws regarding hiring and access to employment, driver's licenses, higher education, and so on.

In the decade following welfare reform, subsequent law reinstated eligibility for some groups and some programs. These law changes are also documented in Table 2. For example, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act reinstated benefits for pre-enactment immigrants for SSI. A 1998 agriculture bill restored food stamp eligibility to pre-enactment LPR children, disabled persons, the blind, and the elderly. Later, the 2002 Farm Bill restored food stamp eligibility to all LPR

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<sup>11</sup> The 1996 IIRIRA also changed rules for those who sponsor legal immigrants arriving or becoming LPRs, requiring that sponsors' income be treated as available to the immigrants when assessing eligibility for needs-based assistance costs.

children and disabled persons, regardless of their time resident in U.S. It also restored food stamp eligibility to LPR adults in the country for five or more years. In 2009, the SCHIP reauthorization bill lifted the 5-year bar on participation for post-enactment immigrants for Medicaid and SCHIP for children and pregnant women.

The PRWORA legislation only affects federal funding for safety net programs. Consequently, in the face of the withdrawal of federal support for some LPRs, many states chose to maintain coverage for legal immigrants with state-funded replacement coverage (known as “fill in” programs). Additionally, with the new authority given to them by PRWORA, some states *further reduced* eligibility for pre-enactment immigrants (who were still eligible under the federal law). We document these state policies for TANF, Medicaid, SCHIP, SSI and Food Stamps in Appendix Tables 1-5. In those tables, an “X” indicates that a state, in a given year, provides benefits for the specified immigrant group (e.g., pre-enactment, post-enactment). Here we simply document these program changes and conduct a descriptive assessment of immigrants pre- and post- welfare reform. We leave to future work the analysis of the role played by the policies enacted by the states.<sup>12</sup>

With all these changes, affecting various groups and programs differently, it would not be surprising if there was (and is) considerable confusion about immigrant eligibility for safety net programs. Many studies have documented so-called “chilling effects”—that is, a reduction in utilization for programs in the absence of a change in eligibility (see Fix, Capps and Kaushal 2009 for a review).

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<sup>12</sup> A growing literature uses this state-year policy variation in access to the safety net to estimate the impact of reforms on safety net participation (Borjas 2003, Kaushal and Kaestner 2005, Royer 2005, Watson 2010, Borjas 2011), food insecurity (Borjas 2004, Ratcliffe et al. 2011), and location choice (Kaushal 2005).

### III. Data, Sample, and Definitions

Our analysis uses data from the 1995 to 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), administered to most households in March. The ASEC is an annual survey that collects labor market, income, and program participation information for the previous calendar year, as well as demographic information from the time of the survey. The sample size is approximately 150,000 persons or 57,000 households per year. Our sample uses the 1995 through 2010 CPS surveys, corresponding to 1994-2009 calendar year outcomes. We are unable to utilize a longer pre-welfare period because the CPS begins reporting information on immigrant status only in the 1994 survey year. However, because of problems with the weights for immigrants and data on country of origin in the 1994 survey year, we begin our analysis with the 1995 CPS survey year.<sup>13</sup> For all analyses in the paper, we limit the sample to include only those households with children under age 18.

We use the CPS to construct two groups: *natives* (which we define as those born in the U.S., Puerto Rico or outlying areas, or born outside the U.S. but with at least one parent being an American citizen) and *immigrants* (which we define as any foreign-born individual). Our immigrant group therefore consists of naturalized citizens, LPRs, refugees, temporary legal or illegal foreign-born residents, and unauthorized immigrants. We choose to pool these groups because of changes in naturalization (Van Hook 2003) and the inflow of unauthorized immigrants during this period. We also use information on “When did you come to the U.S. to

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<sup>13</sup> Our decision to exclude 1994 survey year CPS data comes from communication with various immigration scholars. Schmidley and Robinson (1998) discuss some of these issues, noting that there are potential issues with comparability for 1994 and 1995. Various papers include the 1995 data (e.g., Borjas 2004) although sometimes with special adjusted weights created by Jeffrey Passel. In general, it is desirable to include 1995 data as it increases our pre-PRWORA sample (income is measured for the 1994 year). Findings are generally robust to omitting the 1995 survey year (1994 calendar year) measures.

stay” to assign individuals to pre- and post-enactment groups and whether they are subject to the five-year bar.<sup>14</sup>

We assign all outcomes including safety net program participation and poverty at the household level. Household characteristics, including household immigration status, are assigned using the values of the head of household. We also provide analyses of children using their own immigrant status along with the immigrant status of the head of household. That allows us to distinguish between citizen children of an immigrant head and noncitizen children of an immigrant head.<sup>15</sup>

The safety net programs we measure in the CPS include ADFC/TANF, food stamps, Medicaid, SCHIP (after it became law), SSI, school lunch, LIHEAP, and housing benefits (public housing and section 8 rental subsidies). SCHIP allowed states to offer Medicaid coverage to a higher income group of children or provide a separate program for these children. In our analysis, we pool Medicaid with SCHIP when they are asked about separately. In addition, the CPS provides imputed data for the cash value of some programs (public housing, Medicaid and Medicare) and for taxes owed and tax credits (e.g., the EITC or child tax credits) that households could obtain, based on their family structure. Official poverty status in the U.S. is determined by comparing total pre-tax family cash income to poverty thresholds, which vary by

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<sup>14</sup> Those born outside the US are asked when they came to the U.S. to stay. Responses pool the most recent year with the most recent 2-3 years (and the first three months of the current year). Before this, 2 year periods of arrival are pooled. Consequently, we can consistently defined a variable that is 1 if the immigrant arrived at least 4 years and 4 months ago and at most 6 years and 3 months ago for even years, and at least 5 years and 4 months and at most 7 years and 3 months for odd years. Because this question asks when you came to the US to stay, research suggests this may not correspond to either the first or last U.S. trip (Redstone and Massey 2004). For individuals born in Puerto Rico or other territories or born abroad of U.S. parents, we set this variable to be 0. We can identify for most years whether individuals came to the U.S. before August 1996 or after. We cannot do so consistently for 1997, and therefore do not define it for survey year 1997.

<sup>15</sup> We choose to analyze households because use of some of the safety net programs (food stamps, school lunch, LIHEAP, public housing, and section 8 rental subsidies) are reported only at the household level. This approach also takes into account income or resource sharing that may occur in households containing multiple families.

family size, number of children, and presence of elderly persons. In 2009, the poverty threshold for a family of four (two adults, two children) was roughly \$22,000. We use household income to assign poverty status, comparing income to the appropriate household poverty threshold. To address some of the many criticisms of the official poverty measure (for example, Citro and Michael, 1995), we also use an alternative poverty measure where income is measured post-tax and post-transfer, using the imputed values for taxes and transfers described above.<sup>16</sup>

In our results, below, we compare outcomes for households headed by natives and immigrants pre- and post-welfare reform. We do not make any claim that this identifies the causal impact of welfare reform and instead provides important descriptive evidence on immigrant well-being compared to natives. To illustrate the challenge to causal identification, Table 3 provides means for demographics, employment, and income for households with children headed by natives (column 1) and immigrants (column 2) from the ASEC for calendar year 2009. The table shows that immigrants are significantly more disadvantaged than are natives, with lower education levels, lower earnings, less health insurance coverage, and lower income as well as larger household sizes. At the same time, immigrant household heads are more likely to be married. To try to avoid having our comparisons confuse these differences with policy effects, whenever possible we limit our sample to households with income below

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<sup>16</sup> In November 2011, Census released a report introducing the new Supplemental Poverty Measure (Short 2011). The plan is to maintain the official poverty measure but to also release estimates of the SPM each year. Our “alternative income measure” comes from working definitions adopted by Census in 1999. It is quite similar to the income concept used in the SPM in that it is net of federal taxes and adds valuation for many in-kind benefits. In particular, we define alternative income by adding to money income the cash value of food stamps, school lunch, and housing subsidies and then subtract payroll taxes, and net federal and state taxes (including the EITC). Our approach is similar to some of the experimental poverty measures tabulated annually at the US Census Bureau as in Dalaker (2005). In addition, however, the SPM alters the thresholds used to define poverty by incorporating various expenses and allowing for geographic differences. The overall impact is to increase poverty slightly, from 15.3 to 16.0 among all persons in 2010. Unfortunately, at this time it is not possible to create a consistent series for the SPM over our period of interest.

200 percent of poverty.<sup>17</sup> The characteristics for immigrant and native headed households in this lower income sample are provided in columns 3 and 4, showing somewhat more similarity between the groups in many characteristics. Even in the lower income sample, immigrants are less educated and have larger households than natives, but they have higher earnings and household income and are more likely to be married and have more male household members than native households under 200% of poverty. The shares of immigrants and natives below poverty show that the incomes of immigrants and natives are quite similar once we condition on being in this lower income sample. Interestingly, the means at the bottom of the table show that almost 90 percent of immigrant headed households contain a native born child. In contrast, few native headed households contain foreign born persons.

#### IV. Results: The Safety Net

We begin with our sample of all children using the 1995-2010 CPS. Program participation is measured at the household level and refers to the prior calendar year, thus the data cover calendar years 1994-2009. We begin by stratifying children using the immigration status of the head of household, splitting the sample into households headed by natives (born a citizen) and immigrants (foreign born). Figure 1a presents the fraction of children with any household safety net participation (this measure includes cash welfare [AFDC/TANF, general assistance], food stamps, Medicaid or SCHIP, SSI, public housing, subsidized housing, school lunch, or energy assistance). Shaded regions on the graph are periods of labor market

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<sup>17</sup> Here we use official poverty because alternative poverty includes many programs for which immigrants are not eligible in some or all years.

contractions<sup>18</sup> and we mark federal welfare reform in 1996 using a vertical line. The figure shows higher use of the safety net overall for immigrants compared to natives. Both groups show a reduction in safety net use post welfare reform and are trending similarly. Figure 1b presents two key elements of the cash or near cash safety net, cash welfare (in blue) and food stamp benefits (in red). Prior to welfare reform, immigrants (dashed line) participated at higher levels compared to natives (solid line) but the gap narrows such that by the end of the 1990s immigrants and natives have quite similar participation rates.

As a descriptive summary measure of the impact of welfare reform on Figures 1a and 1b, we provide the mean difference-in-difference estimate of program participation for immigrants versus natives, using 1994-1995 as the pre-welfare reform period and 2008-2009 as the post-welfare reform period. These calculations show that food stamp participation declined by 3.9 percentage points for immigrants relative to natives (p-value 0.01) and public assistance participation declined by a (statistically insignificant) 2.4 percentage points relative to natives. The broader measure of “any safety net participation” did not change for immigrants relative to natives post-reform.

As shown in Table 3, immigrants have on average lower incomes than natives. Thus the differences across groups in Figure 1 may reflect in part different levels of disadvantage. Figure 2 presents program participation for children living in households under 200 percent of poverty. There are six panels in Figure 2, one for any safety net participation and the remainder for individual program participation in the following programs: cash welfare, food stamps,

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<sup>18</sup> We use the approach in Bitler and Hoynes (2010) to construct annual periods of contraction using the official monthly NBER recession dating combined with examination of the national peaks and troughs in the unemployment rate. See data appendix for details.



Medicaid/SCHIP<sup>19</sup>, school lunch, and SSI. The graphs are similar to Figure 1 except now we split the child sample into three groups: child living with a native household head,<sup>20</sup> native child living with an immigrant head, and immigrant child living with an immigrant head. This allows us to explore outcomes for native children in mixed-status households whose eligibility for these programs did not change over this period.

Several findings are apparent from these graphs. First, immigrants generally participate in the safety net at *lower* rates than do natives. This is true for the entire time period for cash welfare (panel b), food stamps (panel c) and SSI (panel f), and is true both before and after welfare reform. Children who are themselves immigrants are less likely to participate in Medicaid/SCHIP across the entire time period as well, and native children of immigrant parents about as likely as children of native parents to participate. The main exception is the school lunch program (panel e) where immigrants have consistently participated at higher rates than natives. Overall, our measure of “any safety net participation” (panel a) is higher for immigrants compared to natives, driven primarily by this higher participation in the school lunch program. Immigrant children in immigrant head households consistently participate in each of the individual programs or in the “any safety net” measure at the lowest levels among the three groups.

Second, these national trends in safety net participation are broadly consistent with the finding of reduced immigrant access to the safety net post welfare reform. To explore this more concretely, we present the difference-in-difference estimates of the change in safety net

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<sup>19</sup> SCHIP legislation is passed in 1997 and the CPS begins measuring participation in 2000. For all years, we combine Medicaid and SCHIP.

<sup>20</sup> Almost all children living with native household heads are themselves natives.

participation for immigrants versus natives in 2008-2009 compared to 1994-1995. These simply take the change in participation for immigrants and subtract the change in participation for natives; and we show this estimate for each panel. The results show that post-reform immigrant food stamp participation has declined by 5.7 percentage points relative to natives (p-value 0.002) and immigrant SSI participation has declined by 1.6 percentage points relative to natives (p-value 0.01). School lunch participation also declined by 1.2 percentage points for immigrants relative to natives, but the differences are not statistically significant.

Medicaid/SCHIP provides the main exception to this pattern, with an *increase* of 4.2 percentage points for immigrants relative to natives (p-value 0.05). Interestingly, for participation in Medicaid/SCHIP, children in native-headed households and native children in mixed-status households have almost identical levels and trends in participation, which may reflect SCHIP's outreach efforts aimed at immigrant families (Aizer 2003, 2007).

Overall, given the greater severity of the restrictions on access to food stamps and SSI (compared to TANF and Medicaid/SCHIP), we would expect to see larger (relative) declines for immigrants post-welfare for use of those programs. Similarly, we would expect the smallest changes in participation for school lunch, given that welfare reform did not affect eligibility for this program. The results, described above, are broadly consistent these predictions.

Of course, it is possible that other factors that may be changing over this period that may impact the native versus immigrant comparisons. Thus, we are cautious about drawing strong conclusions from this analysis of the results in Figures 1 and 2. As an illustration of the general issues at play here, Figure 3 presents the trends in the percent distribution of children in households with income less than 200% of official poverty for our three immigration-status

groups. Overtime, native children in immigrant-headed households are a growing share of the sample (share increasing from 13.9 percent in 1995 to 23.5 percent in 2010) and children in native-headed households are declining (share is 80.5 percent in 1995 compared to 71.5 percent in 2010). The share of children under 200% of poverty who are immigrant children in immigrant-headed households also declined from 5.6 percent to 5.0 percent.

Recall that the post-welfare reform immigrant eligibility rules differentiate between pre- and post-enactment immigrants and between those who have been in the U.S. for at least 5 years and those in the U.S. less than 5 years.<sup>21</sup> Recent immigrants are least likely to be eligible post-reform, while longer term residents are more likely to be eligible, but still not necessarily at the levels they were pre-PWORA. Given this, in Table 4 we explore further the impact of the policy changes by examining safety net participation separately for immigrants arriving within the past 5 years to immigrants arriving more than 5 years ago. In particular, we identify participation for five groups. In our pre-reform years (1994 and 1995), we calculate safety net participation for recent immigrants (head arrived 5 or fewer years ago) and other immigrants (head arrived six or more years ago). In our post reform years (2008-2009), we break down the 6 or more year group into those with heads that arrived pre-enactment and those that arrived post-enactment.<sup>22</sup> At the bottom of the table we present two pre- versus post-reform

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<sup>21</sup> We focus here more on entry within the last 5 years or further back because we have so few pre-PRWORA observations due to the limited years that the CPS includes immigrant status.

<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, given the data restrictions discussed above in footnote 14, we cannot do this comparison across our time period systematically. First, for some key post-reform years, it is impossible to uniquely classify individuals as pre- and post-enactment (e.g., 1997 observations cannot cleanly be assigned as pre- or post-1996 arrival). Second, the policies are changing frequently across states and over time in a way that complicates a simple differences-in-differences analysis. Since policies at the state and federal level change considerably in the period post-PWRORA but before 2002, it is hard to assign these observations to a consistent treatment or control group. By 2008-2009, however, policies have settled out for the federal government and across states, and it is clear what policies apply across immigrant statuses.

differences, in each case comparing individuals in different years-in-U.S. group (five or fewer years, six or more) that arrived pre-enactment to a group arriving post-enactment. The data are largely consistent with these expectations: Recently arrived immigrants have larger reductions in use of public assistance and food stamps and substantially smaller increases in use of Medicaid/SCHIP than do less-recently arrived immigrants. For example, receipt of public assistance (receipt of food stamps) declined by 21.4 (6.4) percentage points for children in households headed by immigrants who arrived 5 or fewer years ago compared to 14.9 (3.7) percentage points for children in households headed by immigrants that arrived 6 or more years ago. School lunch and SSI show the opposite pattern in relative changes in use, with larger decreases for those arriving longer ago. Again, Medicaid looks quite different.

In addition to tabulating the CPS data, we use the available administrative data to further explore trends in program participation. In Figure 4, we present the percent of SSI participants that are noncitizens for 1980 through 2009. We plot this separately for all recipients, aged recipients, and disabled/blind recipients. We are focused on households with children. That said, SSI is not a very heavily used safety net program in our population of interest. This is clear in Figure 3(f) which shows SSI participation rates never rise above 10 percent and are mostly below 5 percent of children in immigrant households. Given the small share of elderly persons in our sample of households with children (Table 3), the SSI disabled caseload is the most relevant for our purposes. Having said this, Figure 4 shows a dramatic decline in noncitizen SSI participation following federal welfare reform, with little recovery through 2009. Potentially more relevant is the AFDC/TANF “child- only” caseload. The child-only caseload consists of administrative cases without an adult participant; the largest group of

which being cases where the child is a citizen but the parent is not a citizen (Blank 2001, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2008). As such, child-only caseloads may be a useful proxy for program participation among native children in mixed-status households. Figure 5 presents the administrative data on the child-only caseload per 1,000 persons for fiscal years 1995 through 2008. There is a sharp and dramatic decline in the child-only caseload following welfare reform. This steadily and slowly increases, but never returns to its pre-reform level. Wasem (2010) reports trends in the noncitizen fraction of food stamp participation based on Food Stamp Quality Control data. That data show a similar pattern, a sharp decline in the noncitizen share in 1997 with little recovery since then. Overall 7.1 percent of the food stamp caseload consisted of noncitizens in 1989; this fell to 3.8 percent in 2009.

#### V. Results: Income and Poverty

Having established the basic facts on program participation, we move on to analyze immigrant well-being pre- and post- welfare reform. In particular, we quantify the importance of safety net programs by exploring the sources of household income and how they have changed over time. We also examine child poverty and extreme poverty for immigrants and natives pre- and post- welfare reform.

We begin in Figure 6, by presenting the share of the quantity household cash income plus food stamps contributed by each source for households with children in extreme poverty (below 50 percent of official poverty). We compare these sources of income for a year pre-reform (1994) and post-reform (2009). Ideally, we would have compared data for two similar points in the business cycle, but data limitations prohibit this. In 2009, the U.S. unemployment was 9.3 percent, which is the peak in the annual rate for the Great Recession. The early 1990s

recession level of unemployment peaked in 1992 at 7.5 percent and by 1994 was down to 6.1 percent. We present a graph for households headed by natives (panel a) and households headed by immigrants (panel b). We show shares for some important income sources for lower income households: Earnings, cash welfare, food stamps, SSI, unemployment compensation (pooled with workers compensation and veterans payments), and child support combined with alimony.

The most striking feature of Figure 6 is that households headed by low-income immigrants rely much more heavily on earnings compared to native-headed households. In 2009, among households with children in extreme poverty, almost 50 percent of income comes from earnings for immigrant-headed households compared to less than 30 percent for native-headed ones. This difference was also present pre-welfare reform but the gap has grown post-reform. Second, the graph clearly shows the declining role of cash welfare as a countercyclical income source for the poor and the increasing role played by food stamps and earnings for both immigrants and natives. The other categories of income presented are less important sources for this very low income group. Having said that, the share of income from SSI is increasing over this period for natives and decreasing for immigrants (the opposite pattern holds for child support and alimony).

Figures 7 and 8 present the same information for samples of households with children below 100 percent of poverty (Figure 7) and below 200 percent poverty (Figure 8). While the magnitudes change, the basic findings are similar: immigrants tend to rely more on earnings and that has increased over time; cash welfare is now much less important than it was; and food stamps is much more important. Notably, in 2009, earnings represent 70 percent (80

percent) of total income (cash income plus food stamps) for immigrant households below poverty (below 200 percent poverty). For natives, earnings are 45 percent for those below poverty and just over 60 percent for those below 200 percent of poverty.<sup>23</sup>

One reason why the results may differ for immigrants compared to natives may be the immigrants more disadvantaged status even within a given poverty sample. To address this, we examined similar graphs where we reweighted the native group to match the income distribution of immigrants (based on 25 percent bins of the income to poverty distribution).<sup>24</sup> This made little difference in the results, which perhaps is not surprising given the similarity in the income distribution in the two groups once we condition on being below 200 percent of poverty (Table 3). In addition, it is well known that beginning in the 1990s immigrant populations grew significantly beyond the traditional immigrant destination states (e.g., Massey 2008). Much of the growth has been in areas, such as the Southeast, where the safety net is less generous. To address this, we reweighted the immigrant groups in 1994 and 2009 to represent their state population shares in 1990.<sup>25</sup> This too made little difference to the results, which may reflect the fact that while the growth rate increased in new destination areas, the overall population of immigrants is still dominated by their shares in traditional destination states.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> On average, for households under 200% of poverty, the components we show make up 81% of total household income (including food stamps). The three largest remaining categories (pooling 2009 and 1994) are Social Security payments (pools OASI and DI): 5.1%, asset income (includes rents, dividends, and interest income): 3.5%, and retirement income: 2.8%.

<sup>24</sup> To do this, we summarized the shares within each bins, and then allocated the native shares according to the relative shares of immigrants in each bin.

<sup>25</sup> We did this by using the IPUMS 1990 census (Ruggles et al. 2008) 1% micro data and calculating the share of households with children within each state that were immigrant or native headed. We used these weights to summarize the state-by-year-by native/non-native head weighted percentages for each group.

<sup>26</sup> Results for the two reweighting procedures are available on request.

What is the end result of all these changes to the safety net? One important summary measure is the incidence of poverty, and how it compares between immigrants and natives. In the remainder of our analysis, we present new evidence on trends in child poverty for immigrants versus natives. We return to our three groups of children analyzed above: Children living in households headed by natives, immigrant children living with immigrant heads, and native children living with immigrant heads. The top two panels of Figure 9 present the percent of children living in extreme poverty (panel a) and in poverty (panel b) for 1994-2009 using the official poverty measure. Overall, poverty rates for children in immigrant households exceed those of children living in native households, and this is true both before and after welfare reform. Interestingly, during the 1990s, the gap between extreme poverty rates for native children living in mixed-status households and children in native households narrowed substantially. All of these series illustrate the countercyclical nature of poverty, and improvements during this period were especially apparent in the long economic expansion of the 1990s. However, it is striking that child poverty among immigrant headed households has increased more in the current recession compared to natives. We return to this below.

Many concerns have been raised about the ability of the official poverty measure to capture resources households have. In particular, the official poverty measure uses pre-tax income (missing the EITC, child tax credits, and the effects of the tax system) and does not count in-kind transfers such as food stamps in the measure of household income.<sup>27</sup> To address this concern, and to explore more the role of the safety net post-welfare reform, the final panel of Figure 9 presents the percent of children living below poverty using our alternative income

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<sup>27</sup> Other differences between our measure and the new supplemental measure are discussed above in footnote 16.



measure. As defined above, we construct alternative income by adding to money income the cash value of food stamps, school lunch, energy assistance and housing subsidies and then subtracting payroll taxes, and net federal and state taxes (including the EITC and child tax credits). Poverty rates are lower using alternative income, and appear to be slightly less countercyclical (as we would expect if the safety net is insuring families against short-term income losses). Interestingly, alternative poverty actually declines for children in immigrant headed households in 2009 which is surprising given that the unemployment rate rose between 2008 and 2009. It appears that the large increase in food stamp participation in these households at the end of the period (Figure 3c) may explain part of this difference.

The difference-in-difference estimates show that poverty rates declined for children in immigrant-headed households compared to natives post-welfare reform (2008-2009) relative to pre-reform (1994-1995). This result is unexpected but may be explained by a change in the composition of immigrant children (see Figure 3). That is, while the time series plot in Figure 9 shows that a rise in poverty for immigrant children beginning in 2007, the difference-in-difference reflects the decrease in immigrant poverty in the 1994-1999 period.

To further explore the role of welfare reform, we present mean poverty rates for immigrant groups in Table 5 adopting the same groups that we presented in Table 4 (pre- and post-welfare reform, 5 or less and 6 or more years since arrival, and pre-and post-enactment arrival). Again, at the bottom of the table we present the two pre- versus post-reform comparisons. We find increases or no change in most poverty measures for immigrants who came at least 6 years ago, but surprisingly, we find decreases in poverty for those who arrived 5 or fewer years ago. This is puzzling, given the expectation that these recent immigrants are the

least likely in the post-reform period to have access to the safety net. There are several possible explanations. First, it is possible that the recession has led to reduced return migration (say from Mexico) or increased outflows, and that those who leave or don't return are negatively selected. Rendall et al. (2011) suggest that there has actually been a decline in return migration from the United States to Mexico in the Great Recession and Van Hook and Zhang (2011) show that having children is negatively correlated with emigration. A second explanation is that immigrant households are doubling up in response to the Great Recession, and that this is most common for those with the least amount of access to the safety net, those who came within the last 5 years. Kochhar and D'Vera Cohn (2011) use the American Community Survey data, finding that living in multigenerational households is more common in 2009 than 2007 as a share of households, and that some part of this might reflect doubling up in response to the Great Recession. Lastly, a third possibility is that the CPS is simply missing more unauthorized immigrants who are reluctant to participate given recent legislation that is restrictive towards the unauthorized, although this seems unlikely to drive our findings for citizen children of immigrants.

Given the severity of the Great Recession, during which the unemployment rate has risen from 4.6 in 2007 to 9.3 in 2009, it is of interest to explore more fully the well-being of immigrants and natives in the current period. In particular, we take advantage of the substantial geographic variation in the severity of the recession and plot the change in state unemployment rates against the change in the state child poverty rate between 2007 and 2009. We present the results in a series of scatter plots in Figure 10. There are six panels in the figure: the top two show extreme child poverty, the middle two show official child poverty, and the

bottom two show child alternative poverty. Native headed households are on the left and immigrant headed households are on the right. In each graph, the x-axis is the change in unemployment rates by state between 2007 and 2009. On the y-axis is the change in state child poverty rates over the same period. The size of each state-group's population is represented by the size of the circle representing the data point. These figures show that there is considerable variation in the magnitude of the Great Recession across states: between 2007 and 2009, state changes in the unemployment rate ranged from about 1.2 percentage points in North Dakota to 7.9 percentage points in Nevada. We leverage this state variation to explore how the Great recession affects child poverty in immigrant versus native families.

There are several findings apparent from these figures. First, the scatterplots reveal an upward sloping tendency, showing the strong positive correlation between the severity of the recession and the increase in official child poverty. Second, the poverty rate changes are everywhere higher for children in immigrant-headed households compared to natives, implying that this recession led to larger increases in poverty for that group (note the immigrant and native groups have different y-axis scales). Third, the scatterplots have steeper slopes for children in immigrant-headed households suggesting that a given increase in unemployment leads to larger increases in poverty for immigrants compared to natives.

To explore this more fully, Table 6 presents estimates of the correlation between changes in state unemployment rates and child poverty (e.g., the implied best-fit slope of the data in the scatterplots). Specifically, we regress the change in state poverty rates on the change in state unemployment rates and a constant. The regression is weighted using the population in each state-group cell. An advantage of this approach, compared to the time

series approach above, is that it allows for a common time trend that may confound the simple time series. The first panel of the table presents the estimates for the data in Figure 10—children in immigrant and native headed households. The first number, for example, shows that a one percentage point increase in the unemployment rate leads to a 0.82 percentage point increase in the official poverty rate for children in native-headed households compared to a 0.92 percentage point increase for immigrants. We present similar figures for alternative poverty and extreme poverty. While few of the coefficients are statistically significant, the results from this first panel shows that immigrant child poverty rates increase more with unemployment than native children; that is the estimates in the second row are everywhere higher than the estimates in the first row. Second, the safety net provides less protection for immigrant children relative to natives—a one percentage point increase in the unemployment rate increases alternative poverty by 0.59 for natives (down from 0.82 for official poverty) while immigrant poverty increases by 1.5 percentage points (up from 0.92 for official poverty). This is consistent with lower safety net participation for immigrants post reform.<sup>28</sup>

We explore this further by presenting similar estimates for non-native children with Mexican heads versus non-Mexican non-native heads (panel 2), naturalized heads versus non-citizen heads (panel 3), and non-citizen Hispanic heads versus non-citizen non-Hispanic heads (panel 4). In each panel, the second row represents the group (e.g., Mexican, non-citizen, Hispanic non-citizen) more likely to be impacted by the changes in eligibility due to welfare reform. The results are striking, while not always very precisely estimated. In each panel, the

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<sup>28</sup> Note that these results lead to different conclusions about the relative well-being of immigrants post reform compared to the trends in poverty in Figure 9—the time series trends show gains in poverty for immigrants versus natives post-welfare reform. Using state variation in the cycle, with the ability to control for secular time trends, leads us to the opposite conclusion.

more impacted group shows a much larger increase in child poverty and much less protection from the safety net compared to the less impacted group. For example, a one percentage point increase in the unemployment rate leads to a 0.89 percentage point increase in official poverty for children in households headed by Mexican born heads compared to a 0.34 percentage point increase for children in households headed by other foreign born heads. Using alternative poverty the gap grows to 2.69 for Mexican born heads and 0.17 for other foreign born heads. It is also notable that in each panel, the more-impacted groups increase in alternative poverty with the increase in the unemployment rate is statistically significant and that all four measures are significant for non-citizen heads.

## VI. Conclusions

The 1996 federal welfare reform legislation has ushered in a new era for the safety net in the U.S. As is well known, welfare reform replaced AFDC with TANF, introducing lifetime limits on participation and stringent work requirements. Some 15 years later, welfare caseloads have decreased dramatically, and TANF provides minimal counter-cyclical aid. But, less known is the fact that not only did PRWORA “change welfare as we know it” but it also changed *immigration policy as we know it*. PRWORA severely curtailed access to TANF, as well as other key safety net programs such as food stamps and SSI access, for *legal* immigrants who previously had been treated identically to natives. Notably, the policy essentially devolved immigration policy to states, who are now engaged in many aspects of immigration policy around hiring and employment, driver’s licenses, and others that had previously been in the federal realm.

In this paper, we comprehensively examine program participation and poverty for immigrants versus natives in the post-welfare reform era. We update the existing literature by focusing on children, updating the analysis through 2009, and paying particular attention to the well-being of children using official and alternative poverty measures.

We find that participation in the safety net declined for immigrants compared to natives, and the declines were largest for food stamps and SSI (the programs with the most severe restrictions for immigrants). Medicaid/SCHIP participation actually increased for immigrants compared to natives which may reflect important outreach efforts of those programs to minority groups. We find that among low income households with children, immigrant households rely more heavily on earnings and less on the safety net, and these differences with native-headed households have grown post-welfare reform. Using variation across states in the magnitude of the Great Recession, our results show that labor market contractions have led to larger increases in poverty rates for children in immigrant headed households compared to native-headed households. Our results also show that the safety net acts to dampen the effects of the economic downturn on child poverty for native-headed households but offers measurably less protection for children in immigrant-headed households.

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## Appendix: Data and Sources

*Contractions/Expansions:* We identified annual periods of contractions as the range of years from lowest to highest annual unemployment and the expansions as the range of years from highest to lowest annual unemployment rates that are near the beginning and end points of the various NBER recessions. The contraction periods are 2000-2003 (NBER recession: 3/2001-11/2001), and 2007-2009 (NBER recession 12/2007-6/2009). The expansion periods are 1992-2000, and 2003-2007. The end period of 2009 for the most recent contraction may end up not being the peak annual unemployment period, but is the last year for which the bulk of our data are available.

*AFDC/TANF administrative data on caseloads and expenditures:* TANF caseloads are from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/index.htm>. TANF expenditures are from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/data/index.html>. TANF total expenditures includes all expenditures (maintenance of effort from the state and federal sources, including separate state programs, combined federal and state expenditures on assistance, non-assistance, and both together, "Table F - Combined Spending of Federal and State Funds Expended in FY XXXX"). Federal stimulus ARRA is included in the 2009 data. The average monthly TANF benefit is the average family benefit for 2006, inflated to be in 2009 real \$ from [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/annualreport8/TANF\\_8th\\_Report\\_111908.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/annualreport8/TANF_8th_Report_111908.pdf), DHHS (2009). All AFDC and TANF data are for the Fiscal Year (year ending Sept 30).

*Food Stamp administrative data on caseloads and expenditures:* Caseload and expenditures come from unpublished USDA data generously provided by Katie Fitzpatrick and John Kirlin, of the Economic Research Service, USDA.

*Reduced Price School Lunch and Breakfast caseloads and expenditures:* Can be found in Table 4 (recipients, lunch), Table 6 (costs, lunch), Table 8 (recipients, breakfast), and Table 10 (costs, breakfast) in [http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/key\\_data/march-2010.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/key_data/march-2010.pdf). Recipients are average daily.

*Unemployment Insurance administrative data on caseloads and expenditures:* Data for calendar years come from unpublished data provided by the Office of the Chief Economist at the Department of Labor. The average benefit is the weekly average benefit amount for 2009, quarter 4 from [http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data\\_stats/datasum09/DataSum\\_2009\\_4.pdf](http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data_stats/datasum09/DataSum_2009_4.pdf).

*Deflator:* The CPI-U is from the Economic Report of the President, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/eop/tables10.html>.

Table 1: Expenditures and Participation in Cash or Near-Cash Safety Net Programs

	Number of recipients (thousands)	Total benefit payments (millions of 2009\$)	Average monthly benefit	Estimated number of children removed from poverty (millions, in 2005)
<u>Cash or near cash means tested programs</u>				
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	1,796	\$9,324	\$397	0.8
Food Stamp Program	15,232	\$50,360	\$276	2.2
Federal Earned Income Tax Credit	24,757	\$50,669	\$171	2.6
Supplemental Security Income, non-Disabled	6,407	\$41,023	\$517	n/a
<u>Non cash means tested programs</u>				
Medicaid, Children (2007)	27,527	\$53,716	n/a	n/a
Medicaid, All (2007)	56,821	\$276,246	n/a	n/a
National School Lunch Program, Free and Reduced Price (2009)	19,446	\$7,563	n/a	n/a
School Breakfast Program, Free and Reduced Price (2009)	9,068	\$2,498	n/a	n/a
<u>Other short term income replacement programs</u>				
Unemployment Compensation - Total	5,757	\$131,420	n/a	n/a

Notes: Data for all programs refers to calendar year 2009 and are in 2009\$ except the EITC which refers to 2008 (and amounts are in 2008\$), TANF and the child nutrition programs (National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program) which are for fiscal year 2009 (year ending 9/30/09), and Medicaid which refers to 2007 (and amounts are in 2007\$). For TANF, Food Stamps, the child nutrition programs, and Unemployment Compensation program data sources, see the data appendix. EITC data are from the Tax Policy Center (2010) and SSI data are from Social Security Administration (2010). SSI includes federal and state supplement payments and participation and the EITC includes the total tax cost (not just refundable portion).

Table 2: Federal Laws Regarding Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Safety Net Programs

			August 22, 1996	1997	1998	2002	2009
		Prior to PRWORA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) <sup>1</sup> Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) <sup>2</sup>	Balanced Budget Act <sup>3</sup>	Agriculture, Research Extension and Education Reform Act <sup>4</sup>	Farm Security and Rural Investment Act <sup>5</sup>	Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act <sup>6</sup>
TANF	Pre-Enactment Immigrants						
	Qualified Immigrants	Eligible	Eligible; State option to bar				
	Exempted Groups	40 quarters of work	Eligible				
		Military	Eligible				
		Refugees/Asylees	Eligible	Eligible for first 5 yrs; State option after			
	Post-Enactment Immigrants						
Medicaid	Qualified Immigrants	Eligible	Barred for first 5 yrs; State option after				
	Exempted Groups	40 quarters of work	Eligible				
		Military	Eligible				
		Refugees/Asylees	Eligible	Eligible for first 5 yrs; State option after	Eligible for first 7 yrs; State option after		
	Post-Enactment Immigrants						
	Qualified Immigrants	Eligible	Barred for first 5 yrs; State option after				Eligible; State option to bar
SCHIP	Exempted Groups	40 quarters of work	Eligible				
		Military	Eligible				
		Refugees/Asylees	Eligible	Eligible for first 5 yrs; State option after	Eligible for first 7 yrs; State option after		
	Post-Enactment Immigrants						
	Qualified Immigrants	Eligible	Barred for first 5 yrs				Eligible; State option to bar
	Exempted Groups	40 quarters of work	Eligible				
Food Stamps		Military	Eligible				
		Refugees/Asylees	Eligible				
	Post-Enactment Immigrants						
	Qualified Immigrants	Eligible	Ineligible		Elig restored if as of 8/22/96 are children, disabled, blind, elderly		
	Exempted Groups	40 quarters of work	Eligible	Eligible			
		Military	Eligible	Eligible			
SSI		Refugees/Asylees	Eligible	Eligible for first 5 yrs		Eligible for first 7 yrs	
	Post-Enactment Immigrants						
	Qualified Immigrants	Eligible	Ineligible		Elig extended to SSI recip as of 8/22/96 and those legally residing in US on 8/22/96		
	Exempted Groups	40 quarters of work	Eligible	Eligible			
		Military	Eligible	Eligible			
		Refugees/Asylees	Eligible	Eligible for first 5 yrs	Eligible for first 7 yrs		

Notes: Table refers to eligibility for programs under Federal law for qualified immigrants, see text for more details. Rules under SCHIP apply to stand-alone SCHIP programs. SCHIP programs offered through Medicaid operate under Medicaid rules.

<sup>1</sup>Legislation can be found in: <http://www.nacua.org/documents/iirira.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Legislation can be found in Section 400-451 of [http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/Legislation/pdfs/PL\\_104-193.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/Legislation/pdfs/PL_104-193.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Legislation can be found in Sections 5301-5308 and 5561-5574 of <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-105hr2015enr/pdf/BILLS-105hr2015enr.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup>Legislation can be found in Section 501-510 in <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/offices/legis/pdfs/areera98.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>Legislation can be found in Section 4401 of: [http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/FoodAid/Farm\\_Bill\\_2002.pdf](http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/FoodAid/Farm_Bill_2002.pdf).

<sup>6</sup>Legislation can be found in Section 214 of: [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ003.111](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ003.111)

Table 3: Characteristics of Households with Children, by Immigrant Status of Head of Household

	All households		Households < 200 % poverty	
	Natives	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants
<i>Characteristics of household head (at survey)</i>				
Mean age	40.1	40.5	37.5	39.2
Male	0.467	0.524	0.327	0.470
White, non Hispanic	0.715	0.140	0.550	0.082
Black, non Hispanic	0.156	0.092	0.268	0.095
Hispanic	0.098	0.544	0.149	0.696
Less than high school	0.089	0.319	0.199	0.476
High school	0.285	0.241	0.389	0.281
More than high school	0.625	0.440	0.412	0.242
Never married	0.154	0.111	0.303	0.159
Married	0.661	0.758	0.410	0.687
Female unmarried family	0.226	0.153	0.435	0.216
Employed	0.725	0.716	0.522	0.611
Not in labor force	0.192	0.201	0.338	0.277
Any health insurance	0.847	0.648	0.691	0.479
<i>Characteristics of the household</i>				
Number of children	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.2
Any elderly	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.06
Number of persons	3.9	4.4	4.0	4.5
Own home	0.679	0.515	0.403	0.336
Household earnings	\$74,210	\$61,938	\$17,894	\$22,913
Household income	\$81,615	\$66,423	\$23,639	\$25,854
Less than 50% FPL	0.058	0.081	0.180	0.161
Less than 100% FPL	0.139	0.222	0.433	0.440
Less than 150% FPL	0.230	0.376	0.715	0.746
Greater than 200% FPL	0.678	0.496	0.000	0.000
Any foreign born	0.058	1.000	0.055	1.000
Any adult born citizen	1.000	0.248	1.000	0.193
Any child born citizen	0.996	0.877	0.998	0.873
Any child foreign born	0.008	0.226	0.004	0.263

Notes: Authors' tabulations of 2010 CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement data for households with at least one child. Demographics and living arrangements refer to the time of the survey (February, March or April 2010) and income and program receipt refer to calendar year 2009. Statistics are weighted.

Table 4: Household Safety Net Participation Rates, for Immigrant-Headed Households with Children with Income Less than 200% of Poverty

		N	Any safety net	Public assistance	Food stamps	Medicaid/SCHIP	School lunch	SSI
<u>Pre reform (1994/1995)</u>								
Arrived 6+ years ago, pre-enactment	(1)	6294	0.811	0.221	0.353	0.474	0.680	0.058
Arrived <=5 years ago, pre-enactment	(2)	1648	0.792	0.287	0.394	0.553	0.569	0.049
<u>Post reform (2008/2009)</u>								
Arrived 6+ years ago, pre-enactment	(3)	6898	0.837	0.076	0.301	0.672	0.634	0.048
Arrived 6+ years ago, post-enactment	(4)	3669	0.843	0.072	0.316	0.676	0.601	0.022
Arrived <=5 years ago, post-enactment	(5)	1875	0.836	0.073	0.330	0.645	0.532	0.018
<u>Post-reform - Pre-reform</u>								
Arrived 6+ years ago	(4)-(1)		0.032	-0.149	-0.037	0.202	-0.079	-0.036
Arrived <=5 years ago	(5)-(2)		0.044	-0.214	-0.064	0.092	-0.036	-0.031

Notes: Authors' tabulations of 1995, 1996, 2009, and 2010 CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement data. Sample includes households with children under 18 with heads born not a U.S. citizen and living in households with income under 200% of poverty and program participation is measured at the household level. Any safety net program participation means someone in the household participated in public assistance (AFDC/TANF or GA), food stamps, Medicaid/SCHIP, free or reduced price School Lunch, SSI, public housing or received a rental subsidy from the government, or energy assistance. Arrival cohort is assigned using when the household head came to the US to stay. See text for details about coding of time of arrival.



Table 5: Poverty Rates for Immigrant-Headed Households with Children

		N	Below 50% poverty	Below 100% poverty	Below 50% alternative poverty	Below 100% alternative poverty
<u>Pre reform (1994/1995)</u>						
Arrived 6+ years ago, pre-enactment	(1)	10245	0.103	0.296	0.044	0.256
Arrived <=5 years ago, pre-enactment	(2)	2301	0.187	0.425	0.124	0.372
<u>Post reform (2008/2009)</u>						
Arrived 6+ years ago, pre-enactment	(3)	13377	0.082	0.229	0.045	0.155
Arrived 6+ years ago, post-enactment	(4)	5979	0.109	0.319	0.057	0.218
Arrived <=5 years ago, post-enactment	(5)	2982	0.153	0.359	0.079	0.277
<u>Post-reform - Pre-reform</u>						
Arrived 6+ years ago	(4)-(1)		0.006	0.023	0.013	-0.038
Arrived <=5 years ago	(5)-(2)		-0.034	-0.066	-0.045	-0.095

Notes: Authors' tabulations of 1995, 1996, 2009, and 2010 CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement data. Sample includes households with children under 18 with heads born not a U.S. citizen and program participation is measured at the household level. Extreme poverty and official poverty calculated using official CPS poverty thresholds and income sources and household size; alternative poverty calculated using official CPS poverty thresholds and household size, and using household income measured as CPS cash income minus FICA and state and local taxes plus the EITC and relevant child tax credits plus cash transfers. Arrival cohort is assigned using when the household head came to the U.S. to stay. See text for details about coding of time of arrival.

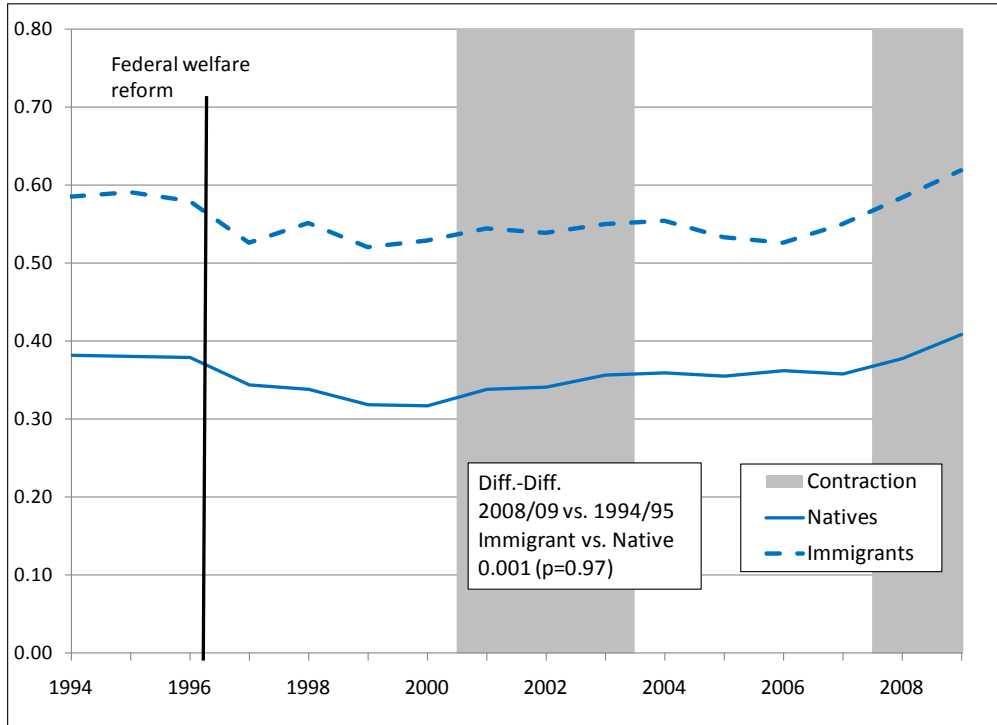
Table 6: Impact of State Unemployment Rates on State Child Poverty Rates, 2007-2009

	Below 100% poverty	Below 100% alternative poverty	Below 50% poverty	Below 50% alternative poverty
<i>Sample: All children</i>				
Native head	0.82** (0.31)	0.59** (0.29)	0.04 (0.22)	0.17 (0.17)
Non-native head	0.92 (0.83)	1.50** (0.63)	0.82* (0.47)	0.76 (0.46)
<i>Sample: All children with non-native heads</i>				
Non-mexican head	0.34 (1.03)	0.17 (0.80)	0.31 (0.60)	0.16 (0.47)
Mexican head	0.89 (1.22)	2.69** (1.11)	1.38 (0.83)	1.32* (0.76)
<i>Sample: All children with non-native heads</i>				
Naturalized head	-0.42 (1.15)	0.74 (0.96)	0.36 (0.74)	0.15 (0.66)
Non-citizen head	2.54** (1.06)	2.46** (0.94)	1.43** (0.68)	1.28** (0.57)
<i>Sample: All children with non-citizen heads</i>				
Non-hispanic head	0.79 (1.76)	-0.80 (1.37)	1.59 (1.15)	1.56 (1.01)
Hispanic head	2.44** (1.05)	3.18*** (1.14)	1.29 (0.84)	1.14 (0.76)

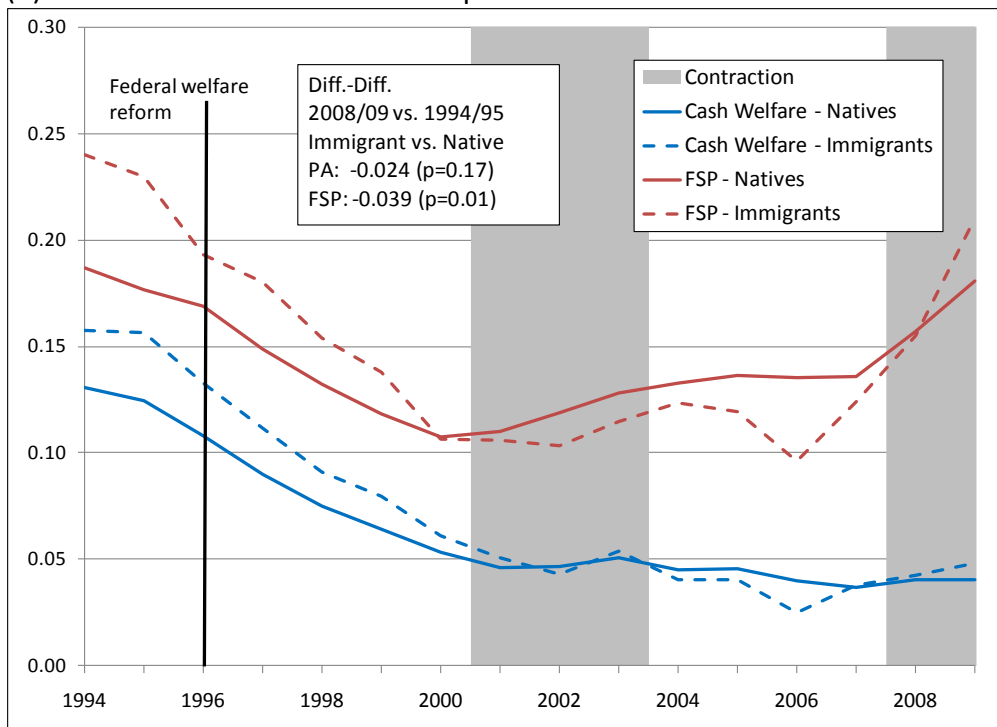
Notes: Each cell in the table presents the estimate of a regression of change in state child poverty rates on change in state unemployment rate for 2007-2009. Estimates are weighted using the population in the cell and \*\*\*, \*\*, \* indicate that the estimate is statistically significant at the 1%, 5% or 10% level. Sample includes children and poverty is assigned at the household level. Official poverty uses total household income and household size and the official Census poverty thresholds; alternative poverty uses total cash income plus the EITC and child tax credits and other transfers minus FICA and state and local taxes. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. See text for details.

Figure 1: Household Safety Net Participation Rates, Children by Immigrant Status of Head

(a) Any safety net



(b) Public assistance and food stamps



Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995-2010 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement data. Sample includes children under 18 and program participation is measured at the household level. Any safety net program participation means someone in the household participated in public assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, free or reduced price School Lunch, SSI, public housing or received a rental subsidy from the government, or energy assistance. Shaded areas refer to annual periods of labor market contraction. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were

born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Figures are weighted. Shaded areas refer to annual periods of labor market contraction. See text for details.

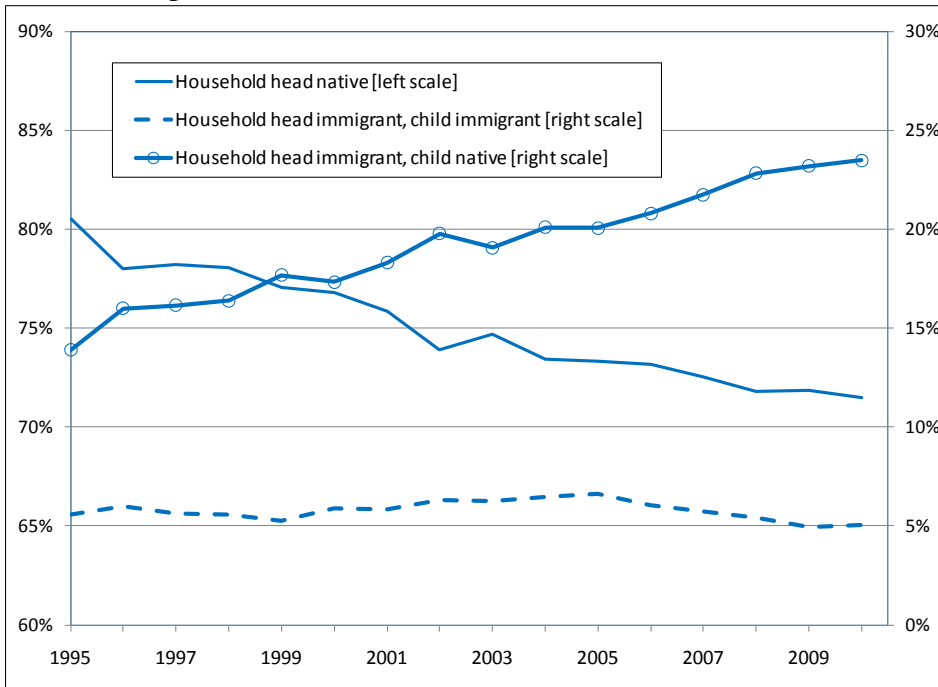
Figure 2: Household Safety Net Participation Rates in Households with Income Less than 200% Poverty, Children by Own and Head's Immigrant Status



Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995-2010 Current Population Survey Annual and Social Economic Supplement data. Sample includes children under 18 with household income below 200% poverty, Program participation is measured at the household level. Any safety net program participation means someone in the

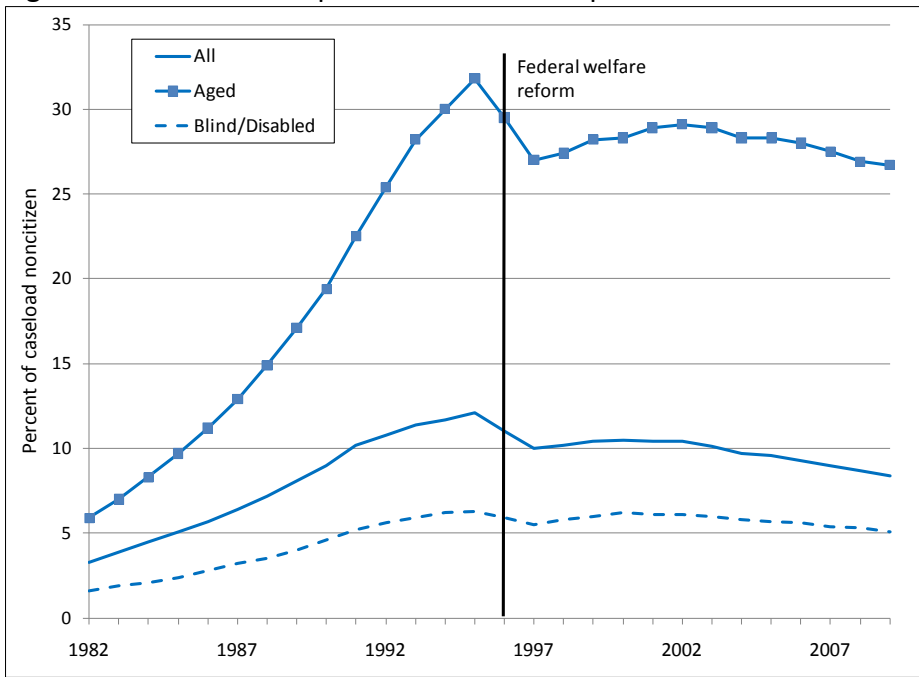
household participated in public assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, free or reduced price School Lunch, SSI, public housing or received a rental subsidy from the government, or energy assistance. Shaded areas refer to annual periods of labor market contraction. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Children's immigration status defined in same way. Figures are weighted. Shaded areas refer to annual periods of labor market contraction. See text for details.

Figure 3: Percent Distribution of Children in Households with Income Less than 200% Poverty, By Own and Head's Immigrant Status



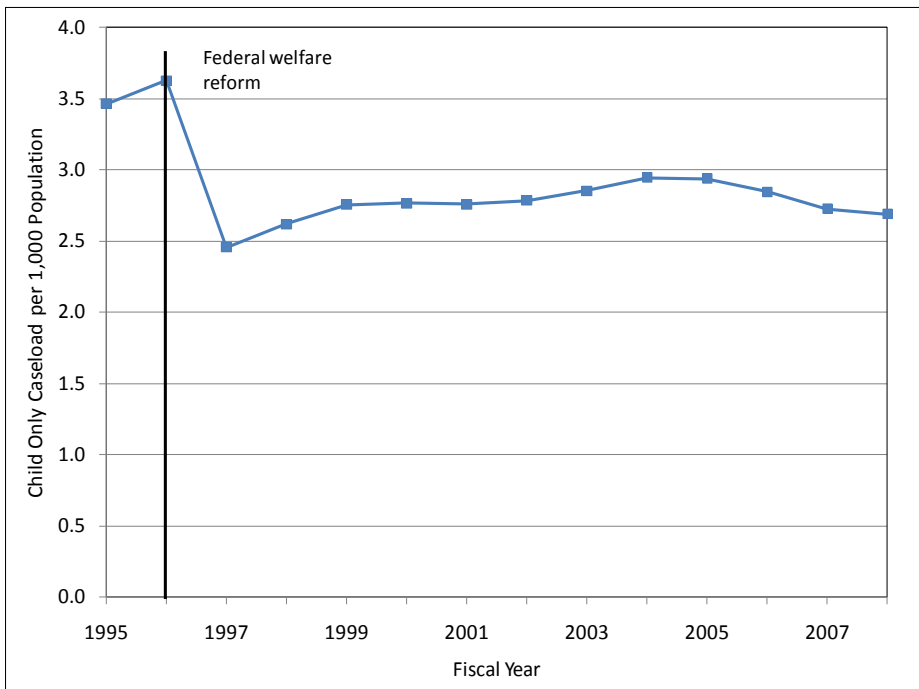
Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995-2010 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement data. Sample includes children under 18 in households with income less than 200 percent of poverty. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Children's immigration status defined in same way. Figures are weighted. See text for details.

Figure 4: Noncitizens as percent of all SSI recipients



Source: Table 29 in Social Security Administration (2010).

Figure 5: Child-Only Caseload in AFDC/TANF (per 1,000 population)

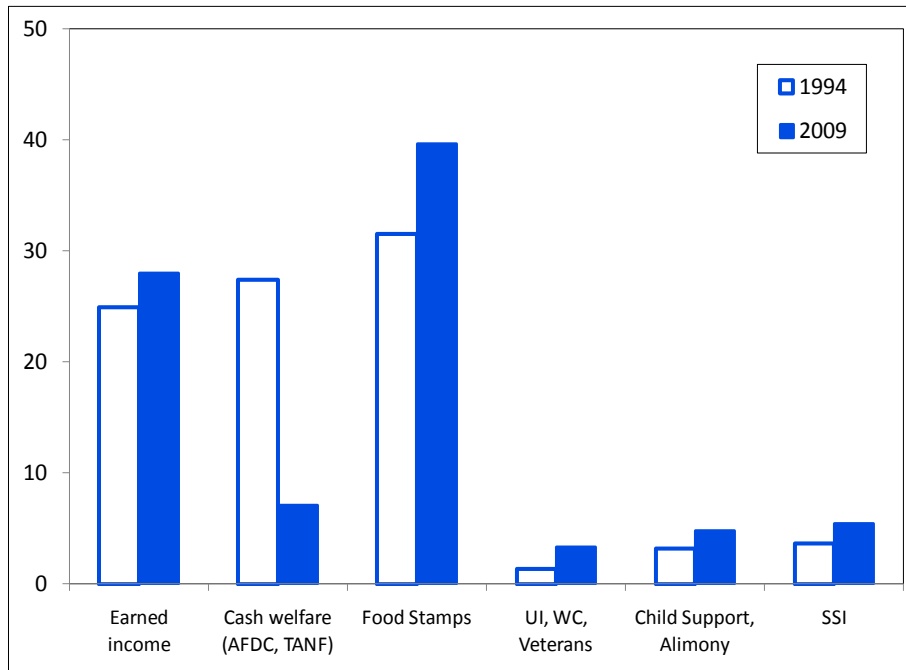


Source: See <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/character/index.html>.

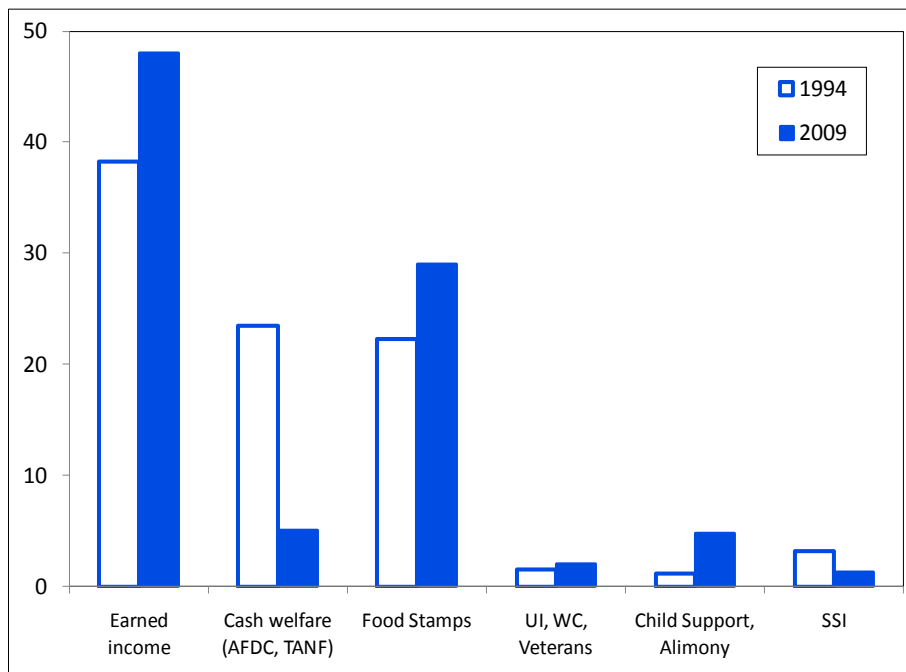


Figure 6: Share of Income by Source for Households with Children Below 50% Official Poverty, 1994 and 2009

(a) Households headed by natives



(b) Households headed by immigrants

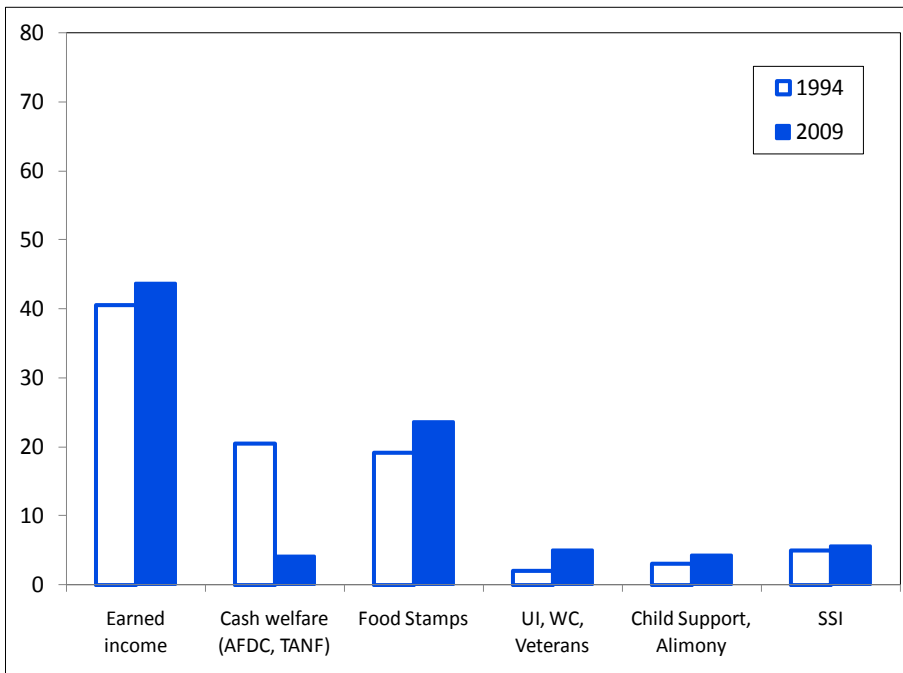


Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995 and 2010 Current Population Survey Annual and Social Economic Supplement data. Sample includes households with children in which income is below 50% of official poverty, poverty is assigned at the household level. Total income includes the value of food stamps. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Categories of income do not sum to 1, some income categories are omitted. Figures are weighted.

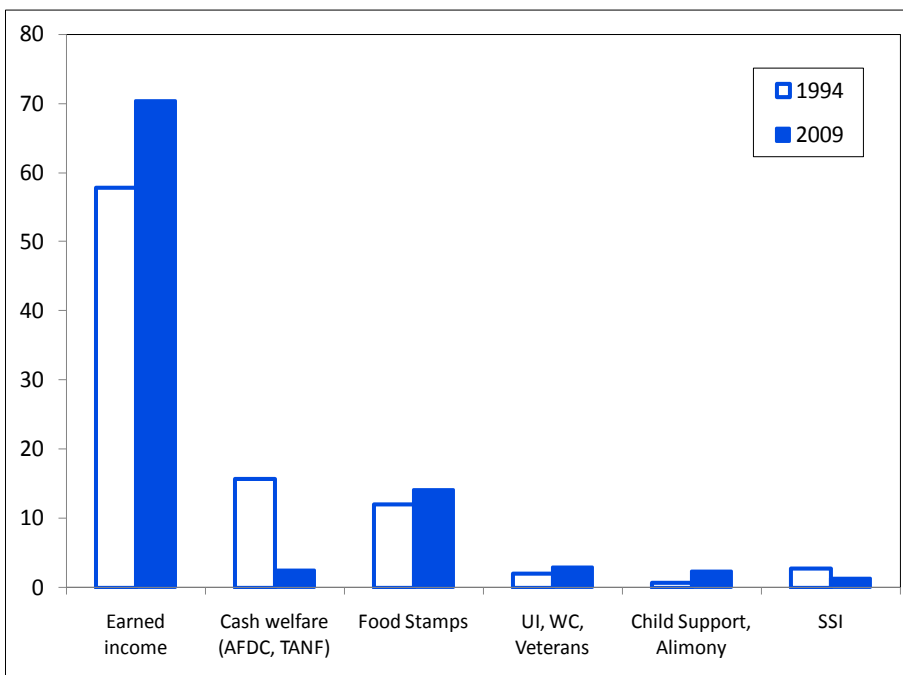
Figure 7

Share of Income by Source for Households with Children Below Official Poverty, 1994 and 2009

(a) Households headed by natives



(b) Households headed by immigrants

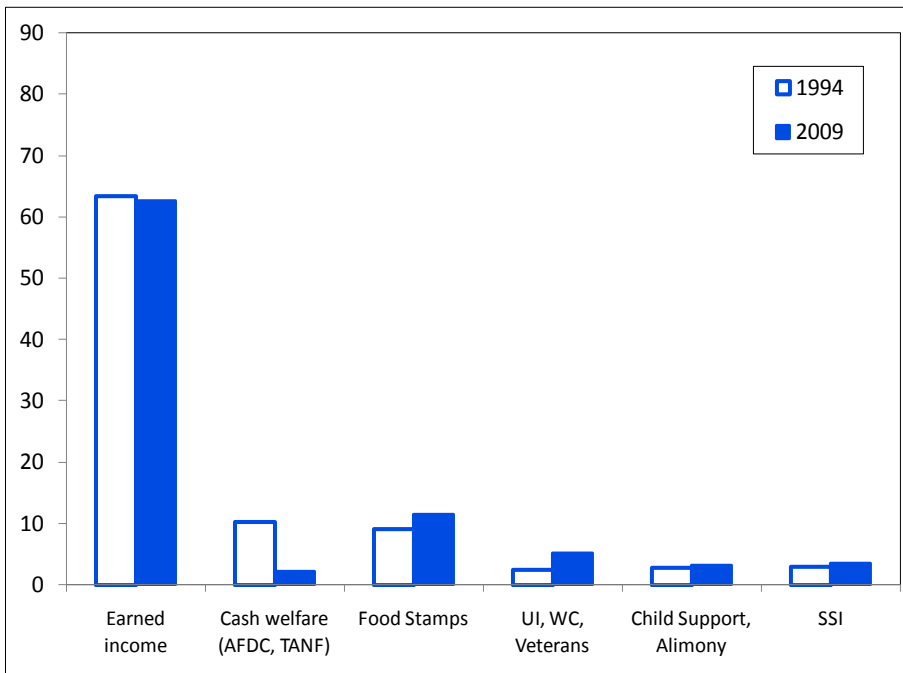


Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995 and 2010 Current Population Survey Annual and Social Economic Supplement data. Sample includes households with children in which income is below 100% of official poverty, poverty is assigned at the household level. Total income includes the value of food stamps. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Categories of income do not sum to 1, some income categories are omitted. Figures are weighted.

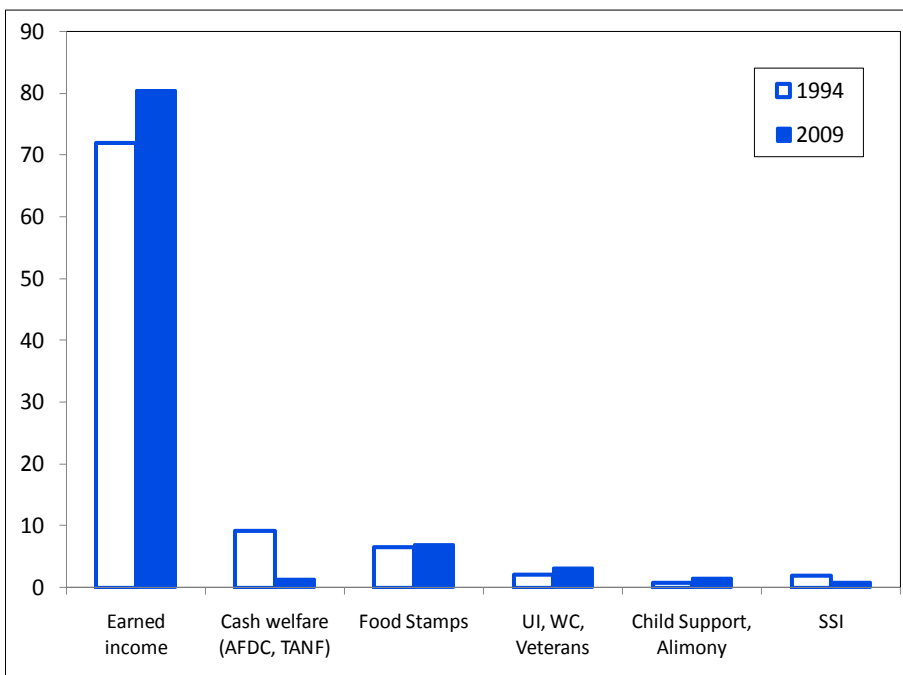
Figure 8

Share of Income by Source for Households with Children Below 200% Official Poverty, 1994 and 2009

(a) Households headed by natives



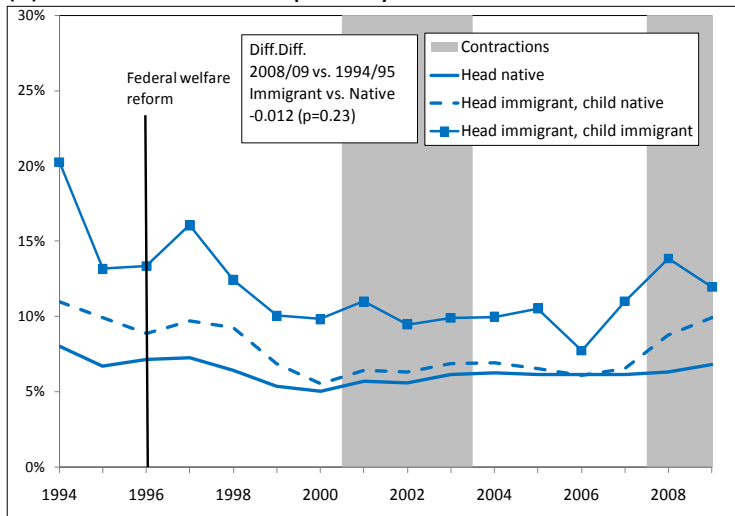
(b) Households headed by immigrants



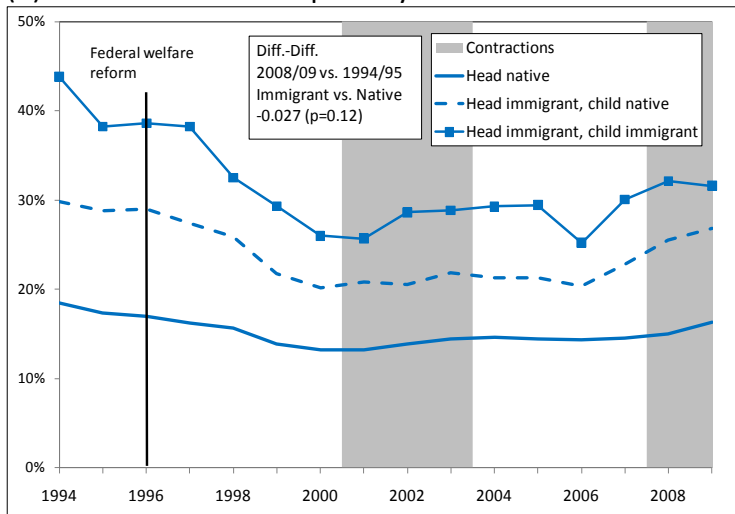
Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995 and 2010 Current Population Survey Annual and Social Economic Supplement data. Sample includes households with children in which income is below 200% of official poverty, poverty is assigned at the household level. Total income includes the value of food stamps. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Categories of income do not sum to 1, some income categories are omitted. Figures are weighted.

Figure 9: Child Poverty Rates, by Immigrant Status of Child and Head of Household

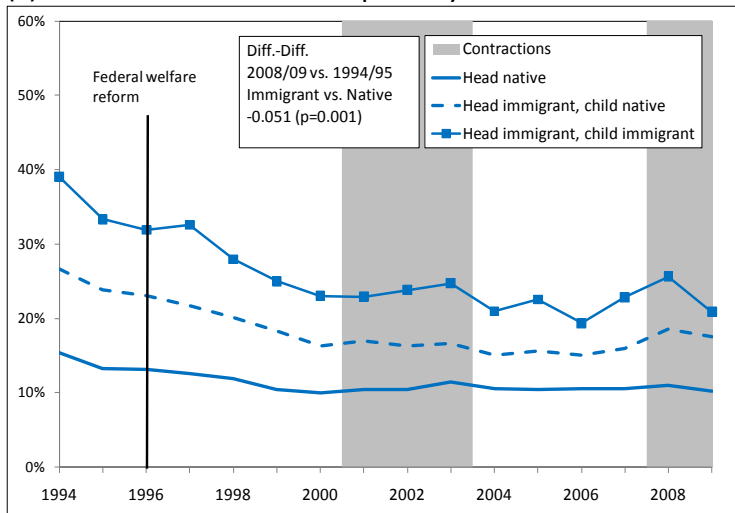
(a) Below 50% official poverty



(b) Below 100% official poverty



(c) Below 100% alternative poverty

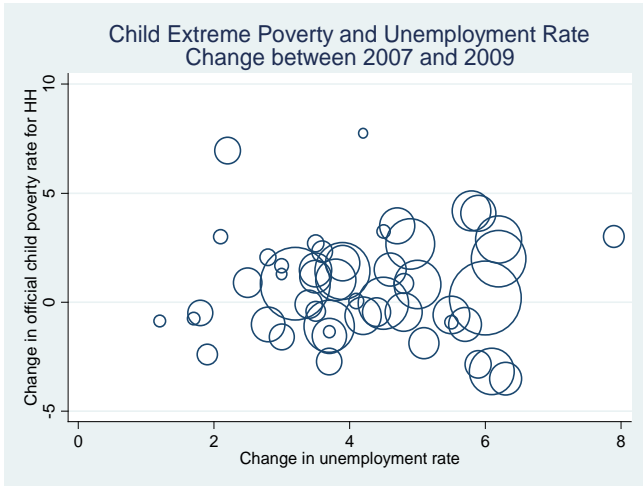


Notes: Authors' calculations from 1995-2010 Current Population Survey Annual and Social Economic Supplement data. Sample includes children and poverty is assigned at the household level. Official poverty uses total household income and household size and the official Census poverty thresholds; alternative poverty uses total cash income plus the EITC and child tax credits and other transfers minus FICA and state and local taxes. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. Children's immigration

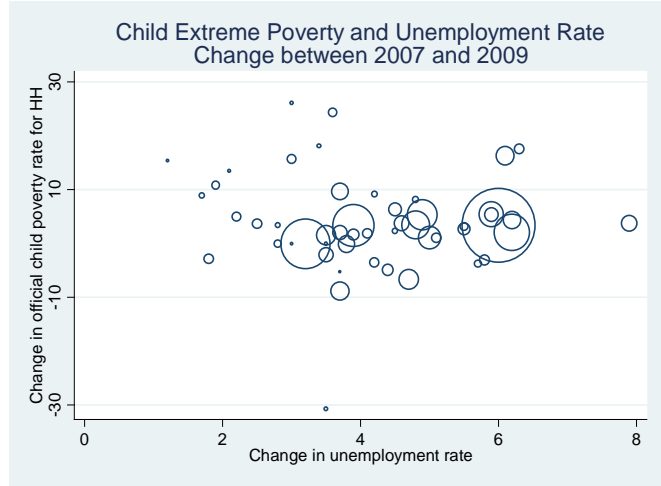
status assigned analogously. Figures are weighted. Shaded areas refer to annual periods of labor market contraction. See text for details.

Figure 10: Change in Unemployment Rate and Child Poverty 2007-2009, by State

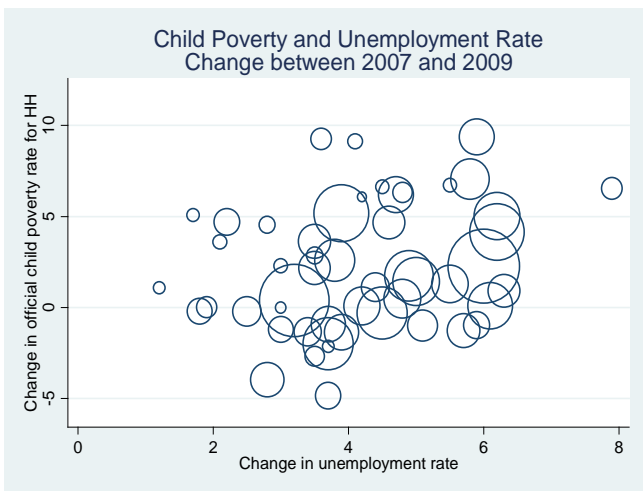
(a) Below 50% poverty, head native



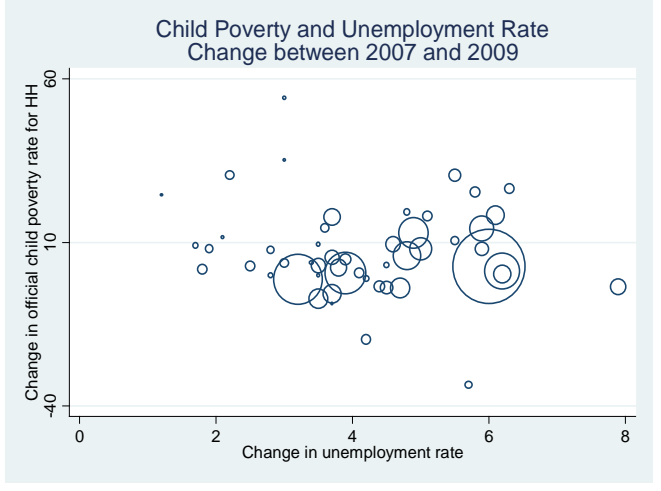
(b) Below 50% poverty, head immigrant



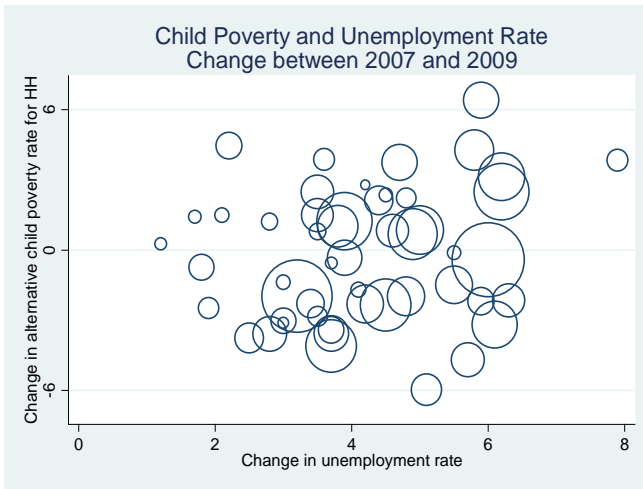
(c) Below 100% poverty, head native



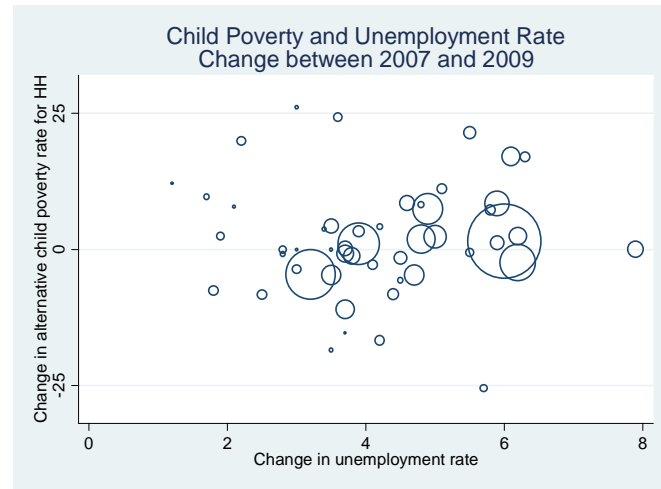
(d) Below 100% poverty, head immigrant



(e) Below 100% alt. poverty, head native



(f) Below 100% alt. poverty, head immigrant



Notes: Scatter plots of state data where each point is the change in unemployment rate and poverty for a state between the peak and trough of the contraction (2007-2009). Authors' tabulations using 2008 and 2010 CPS Annual and Social Economic Supplement Data. Sample includes children and poverty is assigned at the household level. Official poverty uses total household income and household size and the official Census

poverty thresholds; alternative poverty uses total cash income plus the EITC and child tax credits and other transfers minus FICA and state and local taxes. Native household heads are those who were born in the U.S. or Puerto Rico or outlying areas or who were born abroad to U.S. parent(s), immigrant heads are other foreign born. See text for details.

Appendix Table 1: State TANF Immigrant Eligibility

	State Option to Bar but State Chooses Not to		State Fill-in Programs, Post-Enactment Immigrants During 5 Year Bar												
	Pre-Enactment Immigrants	Post-Enactment Immigrants, Post 5-Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Alabama	X	X													
Alaska	X	X													
Arizona	X	X													
Arkansas	X														
California	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colorado	X	X													
Connecticut	X	X	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Delaware	X	X													
District of Columbia	X	X													
Florida	X	X													
Georgia	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hawaii	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Idaho	X	X													
Illinois	X	X													
Indiana	X														
Iowa	X	X													
Kansas	X	X													
Kentucky	X	X													
Louisiana	X	X													
Maine	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maryland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Massachusetts	X	X	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>							
Michigan	X	X													
Minnesota	X	X													
Mississippi															
Missouri	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X						
Montana	X	X													
Nebraska	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nevada	X	X													
New Hampshire	X	X													
New Jersey	X	X													
New Mexico	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
New York	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
North Carolina	X	X													
North Dakota	X	X													
Ohio	X	X													
Oklahoma	X	X													
Oregon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rhode Island	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina	X	X													
South Dakota	X	X													
Tennessee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Texas	X														
Utah	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vermont	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Virginia	X	X													
Washington	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
West Virginia	X	X													
Wisconsin	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wyoming	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: Sources are Welfare Rules Database (<http://anfdata.urban.org/wrd/WRDWelcome.cfm>) cross checked with Zimmerman and Tumlin (1998) and the National Immigration Law Center (2002) and (2004). An "X" indicates that the state covers Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) in that year without any caveats and the state has implemented TANF. Prior to TANF implementation, AFDC rules dictate eligibility. Certain subgroups of immigrants may be covered in unmarked states (see source data for details). State policies electing whether to bar immigrants (first two columns) rarely changed over time; "X" indicates covered as of TANF implementation. Exceptions include Idaho and North Dakota (both began coverage for post-enactment, post-5 year bar group in 2004) and Montana (coverage for pre-enactment group discontinued in 2002; coverage for post-enactment, post-5 year bar discontinued in 2002 and reinstated in 2009). The coverage indicator is consistent across sources except for the following



cases: for pre-enactment immigrants: Alabama in 1998; Mississippi in 1998, 2002, and 2004; and Montana in 2002 and 2004. For post-enactment post, 5-year bar: Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Ohio and Utah in 1998; Arkansas, Montana, and South Carolina in 2002 and 2003; North Dakota in 2004. For post-enactment, during 5-year bar: Hawaii, New Mexico, and New York in 1998 and Georgia in 2004. In these cases the cross checked sources indicate opposite coverage of what is listed.

<sup>1</sup> Immigrants only eligible after they have resided in this state for 6 months

Appendix Table 2: State Medicaid Immigrant Eligibility

	State Option to Bar					State Fill-in Programs, Post-Enactment				
	Pre-Enactment	Post Enactment, Post 5-Year Bar				Immigrants During 5 Year Bar				
		1998	2002	2005	2008	1998	2002	2005	2006	2007
Alabama	X		1	1	1					
Alaska	X	X	X	X	X					
Arizona	X		X	X	X					
Arkansas	X	X	X	X	X					
California	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colorado	X	X	X	X	X					
Connecticut	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Delaware	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
District of Columbia	X		X	X	X				X	X
Florida	X	X	X	X	X					
Georgia	X	X	X	X	X					
Hawaii	X	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>
Idaho	X			X	X					
Illinois	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>
Indiana	X		1	X	X					
Iowa	X	X	X	X	X					
Kansas	X	X	X	X	X					
Kentucky	X	X	X	X	X					
Louisiana	X	X	X	X	X					
Maine	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maryland	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X	X <sup>3</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>
Massachusetts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>5</sup>	X <sup>5</sup>	X <sup>5</sup>
Michigan	X	X	X	X	X		X <sup>3</sup>			
Minnesota	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mississippi	X		1	1	1					
Missouri	X	X	X	X	X					
Montana	X	X	X	X	X					X <sup>2</sup>
Nebraska	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nevada	X	X	X	X	X					
New Hampshire	X	X	X	X	X					
New Jersey	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X <sup>6</sup>	X <sup>6</sup>
New Mexico	X		X	X	X					
New York	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
North Carolina	X	X	X	X	X					
North Dakota	X	X	1	1	1					
Ohio	X		1	1	1					
Oklahoma	X		X	X	X					
Oregon	X		X	X	X					
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>7</sup>	X	X	X	X
Rhode Island	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>
South Carolina	X		X	X	X					
South Dakota	x		X	X	X					
Tennessee	X	X	X	X	X					
Texas	X		1	1	1		X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>
Utah	X	X	X	X	X					
Vermont	X	X	X	X	X					
Virginia	X		1	1	1					
Washington	X		X	X	X	X <sup>7</sup>	X <sup>2,3</sup>	X <sup>8</sup>	X <sup>8</sup>	X <sup>8</sup>
West Virginia	X		X	X	X					
Wisconsin	X	X	X	X	X					
Wyoming	1		1	1	1					

Notes: An "X" indicates that the state covers Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) in that year (see footnotes for major exceptions). Sources include Tumlin, Zimmerman, and Ost (1999) for 1998 and National Immigration Law Center for 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Certain subgroups of immigrants may be covered in unmarked states (see source data for details). In 1998 a blank for post-enactment, post 5-year bar can mean the state has not implemented this policy yet.

<sup>1</sup> Only to LPRs with 40 quarters of work and the veteran and "refugee" categories.

<sup>2</sup> Available for Children

<sup>3</sup> Available for Pregnant women

<sup>4</sup> Only available to Children, Pregnant Women, or Disabled immigrants

<sup>5</sup> Seniors and Disabled eligible up to 100% FPL; Children up to 200% FPL. All children are eligible for preventative care.

<sup>6</sup> Children and Parents are eligible. Beginning in 2007, limited funds for prenatal care are available for up to 200% of the federal poverty line.

<sup>7</sup> Must be a resident for 6 months (Pennsylvania) or 1 year (Washington) before eligibility begins

<sup>8</sup> Seniors and Disabled Immigrants receiving cash assistance are eligible. Prenatal care is available. Children are covered up to 100% of the FPL, however total allowances are capped.

Appendix Table 3: State SCHIP Immigrant Eligibility

	State Fill-in Programs, Post-Enactment Immigrants During 5-Year Bar				
	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007
Alabama					
Alaska					
Arizona					
Arkansas					
California	X	X	X	X	X
Colorado					
Connecticut	X	X	X	X	X
Delaware					
District of Columbia	X	X	X	X	X
Florida	X	X	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>
Georgia					
Hawaii	X	X	X	X	X
Idaho					
Illinois	X	X	X	X	X
Indiana	X				
Iowa					
Kansas					
Kentucky					
Louisiana					
Maine	X	X	X	X	X
Maryland	X	X			X
Massachusetts	X	X	X	X	X
Michigan					
Minnesota	X	X	X	X	X
Mississippi					
Missouri					
Montana					
Nebraska	X	X	X	X	X
Nevada					
New Hampshire					
New Jersey	X	X	X	X	X
New Mexico					
New York	X	X	X	X	X
North Carolina					
North Dakota					
Ohio					
Oklahoma					
Oregon					
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X	X
Rhode Island	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina					
South Dakota					
Tennessee					
Texas	X	X	X	X	X
Utah					
Vermont					
Virginia					
Washington	X	X	X	X	X
West Virginia					
Wisconsin					
Wyoming					

Notes: Policies listed for SCHIP plans via Medicaid, Separate state program, or a combination of the two. An "X" indicates that the state covers Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) in that year (see footnotes for major exceptions). Sources include the National Immigration Law Center for 2002, 2005, 2006, and 2007 and Fremstad and Cox (2004) for 2004. Certain subgroups of immigrants may be covered in unmarked states (see source data for details).

<sup>1</sup> Funding is capped such that everyone who was covered as of July 1, 2000 is covered.

However anyone applying afterwards was put on a waiting list. A second freeze and removal of the waiting list was done in July 2003

Appendix Table 4: State SSI Immigrant Eligibility

	State Fill-in Programs, Post-Enactment Immigrants			
	1998	2002	2005	2006
Alabama				
Alaska				
Arizona				
Arkansas				
California		X	X	X
Colorado				
Connecticut				
Delaware				
District of Columbia				
Florida				
Georgia				
Hawaii		X	X	X
Idaho				
Illinois <sup>1</sup>				
Indiana				
Iowa				
Kansas				
Kentucky				
Louisiana				
Maine	X	X	X	X
Maryland				
Massachusetts				
Michigan				
Minnesota				
Mississippi				
Missouri				
Montana				
Nebraska		X	X	X
Nevada				
New Hampshire	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup>
New Jersey				
New Mexico				
New York				
North Carolina				
North Dakota				
Ohio				
Oklahoma				
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island				
South Carolina				
South Dakota				
Tennessee				
Texas				
Utah				
Vermont				
Virginia				
Washington				
West Virginia				
Wisconsin				
Wyoming				

Notes: An "X" indicates that the state covers Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) in that year (see footnotes for major exceptions). Sources include Tumlin and Zimmerman (1999) for 1998, and the National Immigration Law Center for 2002, 2005, and 2006. Following the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, all immigrants receiving SSI prior to 1996 as well as those who entered before 1996 and would become eligible, were eligible for SSI.

<sup>1</sup> Illinois is recorded immigrants was also covering pre-enactment immigrants who are 65 or older, and are determined ineligible because they do not have a disability in 2002, 2005, and 2006 and covering refugees past their 7-year quota in 2005 and 2006

<sup>2</sup> Funds only available after the individual exceeds the 5-year bar

Appendix Table 5: State Food Stamps Immigrant Eligibility

	State Fill-in Programs, Pre-Enactment Immigrants				State Fill-in Programs, Post-Enactment Immigrants									
	1998	2001	2002	2003	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Alabama														
Alaska														
Arizona														
Arkansas														
California	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colorado														
Connecticut	X	X	X	X	X	X	X <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Delaware														
District of Columbia														
Florida	X <sup>2</sup>													
Georgia														
Hawaii														
Idaho														
Illinois	X	X <sup>3</sup>	X <sup>3</sup>											
Indiana														
Iowa														
Kansas														
Kentucky														
Louisiana														
Maine	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maryland					X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>4</sup>						
Massachusetts	X	X	X <sup>1</sup>		X	X	X <sup>1</sup>							
Michigan														
Minnesota	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mississippi														
Missouri	X <sup>5</sup>													
Montana														
Nebraska	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nevada														
New Hampshire											X			
New Jersey	X	X <sup>6</sup>	X <sup>6</sup>											
New Mexico														
New York	X <sup>5</sup>	X <sup>7</sup>	X <sup>7</sup>											
North Carolina														
North Dakota														
Ohio	X <sup>5</sup>	X <sup>8</sup>	X <sup>8</sup>											
Oklahoma														
Oregon														
Pennsylvania														
Rhode Island	X	X <sup>9</sup>	X <sup>9</sup>											
South Carolina														
South Dakota														
Tennessee														
Texas	X <sup>5</sup>	X <sup>10</sup>	X <sup>10</sup>											
Utah														
Vermont														
Virginia														
Washington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
West Virginia														
Wisconsin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wyoming														

Notes: An "X" indicates that the state covers Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) in that year (see footnotes for major exceptions). Sources include Zimmerman and Tumlin (1999) for 1998, Schwartz (2001) for 2001, National Immigrant Law Center for 2002, USDA's "State-Funded Food Programs for Legal Immigrants" for 2003 and 2004 and the USDA's "Food Stamp Program State Options Report" for 2005-2009. In 1998 the Agriculture Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act restored eligibility for pre-enactment immigrants receiving payments or assistance for blindness or disability, those who were 65+ on August 22, 1996 and Pre-enactment minors. The 2002 Farm Bill gave eligibility for Post-Enactment immigrants who have lived in the United States for 5 years, and for all immigrant children and disabled individuals. Effective Oct. 1, 2002, "qualified" immigrants receiving disability-related assistance will be eligible. Effective Apr. 1, 2003 "qualified" immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for five or more years as a "qualified" immigrant will be eligible. Effective Oct. 1, 2003, "qualified" immigrant children will be eligible, regardless of their date of entry.

<sup>1</sup> Qualified Immigrants in MA in 2002 and immigrants entering after 4/1/1998 in CT in 2002 must meet a 6 month residency requirement

<sup>2</sup> Only children, elderly, and disabled are covered.

<sup>3</sup> Only available to 60-64 year olds (without a disability) or parents residing with children who are eligible for federal food stamps.

<sup>4</sup> Only available to children under 18 years old.

<sup>5</sup> Only available to former food stamp recipients.

<sup>6</sup> Only eligible if the immigrant is (1) 65 or older; (2) legal guardian living with dependent children under 18; (3) mentally or physically incapacitated; (4) receiving GA benefits and considered unemployable. Must apply for citizenship within 60 days of being certified for food stamps.

<sup>7</sup> Only eligible between the ages of 60 and 68. Must live in the same county as on August 22, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Only eligible if between 65 and 68 years old, are eligible for SSI, have been in the United States for 5 years, and are Ohio residents as of August 22, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Must be residents of Rhode Island before August 22, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Only Eligible if turned 65 after August 22, 1996 but before March 1st, 1998 and have received food stamps anytime from Sept. 1996 to Aug. 1997.