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FOR CONGRESS

Press Release

CIVIL's Announces Success Factors Anti-Poverty Program:

How the Pursuit of Happiness is Crucial to the New War on Poverty!

(Scottsdale, AZ., 6/44/2020) Since the advent of the War on Poverty in the late 1960's, the poverty rate has varied up or down, a couple of percentage points, generally related to the rise and fall of the economy. The underlying challenge: because there are so many failing schools the numbers of young adults flowing into the system closely align with those who have exited poverty.

Reducing poverty will occur only when public policy tightly entwines a quality education with job availability with encouragement for marriage and family, a linkage that produces economic success and improved path to personal happiness.

Three factors form the foundation for personal economic success and happiness: 1) A high quality high school education and more when possible, 2) work and a willingness to improve one's job skills, and 3) marriage, family, and a stable home life.

To date, our programs presume that the lack of money is the cause of poverty. Since the start of the War on Poverty in the 1960s, \$40 trillion has been spent on the variety of anti-poverty programs, these dollars have not diminished poverty. Though programs like SNAP, Medicare, Medicaid and many others are an important safety net for those in need, they are not anti-poverty solutions because they do not reduce poverty.

To reduce poverty, we need to employ factors in success that have a proven track record.

An education, like money, won't buy happiness, but an education will increase the chances of acquiring a good job, which increases the opportunities for marriage and family, both of which increase economic success and confer a higher degree of happiness. If America is going to get serious about our Pursuit of Happiness, which requires reducing poverty, we must start with quality education.

Over the last several generations, as employment has increasingly favored a strong mind over a strong back, education has become the cornerstone of a successful economic life. The more education one

acquires, the more one's chances of acquiring a quality job increases, as does the likelihood of marriage and family. Additionally, marriage and family increases industriousness, which also produces higher degrees of happiness.

Ron Haskins of the Brookings Institute codified this approach in *The Success Sequence*. He states, 'Our research shows that of American adults who followed these three simple rules, only about 2 percent are in poverty and nearly 75 percent have joined the middle class (defined as earning around \$55,000 or more per year). There are surely influences other than these principles at play but following them guides a young adult away from poverty and toward the middle class.'

America needs a safety net. There should be no doubt about that. But America also needs a simple, effective strategy that builds a success plan that starts in Kindergarten and continues into early adulthood. A new anti-poverty system needs to focus on quality education, work, marriage and family, in this order.

Five pillars build the CIVIL Success Factor approach:

1. Anti-poverty solutions, beginning in Kindergarten, require a new focus on education, especially in inner city and rural America (Education Enterprise Zones),
2. Work as a qualifying requirement for government assistance not only creates a foundation for personal success but is a key factor for increasing one's happiness,
3. Equalize assistance to married and unmarried couples (the existing "welfare penalty" provides less assistance to married couples),
4. Develop Personal Success Plans for each person that is in poverty, and
5. Limit the length of time assistance is available.

This is a 20-year project to reduce poverty rates by transforming the government's 'send a check' mentality, the traditional welfare state that makes poverty comfortable, to policies that focus on personal success, with education as central to its anti-poverty strategy.

If we can raise up the poor, those most in need, by absolutely assuring access to a quality education, we turn off the spigot of people entering poverty for lack of an education, the first rung of economic success.

According to most surveys of happiness around the world, work, marriage, and family are three of the most important elements to achieve a high degree of happiness. What has changed over the last 50 years that is much of America's anti-poverty efforts have not been supportive of these factors. The CIVIL Success Factors approach is a starting point for reducing the poverty rate from 13% to 5% or less over the next twenty years.

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