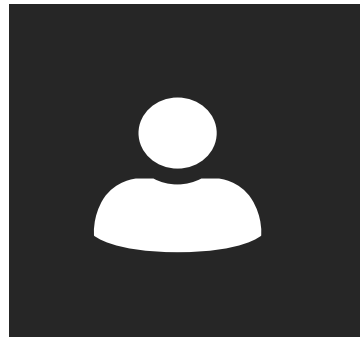


Nixon's Family Assistance Plan:

Its Shortcomings and
Impact on Social Policy



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The FAP and opposition to welfare isn't ancient history—the debates over race, gender, work ethic, and government control haven't gone anywhere. They just evolved.

Methodology:

- **Congressional records** (debates, testimonies, voting patterns)
- **Newspaper archives** (New York Times, Washington Post, regional papers)
- **Television news transcripts** (where available)
- **Policy analyses and academic commentary** from the 1960s–1990s
- **Writings and speeches** from key figures (e.g., Nixon, Moynihan, feminist critics)

The failure of FAP led to the creation and expansion of the EITC and influenced the 1996 welfare reform (PRWORA), which emphasized work requirements and state control.

- # Then vs. Now: Same Fight, Different Packaging
- 1970: Guaranteed income (FAP) → “too generous,” “too radical” (Independent American, 1970)
 - 2020s: Universal Basic Income (UBI) → “too expensive,” “socialist” (Gramm and Arrington, 2018)



Pictured above: Nixon discussing the Family Assistance Plan with advisors (1968)

Guaranteed Income with Work Requirements: Families would receive a base income from the federal government, with additional incentives for working, but able-bodied recipients were required to work or undergo job training.



Graph showing government social welfare expenditures, significantly boosted after LBJ and Nixon.

Why Did the FAP Fail?

- Bipartisan Opposition
- Conservatives feared dependency; liberals criticized low benefit levels.
- Racialized Perception
- Media and political rhetoric portrayed recipients as undeserving and nonwhite.
- Plan ignored women's labor, excluded support for child care
- Passed the House, failed in the Senate—killed by ideological divides.
- Long-term Policy Influence
- Ideas re-emerged in Earned Income Tax Credit (1975) and 1996 welfare reform.



Nixon's bold welfare plan seemed like a solution, but he didn't anticipate the political storm it would unleash. Its failure massively impacted social policy dialogue for the future.



REFERENCES

- Nixon, Gordon and Batlan, Moynihan, ACLU, Allan, Mink, Thorpe, Wiley, Malek, Weaver Jr., Boushey, Zelleke, Tanner, Gramm and Arrington, Rachidi