

## Chapter 2

### *Social Workers and Political Action*

#### Three Relevant Historical Periods

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 provides a brief history of social welfare legislation in the United States and the role of social workers in the development of policies that have advanced human rights and the well-being of vulnerable, underserved populations. Countries around the world have been faced with the dilemma of how to best assist citizens in need or in times of crisis. Some countries, such as many in Western Europe and Scandinavia, are known for having very generous social welfare systems, whereas others, such as many developing countries, cannot afford the luxury of having a social safety net for their citizens. The United States has been called “the reluctant welfare state” because the government and the American public have been quite ambivalent when it comes to answering the question, “Is it the role of the government to help provide for the general welfare of its citizens, and if so, to what extent?”

In fact, the United States did not have large-scale, federal social welfare programs until the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), when his administration was faced with a country reeling from the devastation caused by the Great Depression. Entire books have been written on the history of social welfare policies in the United States; this chapter provides an overview and highlights three very significant time periods in recent U.S. history when major advancements were made regarding how the U.S. government responded to the needs of vulnerable and struggling people by enacting historic, landmark social welfare legislation: the settlement house movement during the Progressive era; the Great Depression and FDR presidency; and President Johnson’s Great Society during the 1960s. These time periods are also noteworthy because they mark a time when social workers were highly politically active and made efforts to push policymakers toward needed social change.

The chapter ends by documenting the rise of conservatism in the 1980s through the present day in the United States, which has coincided with decreasing levels of social and political action by the country’s social workers. Despite a number of issues and social problems that are of concern to the social work profession, such as rising income inequality and poverty rates, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, health care reform, and efforts to dismantle the social safety net, social workers largely retreated to their micro roles.

#### STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to analyze how the early efforts of social workers and government leaders influenced current social welfare policies and programs.
- Students will be able to cite the individuals responsible for working to enact historic, landmark social welfare legislation in the U.S.
- Students will be able to identify and describe important social welfare policies and programs that were passed into law since the Progressive era in the U.S.

## TEACHING TIPS

- It will be important to create a safe space in your class to allow students to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions with regard to their political views. Special care and instructions should be given to help the class learn to disagree with the views of others in a respectful manner.
- This can be a challenging chapter to teach since many students are not very excited about learning history. Find ways to bring this content to life. There are some excellent videos out there (DVD's as well as on-line) where you can show footage of: the early settlement house workers (The Women of Hull House); FDR and the Social Security Act; and LBJ signing historical civil rights legislation into law. This content can be very compelling if it is taught well.
- Make sure to highlight the prominent social workers that are featured in this chapter since this can be very empowering to students to see the contributions that these social workers made in advancing social and economic justice.

## LECTURE GUIDE AND ASSET CORRELATION

The below lecture guide and asset correlation indicates where discussion prompts, assignments, activities or MySearchLab activities connect to a given topic. The full descriptions of these prompts and assignments follow the below guide.

### *Discussion Prompts*

- Throughout this chapter, various discussion prompts have been provided for in-class use. These prompts are developed to assist you in starting open conversation with students about key topics of the chapter.

### *Assignments and Activities*

- These assignments and activities can be used in place of or in supplement of the MySearchLab activities available for students.

### *MySearchLab Connections*

- The MySearchLab Connections at the end of the chapter highlights assets available on [www.mysearchlab.com](http://www.mysearchlab.com) that connect to the topics and/or competencies in the chapter.

### *Chapter Outline*

The Settlement House Movement (Late 1800s) (Discussion Prompt #1; Activity #1 and #4)  
Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal (Discussion Prompt #2; Activity #2 and #4)  
Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society and War on Poverty (Discussion Prompts #3 & 5; Activity #3 and #4)  
The Rise of Conservatism and the Decline of Social Responsibility (Discussion Prompt #4)

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. After reading about the early settlement house workers, what do you see as their contribution and legacy to social work practice in the United States? How has social work practice changed since then?
2. The United States has been called a “reluctant welfare state.” Do you agree with social worker Frances Perkins that the United States would not have been able to pass the Social Security Act without a cataclysmic event such as the Great Depression? Why or why not?
3. What do you think about the legislative priorities and accomplishments of President Lyndon Johnson? Can you imagine another U.S. president declaring a War on Poverty? How was he able to successfully pass all of the Great Society legislation, which was focused primarily on the disadvantaged?
4. As soon as President Obama came into office, he had to respond to a severe economic recession. In your opinion, how do his legislative goals and strategies compare with those of FDR, who was faced with the Great Depression? Compare and contrast the approaches used by these two presidents.
5. Why do you think most Americans do not know about the important accomplishments and social reforms of social workers over the course of U.S. history such as Jane Addams, Harry Hopkins, Frances Perkins, and Whitney Young? What can the social work profession do better to educate the public about the profession’s contributions to society?

## ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. **Messages about people who are poor or low-income.** Brainstorm with the class things they have heard people say about poor people and discuss how people living in poverty are portrayed in the media. Have things changed since the Progressive era with regard to ideas about the worthy versus unworthy poor?
2. **Famous Social Workers.** Get students into groups and have them do additional research on one of the social workers featured in this chapter. Each group can then make a short presentation to the class.
3. **Social Welfare Programs in the U.S.** Get students into groups and assign them to do additional research on one of the social welfare programs that was passed into law by FDR or LBJ (e.g., Social Security Program; SNAP; Medicaid; Medicare; AmeriCorps VISTA program; Head Start; TANF; etc.). Each group can report back to the class on what they learned.
4. **Field Trip.** If you live in Texas, Chicago, or in the DC area, make a field trip to the FDR Memorial in Washington, DC, the Hull House in Chicago, or the LBJ Museum in Austin, Texas.

## STUDENT MYSEARCHLAB STUDY PLAN FOR THIS CHAPTER

Go to [www.mysearchlab.com](http://www.mysearchlab.com)

Login to Ritter, Work Policy Practice: Changing Our Community, Nation, and the World, 1/e

### *Read the Chapter*

- Read this chapter
- Review the Learning Objectives

## ***Chapter Activities and Assignments***

- Watch the Videos and take the quiz
  - Ellis Island Immigrants, 1903
    - Critical Thinking Question: What can we learn about the experiences of today's immigrants to the U.S. from the experiences of the Ellis Island immigrants?
    - Take the Quiz
  - Responding to the Great Depression: Whose New Deal?
    - Critical Thinking Question: Who most benefitted from the New Deal policies and programs and who was excluded?
    - Take the Quiz
  - The Historical Significance of the 2008 Presidential Election
    - Critical Thinking Question: How do you think history will judge the Obama presidency?
    - Take the Quiz
- Read the Cases or Documents and take the quiz
  - Jane Addams, *The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements* (1892)
    - Critical Thinking Question: Do you think that social work practice has moved significantly away from the practice of the early settlement house workers? Why or why not?
    - Take the Quiz
  - Meridel Le Sueur, *Women on the Breadlines* (1932)
    - Critical Thinking Question: What were the experiences of these women affected by the Great Depression? How can this inform our work with those living in poverty today?
    - Take the Quiz
  - Frances Perkins and the Social Security Act (1935, 1960)
    - Critical Thinking Question: What was it about Ms. Perkins that enabled her to be so successful at a time when high ranking women in government was a rarity?
    - Take the Quiz
  - Lyndon B. Johnson, *The War on Poverty* (1964)
    - Critical Thinking Question: What do you think about the LBJ's lofty goal of eliminating poverty in the U.S.? Is this a realistic goal?
    - Take the Quiz
  - Franklin Roosevelt's Radio Address Unveiling the Second Half of the New Deal (1936)
    - Critical Thinking Question: Why do you think FDR was able to understand the need for a social safety net despite the fact that he was raised in such a wealthy and privileged family?
    - Take the Quiz
- Explore the Assets
  - Timelines: The Evolution of Social Welfare Policy

## ***Prepare for the Exam***

- Review the Flashcards
- Take the Formative Assessments
- Review the Learning Outcomes

## ***Take the Chapter Exam***

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- The student will understand the evolution of social welfare policies in the U.S..
- The student will understand that each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education.
- The student will know the social work profession's history.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

#### ***Books***

Addams, J. (1912). *Twenty years at Hull House*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.

Day, P. J. (2008). *New history of social welfare* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

DiNitto, D. M. (2011). *Social welfare: Politics and public policy* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Downey, K. (2009). *The woman behind the new deal: The life and legacy of Frances Perkins*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Jansson, B. S. (2008). *The reluctant welfare state: Engaging history to advance social welfare practice in contemporary society*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Kearns Goodwin, D. (1991). *Lyndon Johnson and the American dream*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Specht, H., & Courtney, M. E. (1994). *Unfaithful angels: How social work has abandoned its mission*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Trattner, W. I. (1999). *From poor law to welfare state: A history of social welfare in America* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

#### ***Journals***

Dorothea L. Dix & Federal Aid. (1927). *Social Service Review, The University of Chicago Press*, 1(1), 117-137.

#### ***Websites***

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/>

Jane Addams Hull House Museum (2012). Retrieved from [http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/hull\\_house.html](http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/hull_house.html)

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.lbjlibrary.org/>

Perkins, F. (October, 1962). *The roots of social security*. Retrieved from <http://www.ssa.gov/history/perkins5.html>

Roosevelt, F. D. (January 11, 1944). *State of the Union Address to Congress*. Retrieved from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16518>

The 25 most powerful women of the past century. (November 18, 2010). *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from [http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2029774\\_2029776,00.html?iid=moreontime](http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2029774_2029776,00.html?iid=moreontime)

### ***Films***

Grubin, D. (Director) (1994). *American Experience: FDR*. PBS Home Video.

Grubin, D. (Director) (1991). *American Experience: LBJ*. PBS Home Video.

Sorensen, J.C., & Suarez, R. (2004). *The women of Hull House*. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences.

## Test Bank for Chapter 2

### Multiple Choice Questions

1. The U.S. has been referred to as this when describing the role of the government in providing for the general welfare of its citizens.
  - a. A generous welfare state
  - b. A nation with high taxation and redistribution
  - c. A social safety net that rivals Scandinavia
  - d. a reluctant welfare state

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Understand

2. The U.S. did not have large-scale federal social welfare programs until the presidency of
  - a. Theodore Roosevelt
  - b. Harry Truman
  - c. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
  - d. Lyndon Baines Johnson

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Know

3. When a poor person was required to enter an almshouse, this was an example of
  - a. Indoor relief
  - b. Outdoor relief
  - c. Criminal justice
  - d. Indentured servitude

Answer: A  
Bloom's Level: Know

4. When a poor person received alms in their own home, this was an example of
  - a. Indoor relief
  - b. Outdoor relief
  - c. Criminal justice
  - d. Indentured servitude

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Know

5. The PRIMARY mechanism used by Dorothea Dix to try to improve conditions for the mentally ill was
  - a. Political protests
  - b. Gathering data
  - c. Letter writing campaigns
  - d. Organizing rallies

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Understand

6. Which of the following is false about the theory of Social Darwinism?
- It borrowed from Darwin's ideas on natural selection
  - It was used to justify economic inequality
  - It was very popular idea during the 1960s
  - It was used to argue that public assistance would lead to dependency

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Understand

7. The COS social workers were known for which of the following?
- The belief that poverty can be cured by teaching values of hard work and thrift
  - The use of political, macro-level change strategies
  - The belief that social workers should live in the same community with those they are serving
  - The belief that the social environment and lack of opportunity are the primary causes of poverty

Answer: A  
Bloom's Level: Analyze

8. The settlement house workers were known for which of the following?
- The belief that poverty can be cured by teaching values of hard work and thrift
  - Practices to determine who was "worthy" of receiving assistance
  - The use of "friendly visitors"
  - The belief that the social environment and lack of opportunity are the primary causes of poverty

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Analyze

9. Which of the following settlement house workers was the first U.S woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize?
- Jane Addams
  - Julia Lathrop
  - Alice Hamilton
  - Ellen Gates Starr

Answer: A  
Bloom's Level: Know

10. What cataclysmic event led to a new understanding of the structural causes of poverty in the U.S.?
- World War I
  - World War II
  - The Great Depression
  - The race riots of the 1960s

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Understand



11. Which of the following was not included in FDR's New Deal policies and programs?
- Work relief programs to put people to work
  - The creation of the Medicare program
  - Passing legislation that would create a social safety net in the U.S.
  - Reform of the financial system to prevent another economic catastrophe

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Understand

12. Which of the following was an experience that FDR and LBJ did not share in common?
- Passing groundbreaking social welfare legislation
  - Serving during a time of war
  - Growing up in a wealthy, privileged family
  - Being very skilled politicians

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Analyze

13. By 1936, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed \_\_\_\_\_ of all unemployed Americans.
- Ten percent
  - Twenty-five percent
  - One third
  - One half

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Know

14. Today, many cite the \_\_\_\_\_ as the birth of policy practice and community practice in Social Work.
- New Deal period
  - Great Society era
  - Civil Rights Movement
  - Settlement House Period

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Know

15. Which of the following is true about the Social Security Act of 1935?
- It did not include health care benefits
  - It did not include public assistance
  - It did not include aid to the blind
  - It did not include unemployment compensation benefits

Answer: A  
Bloom's Level: Know

16. In 1944, FDR presented the idea of a new Bill of Rights, arguing that individuals cannot be free without
- health care coverage
  - racial equality
  - economic security
  - separation between church and state

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Understand

17. President Johnson served in all of the following offices except:
- U.S. Congress
  - Secretary of State
  - U.S. Senate
  - Vice-President

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Know

18. The primary purpose of LBJ's Great Society was to
- make the U.S. the world's super-power
  - tackle poverty and racial injustice
  - win the war in Vietnam
  - improve the educational status of Americans

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Understand

19. Overcrowded tenement buildings, sweat shops, and child labor were significant social problems during which time period?
- The Civil War
  - The 1960s
  - The 1970s
  - The Progressive era

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Know

20. Which is false about the Medicaid program that was passed into law by the LBJ administration?
- It is a means-tested program
  - It has some degree of stigma since it is only for low income Americans
  - It was created to serve those over 65 who are retired
  - It is a public assistance program

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Understand

21. Which is false about the Medicare program that was passed into law by the LBJ administration?

- a. It is a means-tested, public assistance program
- b. It has no stigma since all Americans are eligible to participate
- c. It was created to serve those over 65 who are retired
- d. It is a social insurance program

Answer: A  
Bloom's Level: Understand

22. Which is false about the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964?

- a. It was the cornerstone of LBJ's War on Poverty
- b. It included the VISTA program
- c. It neglected the needs of ethnic minorities
- d. It focused heavily on education and job training (e.g. Head Start; work study programs)

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Analyze

23. The principle of maximum feasible participation was used by the community action agencies created by LBJ's Great Society, which meant that

- a. the programs are developed and administered by the government
- b. the programs are developed and administered by the clients
- c. the programs are developed and administered by social workers
- d. the programs are developed and administered by poverty experts

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Know

24. Which program created during the Great Society was a domestic version of the Peace Corps?

- a. Head Start
- b. the Job Corps
- c. the VISTA Program
- d. Upward Bound

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Know

25. Which law signed and supported by President Johnson outlawed racial discrimination and segregation?

- a. Voting Rights Act of 1964
- b. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
- c. Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965
- d. Civil Rights Act of 1964

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Know

26. Which U.S. President famously proclaimed, "Government is not the solution to our problems. It is the problem."
- Richard Nixon
  - Gerald Ford
  - George W. Bush
  - Ronald Reagan

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Know

27. Since the 1980s,
- Americans have grown increasingly polarized politically.
  - Both political parties have grown more moderate.
  - Social workers have become more politically active.
  - There has been an increased focus on social responsibility to those in need.

Answer: A  
Bloom's Level: Analyze

28. The Progressive era in the U.S. is known for rapid economic growth from the move to an agrarian economy to a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ economy.
- service
  - manufacturing-based
  - information
  - technology-based

Answer: B  
Bloom's Level: Know

29. LBJ's Great Society and War on Poverty ultimately suffered due to being overshadowed by the
- assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King
  - Civil Rights movement
  - Women's Rights movement
  - Vietnam War

Answer: D  
Bloom's Level: Understand

30. Who was the early COS social worker whose book *Social Diagnosis* laid the groundwork for social casework in social work practice in the U.S.
- Jane Addams
  - Ellen Gates Starr
  - Mary Richmond
  - Frances Perkins

Answer: C  
Bloom's Level: Know

## Short Answer Questions

1. Provide three early examples of how poor able-bodied individuals were punished and treated as criminals.

Bloom's Level: Know

2. When was the first time in U.S. history when the federal government provided federal funding to assist people in need?

Bloom's Level: Know

3. What kinds of social problems were large industrial cities experiencing during the Progressive era?

Bloom's Level: Understand

4. What was the main philosophical difference between the COS social workers and the settlement house workers with regard to working with those in poverty?

Bloom's Level: Evaluate

5. The passage of what piece of legislation is responsible for the birth of the welfare state in the United States?

Bloom's Level: Know

6. What type of social welfare legislation was LBJ able to pass into law that FDR was unable to?

Bloom's Level: Understand

7. Who were the two prominent social workers who worked for FDR and helped him carry out his New Deal policies and programs?

Bloom's Level: Know

8. Which two prominent social workers worked closely with LBJ on issues of poverty and racial justice?

Bloom's Level: Know

9. List 3 social welfare programs that were created by LBJ's Great Society that are still with us today.

Bloom's Level: Analyze

10. If you are working with someone over 65 who is in need of healthcare coverage, which program created during the LBJ administration would be most appropriate?

Bloom's Level: Apply

11. Which U.S. President passed unemployment compensation into law in the U.S.?

Bloom's Level: Know

12. Define Social Darwinism and provide an example.

Bloom's Level: Apply

13. Which movement gained increasingly prominence in the Republican party during the 1980s and 1990s?

Bloom's Level: Understand

14. Name one notable progressive policy that was passed during the more recent, and more conservative, era of U.S. politics.

Bloom's Level: Know

15. The Food Stamp Act was passed into law during which presidential administration?

Bloom's Level: Know

### Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the policies and programs of FDR and LBJ. Their legislative achievements occurred during different time periods and circumstances. What were the similarities and differences of these two progressive U.S. Presidents?

Bloom's Level: Evaluate

2. How has social work practice changed since the early social workers of the settlement house movement? Do we still have notions of the 'worthy' versus 'unworthy' poor?

Bloom's Level: Evaluate

3. Many scholars and historians have debated whether President Johnson's War on Poverty was a success or a failure. What do you think? What evidence are you using to base your answer on?

Bloom's Level: Analyze

4. Why do you think President Johnson has been alone in declaring a war on poverty and making this a legislative priority? What role can the social work profession play in pushing this onto a president's legislative agenda?

Bloom's Level: Hypothesize

5. Few Americans have heard of prominent and accomplished social workers such as Jane Addams. What ideas do you have to make the general public more aware of social workers' contributions to social and economic justice in the U. S.?

Bloom's Level: Apply