

**Restore**

# California

**Strengthening Families  
through Education,  
Collaboration,  
and Mobilization**

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## Proposal for Restore California

### **A. Introduction**

California faces a marriage and family crisis that calls for a collaborative, community-based effort to promote healthy marriages and families. High instances of divorce and children born out of wedlock are resulting in increasing numbers of single-parent households, leaving many children living in poverty, without their biological fathers, or missing the positive influence of a father figure. Besides the devastating social and emotional consequences to individuals, these trends are costly, placing a heavy economic burden on the state.

Led by former U.S. congressman, George Radanovich, the Restore California Initiative responds to this crisis by empowering the private sector to rebuild the institution of the family and reduce government costs through broad-based community mobilization. It is based on the principle that happiness is pursued simply by worshipping God, building a family, working and loving our neighbor as ourselves. While government provides the peace and freedom to pursue happiness, it is the responsibility of the private sector to build the institutions that supports these pursuits. Today, with 40% of American children going to bed each night with only one parent in the home and 66% of all “charity” administered through government social programs funded by mandatory taxation, the family and charity are at risk institutions.

Restore California is based on these foundational premises:

- We cannot have social justice and less government without reducing the welfare state.
- You cannot reduce the welfare state without rebuilding the family.
- We cannot rebuild the family without reducing the number of fatherless children.
- We cannot reduce fatherlessness with government programs or government money.

- For permanent, positive social change to occur, the private sector, including local business and faith communities and non-profit organizations must work collaboratively to strengthen families.

Numerous non-profit and community-based organizations exist throughout California offering services that contribute to family restoration. By providing a community-wide goal of reducing fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce, Restore California will provide the focus for businesses, non-profit organizations, churches, schools, and law enforcement to organize their efforts and accomplish common goals to achieve family restoration. This initiative is modeled after a nationally-recognized healthy marriage and family movement, First Things First, which has resulted in significant measurable reductions in divorce and out-of-wedlock births and increased involvement of fathers since 1997 in Chattanooga, Tennessee<sup>1&2</sup>.

## **B. Need and Response**

### ***Divorce***

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's most recent community survey, approximately 120,000 California couples divorced in 2011.<sup>3</sup> According to a study conducted by Dr. David Schramm at the University of Utah in 2006, each divorce costs approximately \$25,000 in added social services to local communities, as parents, especially divorced mothers, turn to government-funded programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) for assistance<sup>4</sup>. Divorced parents are also more likely to rely on Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). California taxpayers paid an estimated \$3 billion for social services in the aftermath of 120,000 divorces in 2011. Alan Doswald, director for 35 years of ESA-Love INC. (a non-profit organization serving Fresno County's poor and needy) says, "Divorce is our greatest social

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<sup>1</sup> <http://firstthings.org/page/about-us/>

<sup>2</sup> W.J. Doherty and J.R. Anderson, "Community marriage initiatives," *Family Relations* 53, no. 5 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

<sup>4</sup> D.G. Schramm, "Individual and social costs of divorce in Utah," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 27, #1 (2006).

problem – it breaks marriages, families, and communities – and it must be addressed by strengthening marriages.”<sup>5</sup>

### ***Out-of-Wedlock Births***

According to the 2010 Maternal and Infant Health Assessment, 42.7% of live births in California were to unmarried women, or out-of-wedlock<sup>6</sup>, compared with 41.0% in the nation<sup>7</sup>. California’s high teen birth rate contributes to this statistic. Each year, California averages 40 births per 1,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19, exceeding the rate of 34 births per 1,000 teen girls in the U.S.<sup>8</sup> The Public Health Institute, an independent, non-profit health research organization, has estimated that California's extraordinarily high rate of teen births costs \$1.1 billion per year in taxpayer subsidized medical care and other secondary costs.<sup>9</sup>

Teen births also put mothers at high risk for poverty. Eighty percent (80%) of teen mothers become lifetime welfare recipients<sup>10</sup>. Children of teen moms are more likely to become teen parents themselves, creating an ongoing cycle of poverty.

### ***Single-Parent Households and Children Living in Poverty***

High divorce rates combined with high numbers of children born out of wedlock result in increasing numbers of single-parent households and children living in poverty. Thirty percent (30%) of California children live in single-parent households compared with only 20% in the nation.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-two (22%)

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<sup>5</sup> Alan Doswald, support letter from 2005 ACF Capacity Building Evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> California Department of Public Health. 2010 MIHA County Report: A Summary Report of County Snapshots and Geographic Comparisons from the Maternal and Infant Health Assessment Survey. February 2012. Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Program.

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/surveys/Pages/MaternalandInfantHealthAssessment%28MIHA%29survey.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Livingston, Gretchen and Cohn, D'Vera. "The New Demography of American Motherhood." May 06, 2010.

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1586/changing-demographic-characteristics-american-mothers>

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention Ventura SJ. Birth rates for U.S. teenagers reach historic lows for all age and ethnic groups. NCHS data brief Hamilton BE, no 89. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Public Health Institute, 2010 Spring Update: No Time for Complacency: Teen Births in California.

<http://cfhc.org/sites/default/files/No-Time-for-Complacency-Teen-Births-California.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [Http://childtrends.org](http://childtrends.org)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

percent of California children live in poverty compared with only 13% in the U.S.<sup>12</sup> Fractured families are a major contributor to the rising poverty rate in California, which is currently 15.8%<sup>13</sup>.

### ***Fatherlessness***

In a majority of single-parent households, children grow up without their biological father, which can have extremely harmful and sometimes lifelong consequences on children. According to a 2002 report by family scholars entitled “Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from Social Scientists” children who live in father-absent homes, on average, are two to three times more likely to use drugs; to experience educational, health, emotional, and behavioral problems; to be victims of child abuse; to become teen parents; and to engage in criminal behavior. Young men who grow up in homes without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail as those who come from traditional two-parent families, even when other factors such as race, income, parent education and urban residence are held constant.<sup>14</sup> Also, 63% of youth who commit suicide,<sup>15</sup> 71% of high school dropouts,<sup>16</sup> and 85% of children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.<sup>17</sup>

The economic consequences of fatherlessness are just as devastating as the social consequences, both to fatherless children and the general public<sup>18</sup>. Nearly 75% of children raised in homes without fathers will experience poverty before age eleven, compared to 20% of those raised in two-parent homes. The cost to the American public is more than \$55,000 per year for each fatherless family.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Overview of Response/Evidence-Based Model***

**Restore California** is a collaborative, community–based initiative that will provide comprehensive,

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

<sup>13</sup> Alexander, K. (November 30, 2011). Fresno County has state's highest poverty rate. *Fresno Bee*. <http://www.fresnobee.com/2011/11/29/2632132/fresno-county-tops-states-poverty.html>

<sup>14</sup> "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 14 (September 2004): 369-397.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of the Census, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Center for Disease Control, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> B&B Media Group News Release; Nov. 6, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> "Dads Make a Huge Difference." June 17, 2010. *The Examiner*. <http://www.examiner.com/article/dads-make-a-huge-difference>

culturally-appropriate services to promote healthy families in all neighborhoods and among all population segments. This initiative will strengthen families and reverse the negative trends associated with family decline through four strategic actions: **1) *identifying significant problems*** facing families and children in California through credible research and study; **2) *implementing effective solutions*** to these problems that are based on traditional values and principles, and empirically measuring the impact of these solutions in California; **3) *building broad public support*** for values-based solutions through advocacy and communication with local businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, and churches; and **4) *empowering local leaders*** who promote values-based solutions and providing support to advance their effectiveness.

Strategies implemented as part of Restore California are **based upon a nationally-recognized model in the healthy marriage and family movement, First Things First, which has produced measurable results in Chattanooga, Tennessee.** Since the implementation of First Things First in 1997, divorce filings in Hamilton County were reduced by 29%, the divorce rate was reduced by 22%, and the rate of teen unwed pregnancies was reduced by 44%. These results of the First Things First initiative have inspired former U.S. congressman George Radanovich to create a focus team to implement similar family restoration strategies in California. The focus team includes leaders of local non-profit organizations who share his vision to empower the private sector to rebuild the family unit.

### **C. Measurable Goals**

The focus team for Restore California has set the following strategic goals:

1. Decrease the number of divorces filed in California by 30% within 10 years.
2. Decrease the number of out-of-wedlock births in California by 30% within 10 years.
3. Decrease the number of children living without their biological father in the home by 30% within 10 years.

## **D. Action Plan**

The following strategies to be implemented as part of Restore California are designed to raise a new generation with family-oriented values and to empower current at-risk populations promoting self-sufficiency and avoiding lengthy government dependence. The action plan includes an agenda for the private sector (businesses, religious and non-profit institutions) to impact the next generation, an agenda for intermediary institutions (schools, law enforcement) to impact the current generation, education/empowerment of elected officials with regard to the initiative's goals, and measurement of success in improving social trends.

### ***Agenda for the Private Sector to Impact the Next Generation***

#### **For Businesses:**

- Prioritize giving to non-profit organizations that prove their ability to lower rates of fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce.
- Prioritize donations to elected officials that support the goals of Restore California and submit or support balanced state and federal budgets based on the economic benefits and government savings achieved by reducing fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce nationwide.
- Adopt a marriage-friendly culture in the workplace.

#### **For Religious Institutions:**

- Raise the standard for preparing nourishing, strengthening, and restoring marriages.
- Adopt the Community Marriage Policy by Marriage Savers, Inc. in every community house of worship.
- Connect families with fatherless children to approved community services.

#### **For Non-Profit Organizations:**

- Organize mission statement around reducing fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy, and divorce.
- Use the goals of Restore California (to reduce these rates by 30% over 10 years) to measure

organizational success.

- Increase public awareness of the goals of Restore California.
- Promote the reduction of fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy, and divorce as primary goals within local communities.

### ***Agenda for the Private Sector to Impact the Current Generation***

#### **For Schools:**

- Implement voluntary character education programs in grades 3-12 using the Cadet Character Academy Program (C-CAP) as a model. The C-Cap model provides a theme, attachment, validation and ownership by the student.
- Focus character education programs on increasing students' readiness to learn through increasing student's feelings of love and safety, and by helping students improve their impulse control.

#### **For Law Enforcement:**

- Provide family intervention in response to police calls that are relational rather criminal in nature.
- Provide community care and referral services for individuals and families affected by traumatic events.

### ***Education and Empowerment of Elected Officials to Make a Positive Difference in the Strengthening of Marriage and Families***

The Restore California initiative will include efforts to educate local, state, and federal government office holders on the cost of broken families to society and make them aware of current government policies and programs that work against the goals of this initiative. Public officials will also be advised of ways to further the goals of Restore California only through public advocacy, not by government funding or legislation. They will be encouraged to propose balanced local, state and federal budgets based on

the economic benefits and government savings achieved by reducing fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce statewide or nationwide. The initiative will encourage city-wide, pro-family policies, such as mandatory, court-ordered counseling or education for couples considering a divorce.

### ***Measurement of Social Trends and Success in Meeting the Goals of the Initiative***

Restore California will partner with local universities and/or research companies to develop baseline statistical data on divorce, fatherlessness, unwed pregnancies, gang membership, and prison incarceration. This data will be used to better identify community needs and provide a baseline for comparison with data in subsequent years to track the progress of the program. Once the initiative is fully implemented, Restore California will establish an annual report card to show measures of progress in meeting expected outcomes. Restore California will also commission researchers to further refine the monetary costs of divorce, fatherlessness and unwed pregnancies to the government and economy, in order to educate the public and community leaders about the economic benefits of investing in family restoration in terms of the potential to save public funds and reduce expensive government programs.

### ***Uniqueness of this Approach***

Modeled after the evidence-based First Things First initiative in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the strategic plan for Restore California will incorporate the characteristics of this successful model. Restore California will be:

- **Values-based**: The initiative is values-based rather than faith-based in order to be more widely accessible to people of all backgrounds and beliefs.
- **Business-led**: The initiative mobilizes the private sector to rebuild the family institution, beginning with the business community. This is because the business community is less segregated and will be less threatened by the new initiative than social services, ministries, and faith-based communities.

Once the business community embraces the initiative, other community sectors will follow.

- **Broad-based:** The initiative is designed to reach widely across segments throughout California, cultivating non-political, non-sectarian volunteer groups within local neighborhoods.
- **Collaborative:** The initiative engages service-providing agencies that are already in existence, uniting them around a common mission and vision rather than creating new programs.
- **Positive, Proactive Message:** The initiative is focused on communicating the positive benefits of strong marriages and family values that will demonstrate positive incentives for people to change. In this way, the initiative is proactive rather than reactive in its approach.

#### **E. Project Management**

**The Four Institutions**, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization founded by former congressman, **George Radanovich**, will be the lead agency in the implementation of Restore California. Radanovich represented California's 19th congressional district from 1995 to 2011, including northern Fresno, and several rural areas northeast of the city. Elected to Congress in 1994, Radanovich served as president of the freshman class of the new Republican majority, promoting the need for cultural reform and reduction in the size of government. He founded The Four Institutions to empower community transformation through locally-controlled, privately-funded endowments. The Four Institutions was founded on the philosophy that four institutions – faith, family, work, and government – must exist in proper balance for U.S. citizens to fully enjoy their constitutional rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Currently, government has assumed too many responsibilities, weakening the institutions of the private sector, which are faith, family and work. The family institution has been damaged the most. Restoration of the family institution will require dramatic reductions in divorce, unwed births, and fatherlessness. Therefore, the primary mission of the Restore California Initiative is to cultivate private sector, non-governmental resources to strengthen the family.

The **Leadership Team** for Restore California will be comprised of leaders of well-established non-profit organizations serving California communities. As volunteers, these leaders will partner with Radanovich to accomplish the initial phases of project implementation.

When necessary, the Four Institutions will hire an **Executive Director** for the Restore California Initiative who will coordinate outreach to and efforts within local communities across California. The Executive Director will have previous experience leading similar projects for a non-profit organization, and demonstrated expertise in public relations, media relations, event coordination, and fundraising. The Executive Director will provide oversight and strategic direction for:

- development and execution of strategic plans, in conjunction with a Board of Developers;
- scientific and program research;
- public relations, marketing, and public representations, including written and other communications;
- financial management and fund development;
- developing and maintaining relationships with community leaders to provide Restore California with the support and credibility required to implement programs necessary to accomplish its stated objectives;
- building key relationships with potential and current large donors;
- identifying, building, and maintaining relationships with the current and prospective financial supporters.

#### **F. Sustainability and Replication**

Long-term sustainability is built into the design of the Restore California Initiative. The initiative will coordinate the efforts of businesses, religious and non-profit institutions, schools, and law enforcement within diverse neighborhoods across California, mobilizing existing pro-family resources in local communities and uniting them around a common vision and set of goals. In this way, the initiative will

reach broadly across diverse community sectors throughout California, providing increased access to existing marriage and family education services for youth, single adults, couples, immigrant couples, and couples with special needs children, specifically targeting those in low-income and at-risk communities.

To increase and secure future sustainability, Restore California will raise funds and pledges for the \$450,000 initial three year funding. It will establish a team of financial supporters comprised of up to 15 prominent members of the California business community who commit to annual contributions of at least \$10,000 each. Annual contributions made by the team of supporters will cover operational expenses for the initiative, including an Executive Director's salary. In addition to the team of supporters, Restore California will submit grant applications to private foundations and solicit contributions from others who support the goals of this initiative. The model used for Restore California will be replicated at the county level throughout the state.