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understanding of the conservative resurgence and its wider implications for American democracy.

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Putting Poor People to Work: How the Work-First Idea Eroded College Access for the Poor *by Kathleen M. Shaw, Sara Goldrick-Rab, Christopher Mazzeo, and Jerry A. Jacobs. New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 2007. 199 pp. $32.50.*

How does the ideology under girding national policy reform trickle down to state and local-level policy and front line service delivery? What are the ripple effects of such changes for other institutions and for population outcomes? This book assesses trends in welfare reform and workforce training and effects for single mothers. The authors trace the prominence and causal role of the idea of "work first" at multiple levels and institutional settings. They find it has become the singular operating rationale for welfare recipients and low income adults more generally across the United States since the late 1990s. They further argue that it has shut doors to higher education.

The widespread implementation of work first is attributed to multiple sources, including the message's sound bite simplicity for workers' to absorb and communicate and its resonance with the popular political belief that welfare reliance is damaging to recipients. Their discussion of the recent history of welfare policies and employment training policies, and their qualitative comparative case study data analysis of state and local programs is well developed and important. It is a story of consistency in mission and approach to almost exclusively funnel clients toward job search. It challenges a previous consensus that there is more diversity in how welfare reform was implemented across the states than there is uniformity. They contrast formal federal and state policy with caseworker and client depictions and pull together remarkably similar and telling data showing declining reports of training and postsecondary education among program participants.

They further argue that this narrowing has had disastrous effects for the poor's chances to increase their education. However, the singular case for the causal role of the work first approach in reducing the enrollment of the poor in postsecondary education is not definitive. A variety of other factors could have also contributed to a decline in program recipients' school enrollment but are not considered here.

Welfare was never conceptualized as a "door" to higher education. Being on the rolls did not preclude continuing one's education pre-1996 because recipients did not have to be employed for as much time as the program now requires. However, with the shrinking of the rolls, women who would have formerly been eligible and who are likely to enroll in postsecondary education

may no longer bother to apply for cash assistance or leave cash assistance more quickly than those with less preference or ability for further education. Their postsecondary training may be occurring outside the welfare system. Equally, recipients' enrollment may not have changed much but more of it goes unreported in administrative systems than in the past, given the new rules. Another hypothesis is whether overall public education in poor communities has declined so much over the last decade that fewer educationally promising students are graduating and eligible for postsecondary enrollment.

Declines in recipients' postsecondary education do not fully attribute cause to the work first mantra. While the authors suggest that community colleges have become restrictive for the poor more generally, the book charges further research on how and why. Public discourse may have been aligned with the work first idea for welfare recipients, and many politicians and policymakers may celebrate the widespread adoption and entrenchment of this philosophy. But whether this went too far and results in recipients' disenfranchisement of human capital opportunities is a further question we are challenged to consider. The authors' concerns resonate with current state and federal policy debates to reinstate more options for education and training. This book should encourage continuing examination of these policies and further research, development, and dissemination of policies that boost education outcomes.

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Portraits of Power: Ohio and National Politics, 1964–2004 *by Abe Zaidan and John C. Green. Akron, OH, University of Akron Press, 2007. 256 pp. Cloth, $49.95; paper, 22.95.*

Abe Zaidan is, without question, one of the most respected and prolific journalists to cover politics in the Buckeye State. During his 40 years of reporting, which include a stint as the Ohio correspondent for the *Washington Post*, he covered many larger-than-life political figures and watershed events that both shaped and were shaped by national politics. *Portraits of Power* presents 90 of Zaidan's over 3,000 columns, news stories, and features. Each has been carefully selected to provide readers with a "first draft of history."

The essays are placed into four chronologically ordered chapters, all of which are eloquently introduced and contextualized by John C. Green, an accomplished journalist in his own right and director of the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron. This offering of Zaidan's work highlights defining moments in Ohio politics. The first two chapters principally address the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s, emphasizing the transformation of the Democratic Party and the racial and generational unrest that characterized the Vietnam era. Most striking are his columns that recount the events surrounding the shooting of antiwar protestors at Kent State. As a reporter for