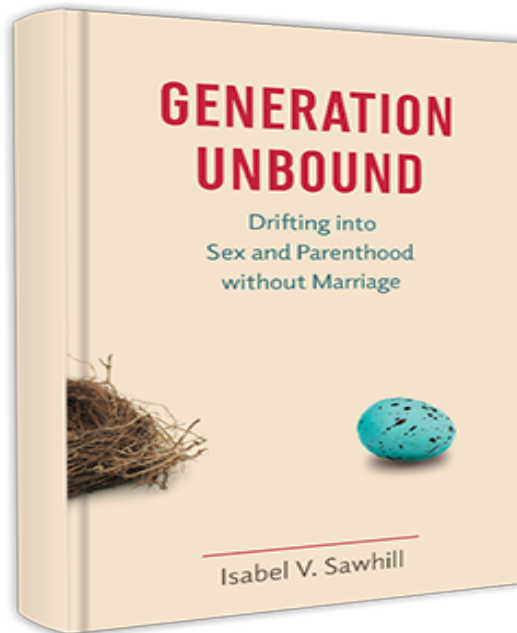


January 2016 webinar

# Generation Unbound:

*Drifting into Sex and Parenthood without Marriage*



# Presenters:



**Kay Reed**  
Executive Director



**Isabel Sawhill**  
Senior Fellow  
The Brookings Institution



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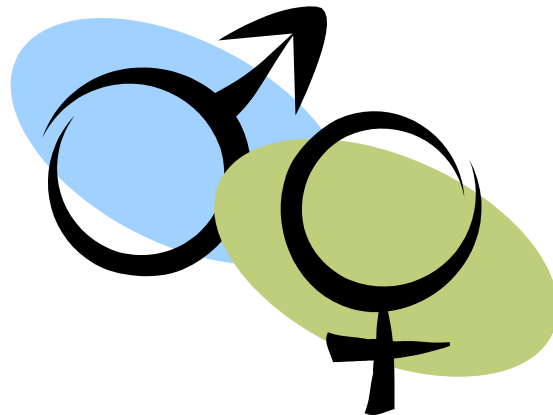
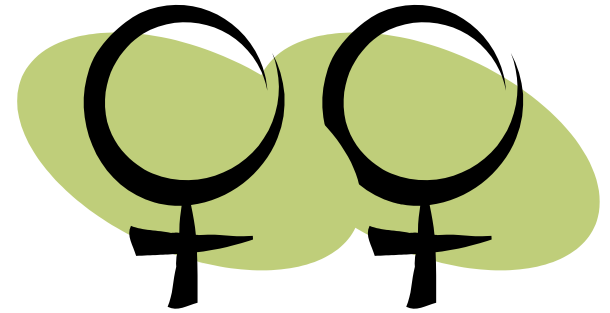
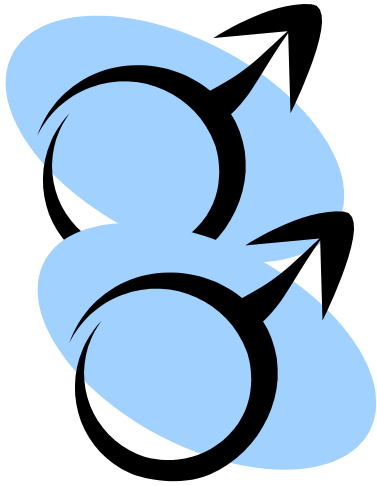
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believes in stable, healthy families.**



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all people deserve respect.





# GENERATION UNBOUND

Drifting into Sex and Parenthood without Marriage

**Isabel Sawhill**

Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

January 13, 2016

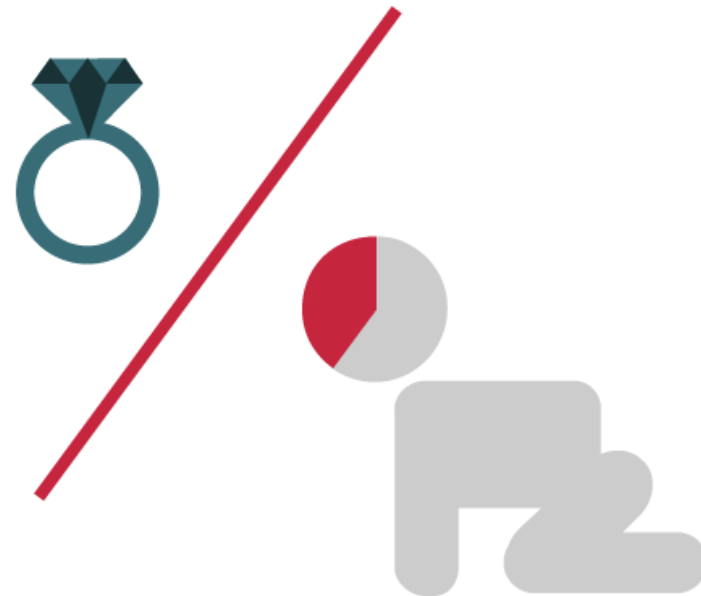


# Outline

- What's happening
- Why it's happening
- Why it matters
- What to do

# A Large Proportion of Births Occur Outside of Marriage

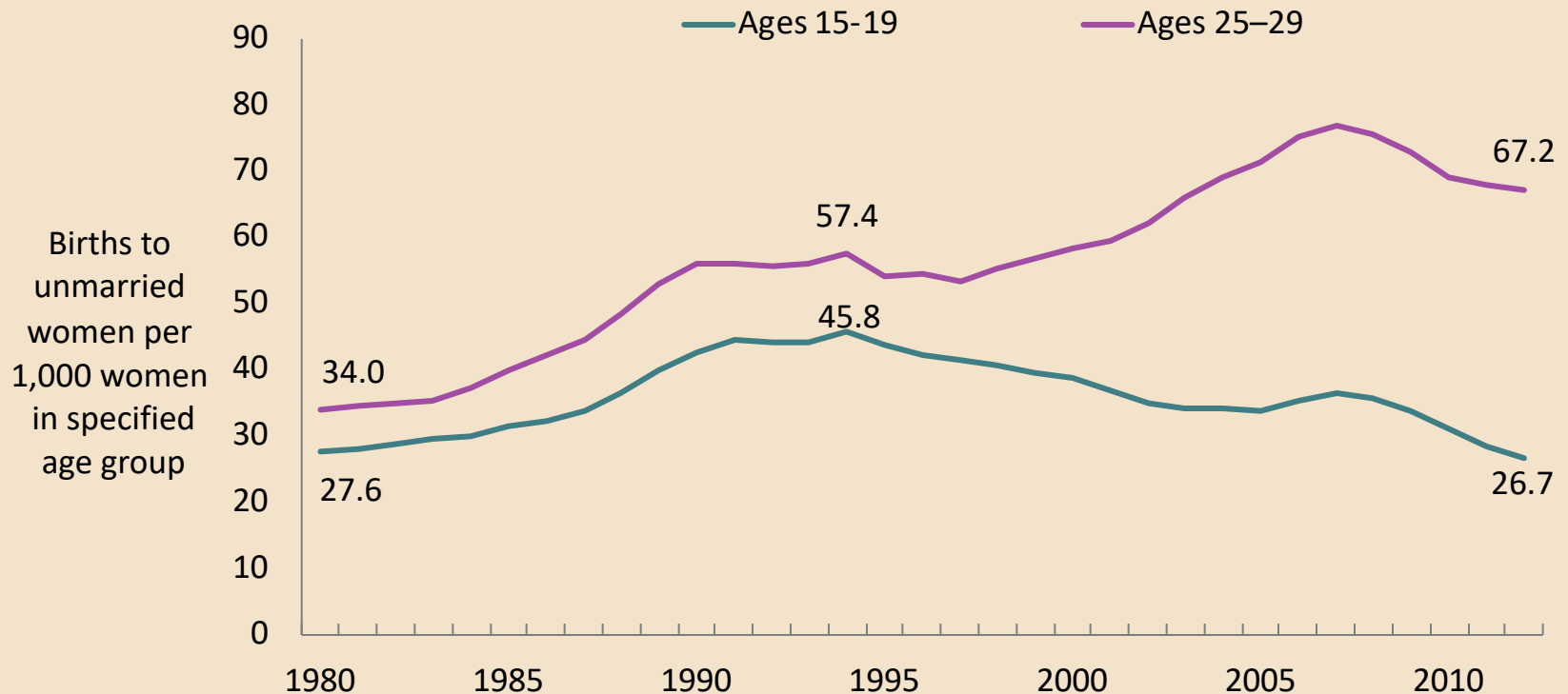
**OVER 40%** OF  
ALL CHILDREN  
ARE BORN  
**OUTSIDE OF  
MARRIAGE**



Source: "Births to Unmarried Women" Child Trends Data Bank. (July 2014).

# Is Unwed Childbearing Going to be the<sup>12</sup> New Normal?

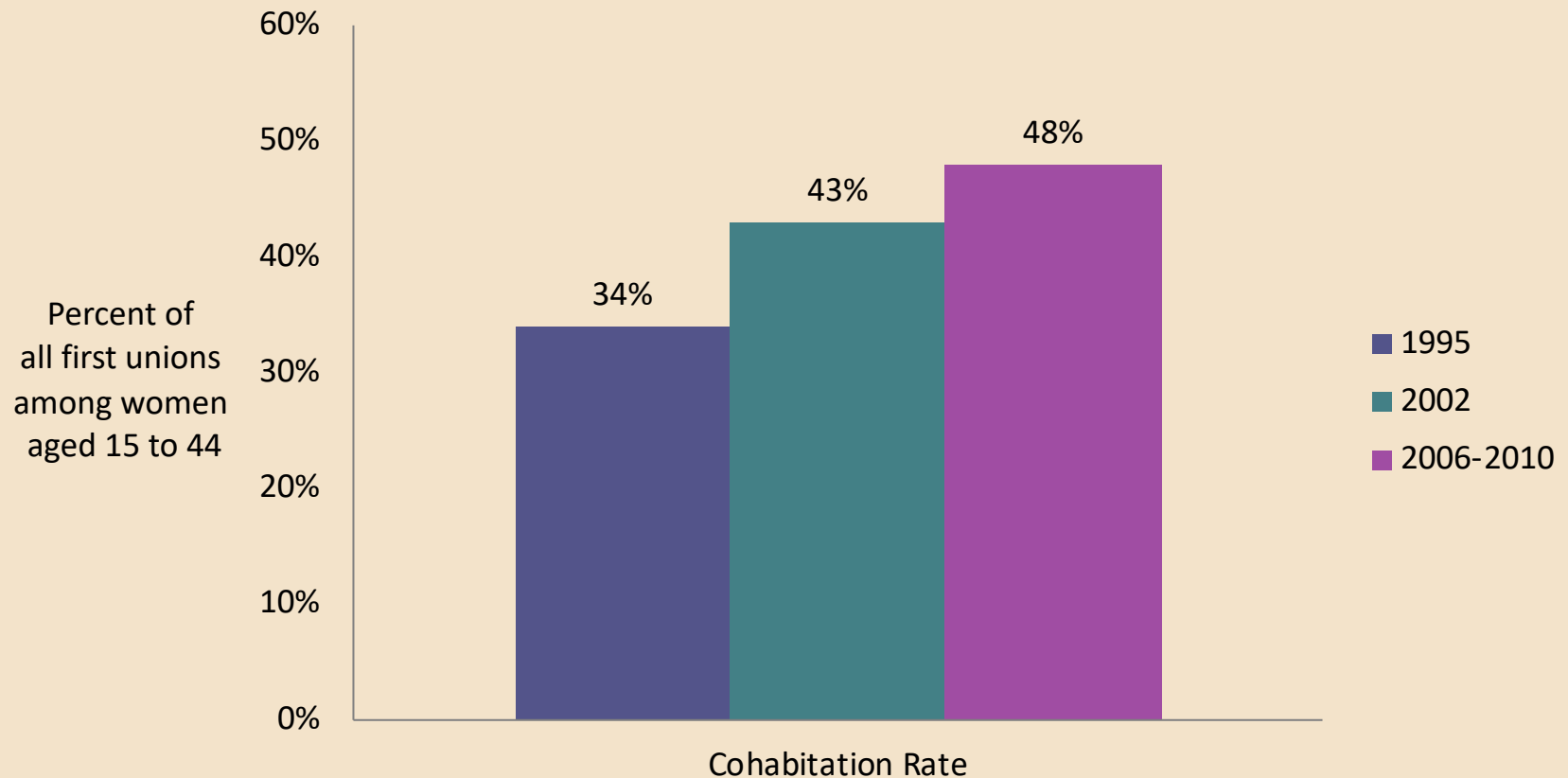
The problem of unmarried births has shifted up the age range. Though teenage births have been on the decline since the 1990s, births to unmarried 20-somethings remain high.



Source: US Census Bureau. Table FAM2.A Births to unmarried women: Birth rates for unmarried women by age of mother, 1980–2012.



# Cohabitation is Increasingly Common

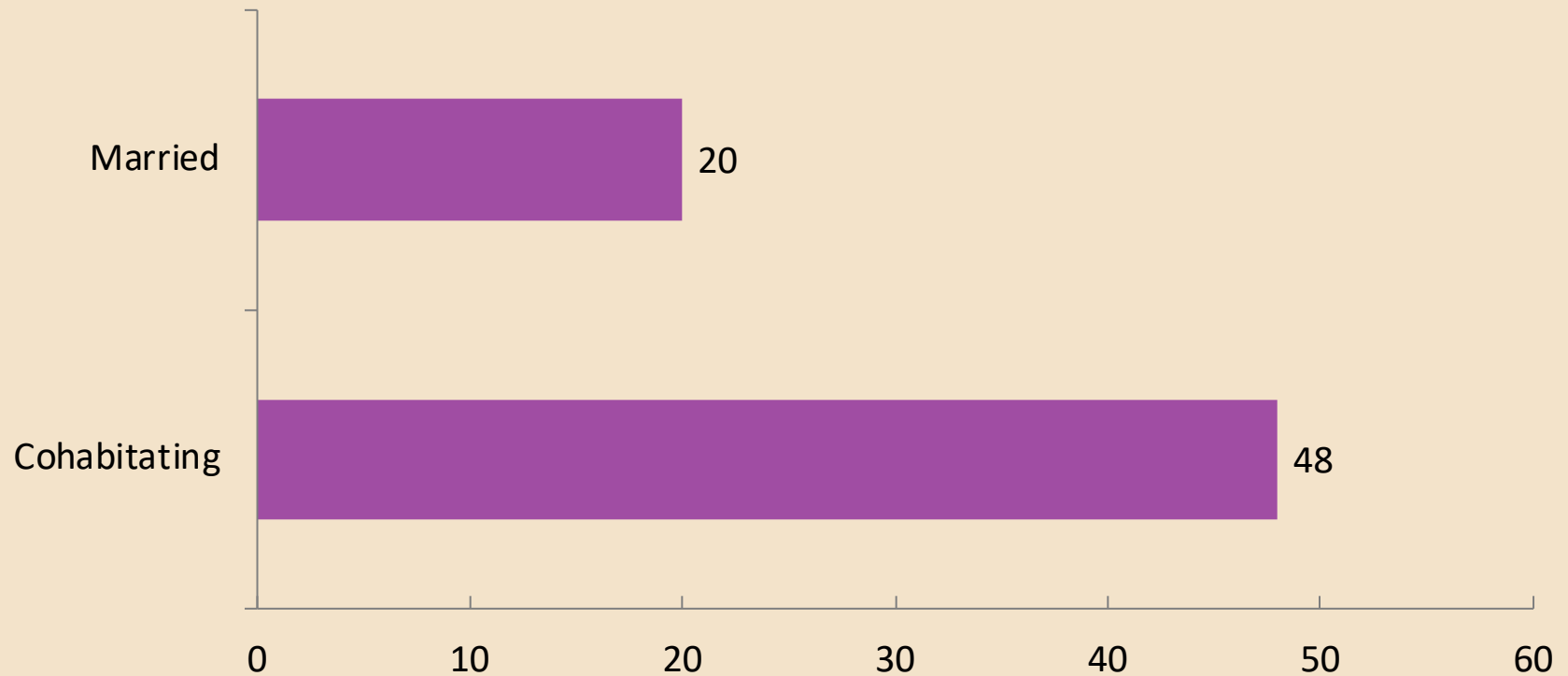


Source: Copen, Casey E., Kimberly Daniels, and William D. Mosher. 2013. "First Premarital Cohabitation in the United States: 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth". 64. National Health Statistics Reports. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr064.pdf>.

# Cohabitation: The New Marriage-Lite?

Increasingly Common but Unstable

Percent of Parents Separated by the Time Their Child is Age 5



Source: "Parents' Relationship Status Five Years After a Non-Marital Birth." 2007. Fragile Families Research Brief 39. Princeton University.  
<http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/briefs/ResearchBrief39.pdf>

# What is Driving the Change in Family Structure?

Improving Opportunities for Women

Declining Economic Prospects for Men

Changing Social Norms

# Why it Matters

- Children fare better in stable two-parent families
- Family breakdown contributes to child poverty, inequality, less social mobility
- Child poverty rates are five times higher in single-parent families vs. two-parent families
- Costs to society
- The typical single-parent family receives around \$6,000 in government benefits per year.<sup>1</sup>

1. Post-tax, post-transfer income includes earned income, child support, social insurance, means-tested cash benefits, food stamps, housing benefits, EITC, and other tax/stimulus payments; Tabulations by Richard Bavier, based on U.S. Census Bureau March Current Population Survey.

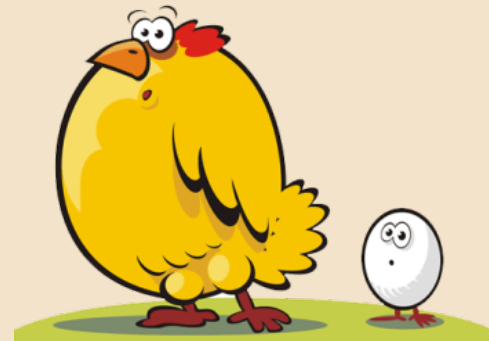


# Chicken and Egg

Does poverty → family breakdown

OR

Does family breakdown → poverty?



# Social Policy Responds

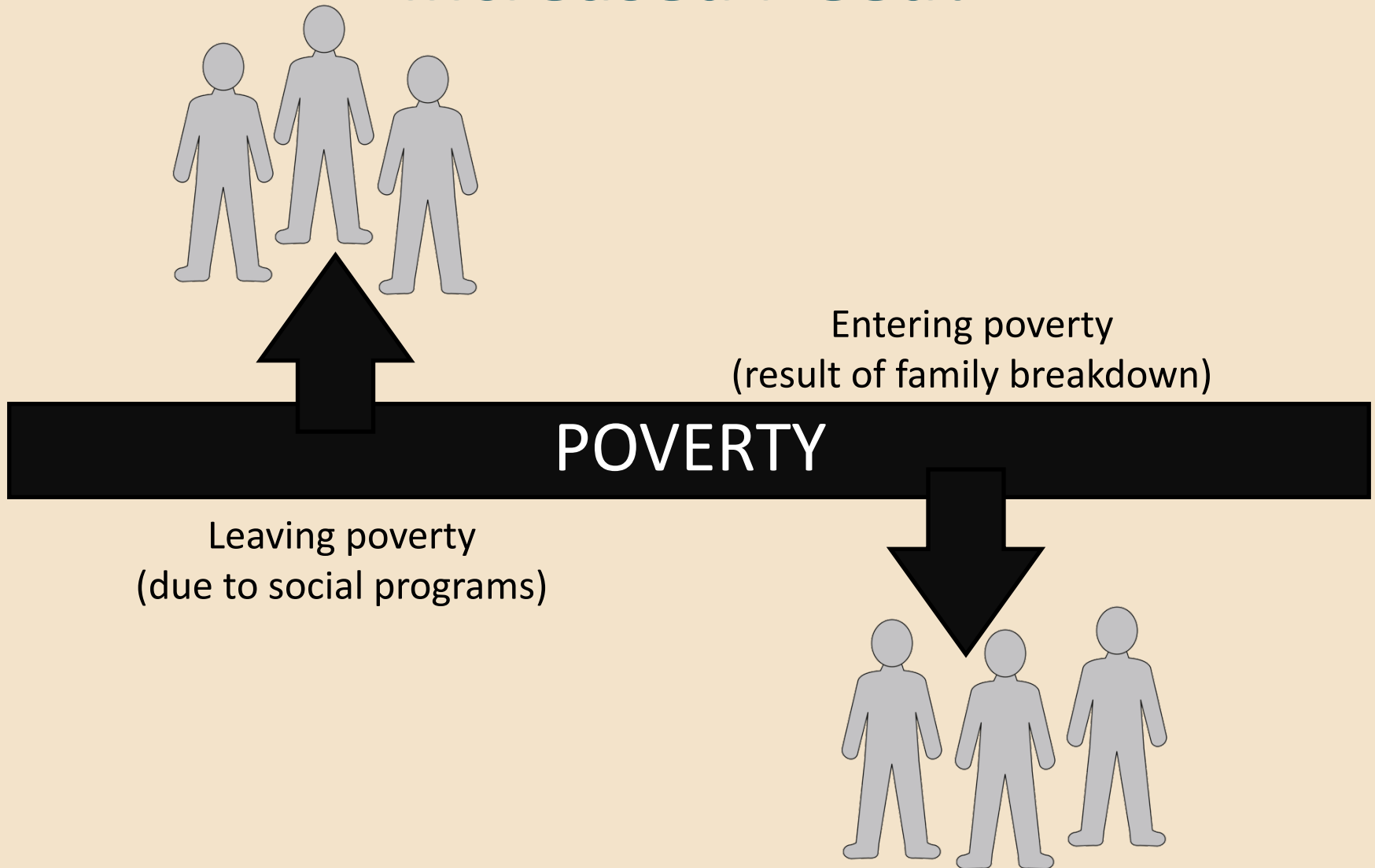
The growth of single parenthood since 1970 has increased child poverty by 5 percentage points.<sup>1</sup>

The growth of the SNAP program alone since 1970 has cost about \$44 billion and reduced child poverty by 3 percentage points.<sup>2</sup> Refundable credits, such as the EITC, cost about \$90 billion and reduce child poverty by 7 percentage points.

1. Found using a shift share analysis: Shift-share Poverty rate = (Single Parent Child Poverty 2012)\* (Proportion of Children in SPF 1970) + (Married Parent Child Poverty 2012)\* (Proportion of Children in SPF 1970); then adjusted for selection using ratio from Thomas and Sawhill (2002).
2. Total expenditures = \$ 79.9 billion; Expenditures on Single Parent Families = \$44 billion; "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Costs" (Sept 5, 2014) <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPsummary.pdf>.

# Can Social Policy Keep Pace with Increased Need?

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# Traditionalists vs. Village Builders

“The truth is, the greatest tool to lift children and families from poverty. . . isn't a government spending program. It's called marriage.”



“Children are not rugged individualists. . . All of us, whether we acknowledge it or not, are responsible for deciding whether our children are raised in a nation that doesn't just espouse family values but values families and children.”



Another Solution:  
Reduce the Breakdown of  
the Family by  
**Changing Drifters into  
Planners**

# What is Drifting?

- Doing something impulsively or without intention
- “Thinking fast,” not “thinking slow” (Kahneman)
- Typically some ambivalence
- What young women say:
  - “It doesn’t matter whether you use birth control or not; when it’s your time to get pregnant it will happen.”
  - “I just wasn’t thinking.”

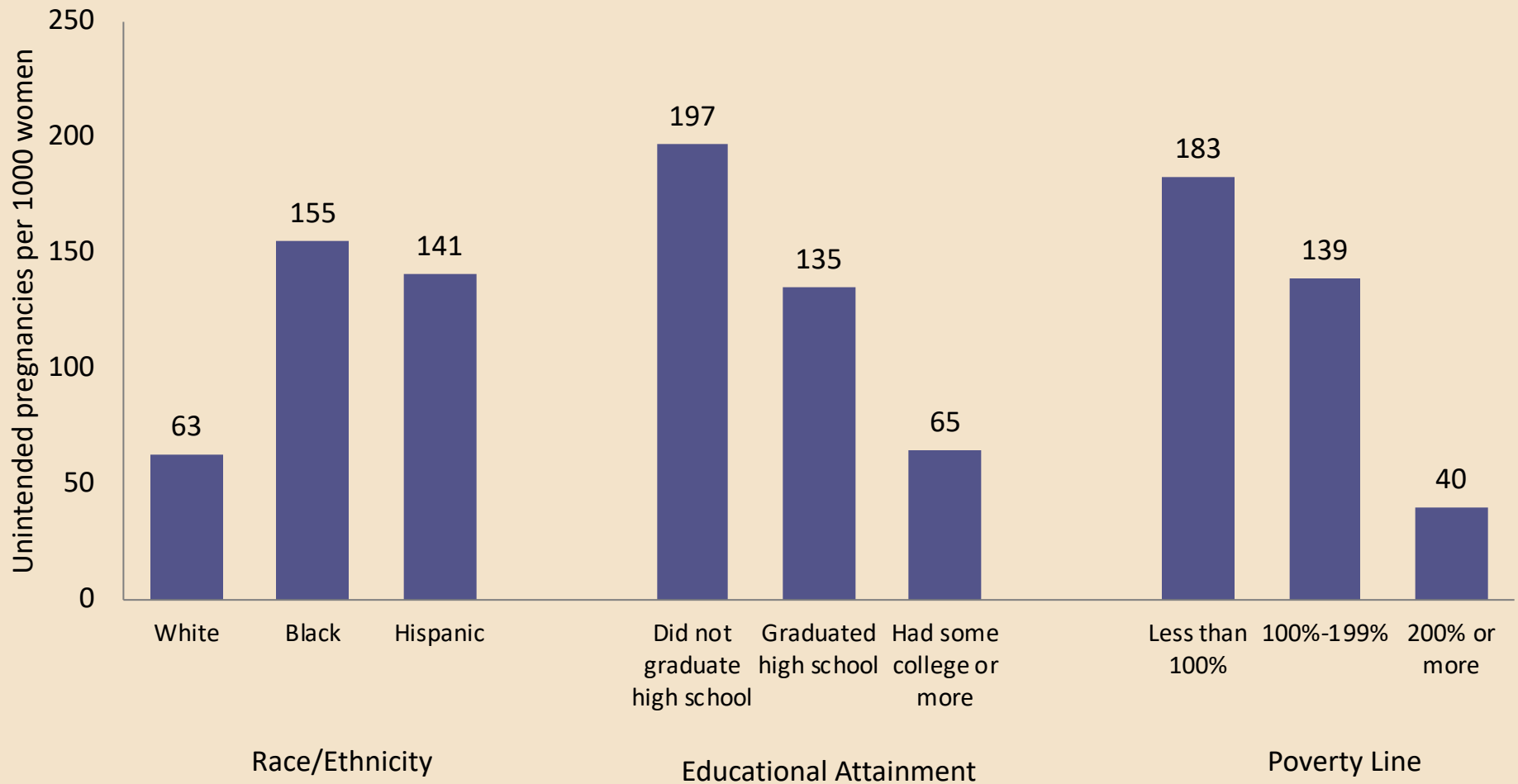
# Drifting into Parenthood is Common

**60% OF BIRTHS TO  
SINGLE WOMEN  
UNDER 30 ARE  
UNPLANNED**



Source: Zolna, Mia, and Laura Duberstein Lindberg. Unintended pregnancy: Incidence and outcomes among young adult unmarried women in the United States, 2001 and 2008. Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2012.

# Less Advantaged Women Have Highest Rates of Drifting

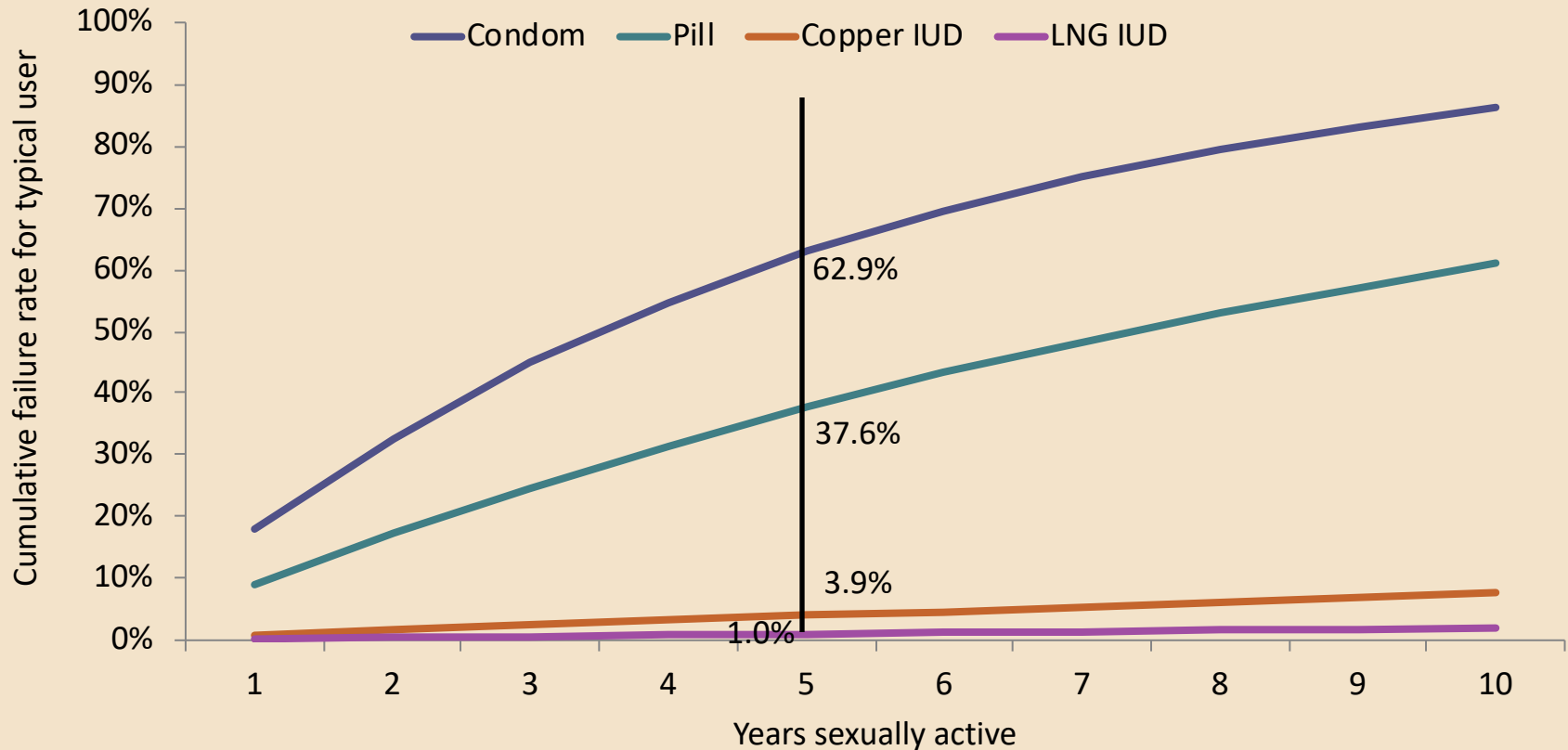


Source: Karpilow, Quentin, Jennifer Manlove, Isabel Sawhill, and Adam Thomas. "The Role of Contraception in Preventing Abortion, Nonmarital Childbearing, and Child Poverty." Paper presented at APPAM, November 2013.

# Why So Much Drifting?

- Young adults not using birth control or using inconsistently
- Not using most effective methods
- Long-acting reversible contraceptives (IUDs, implants) change the default from getting pregnant to not getting pregnant

# IUDs Are Much More Effective Than Other Forms of Birth Control



How we got these numbers: Data is from Trussell (2011). The probability that a person doesn't get pregnant at all over a given period of time is equal to the success rate of her contraceptive method raised to the power of the number of years she is using that method. We then subtract this multi-year "success rate" from 100% to get the failure rate (graphed above). This assumes that there is an equal chance of not getting pregnant in every year of condom use and that successful users and failed users (where success is not getting pregnant during a year using birth control) have the same rate. The assumption is reasonable given that figures we use are the figure for a "typical" user of some type of contraceptive.



# Changing the Default: Evidence

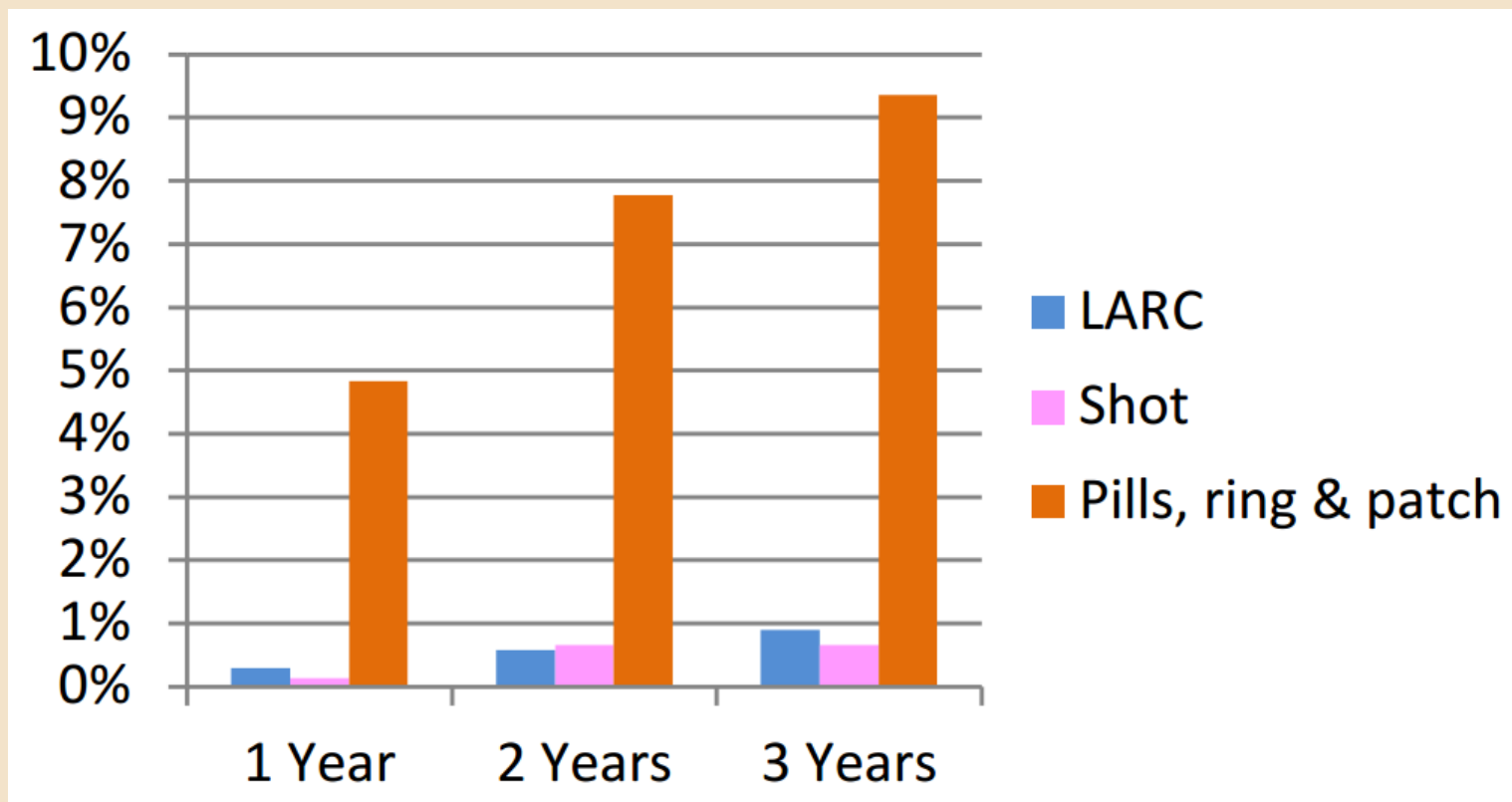
St. Louis: The CHOICE Project

Colorado Family Planning  
Initiative

Iowa Initiative to Reduce  
Unintended Pregnancies

# St. Louis: The CHOICE Project

Women using LARCs or shots had lowest unintended pregnancy rates after 1, 2, and 3 years.



Source: <http://www.choiceproject.wustl.edu/~media/Files/ChoiceProject/Study-Findings-20120917.ashx>.

# Colorado Family Planning Initiative

Expanding access to LARCs caused a

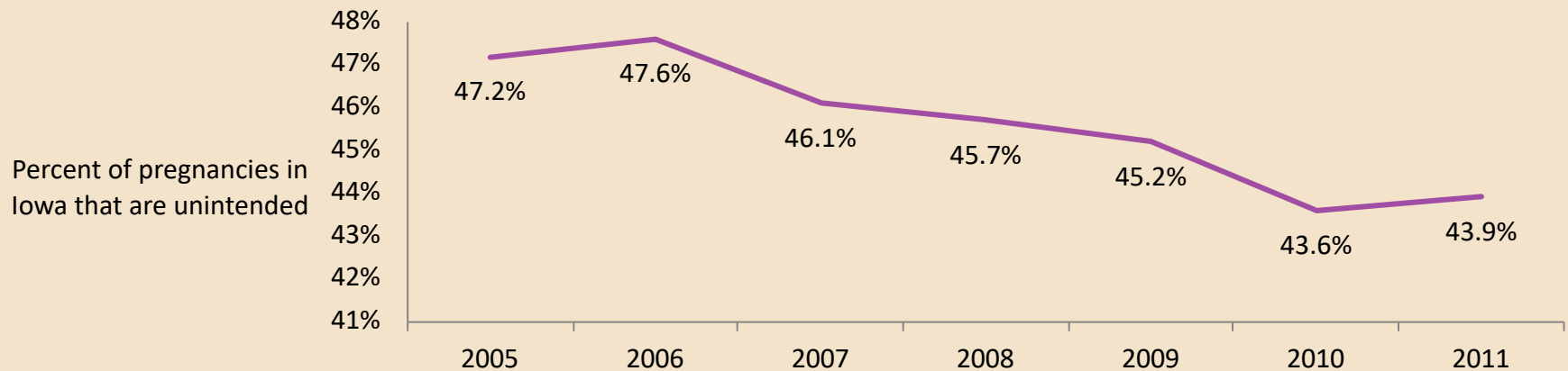
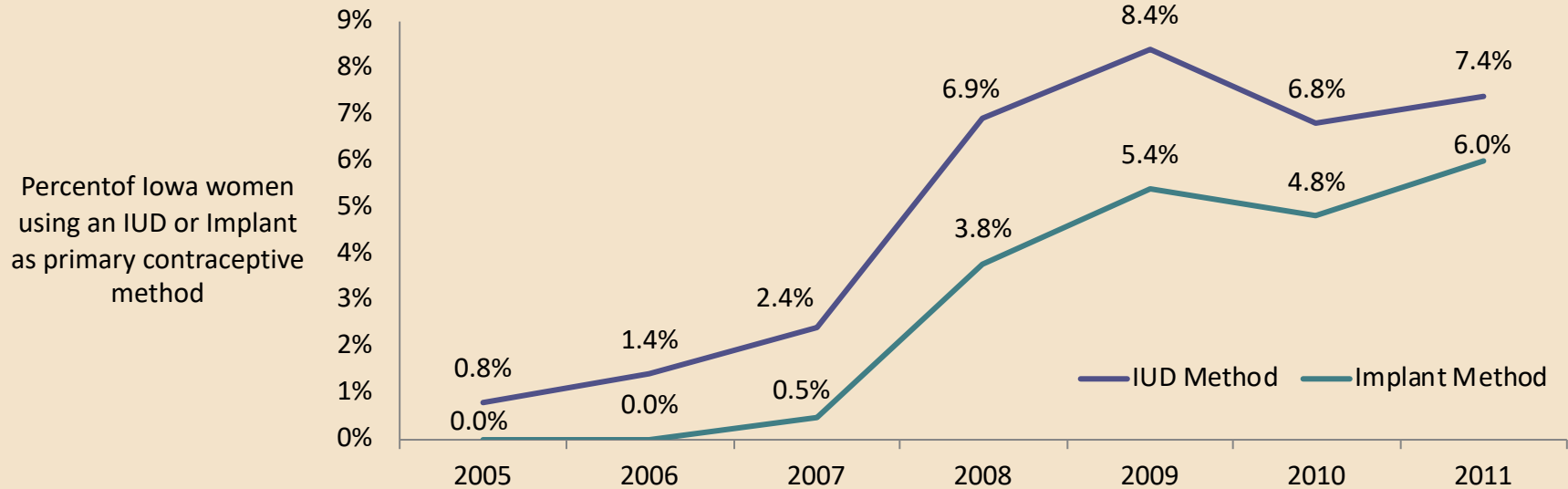
**27 percent decline**

in births to unmarried disadvantaged women who are younger than 25 between 2009 and 2011.

Source: Ricketts, Sue, Greta Klingler, and Renee Schwalberg. "Game Change in Colorado: Widespread Use Of Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives and Rapid Decline in Births Among Young, Low-Income Women." *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health* (2014).

# Iowa Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies

30



Source: [http://www.training-source.org/sites/default/files/comm\\_value\\_public\\_health/II%20Press%20Kit%20One%20Pager%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.training-source.org/sites/default/files/comm_value_public_health/II%20Press%20Kit%20One%20Pager%20FINAL.pdf).

# What Government Needs to Do

Create more opportunity:

- Early childhood education and school reform
- More career and technical education
- Raise minimum wage; expand EITC; etc.

Change the default and empower women to have children when and with whom they want:

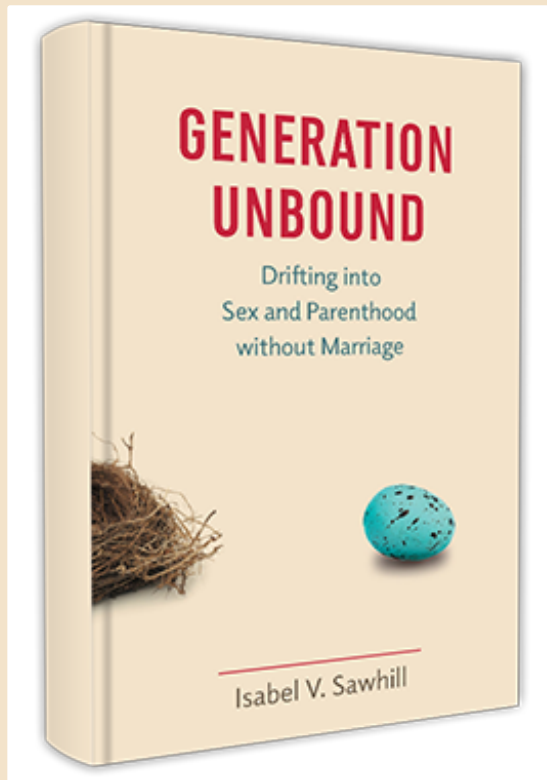
- ACA
- Health care providers
- Social marketing campaign

# What Individuals Need to Do

Old social norm: Don't have children outside of marriage

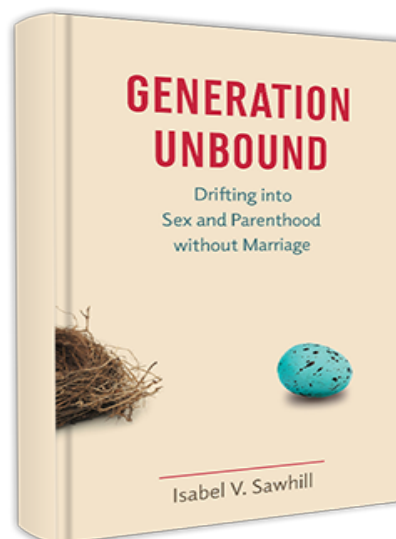
New social norm: Don't have children until you and your partner are ready to be parents

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