

# GENERATION UNBOUND

Drifting into Sex and Parenthood without Marriage

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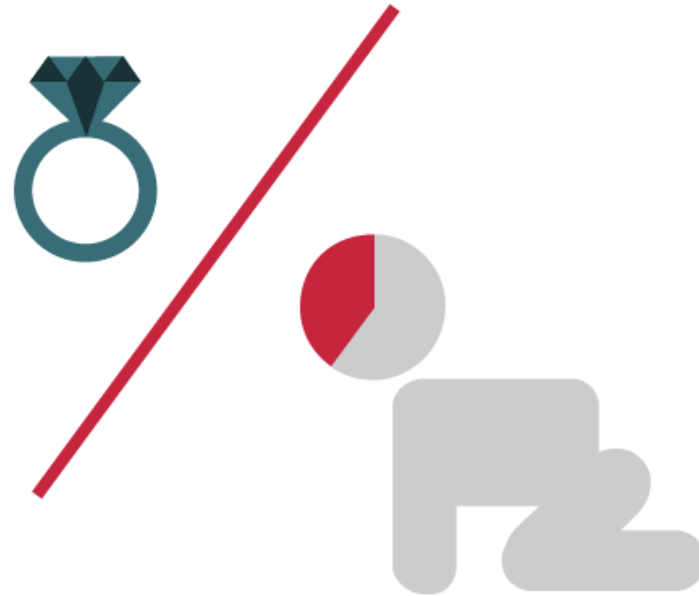


# Outline

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

# A Large Proportion of Births Occur Outside of Marriage

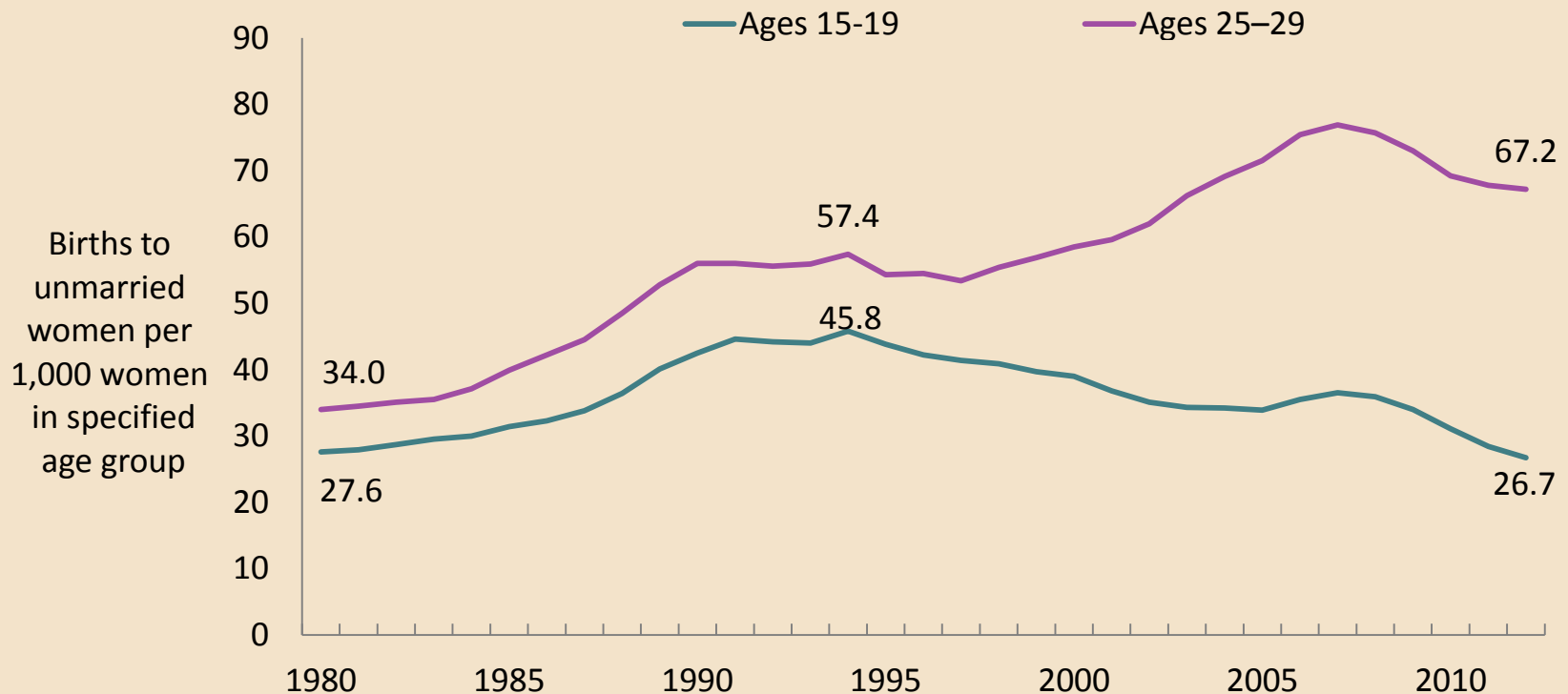
**OVER 40%** OF  
ALL CHILDREN  
ARE BORN  
**OUTSIDE OF  
MARRIAGE**



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

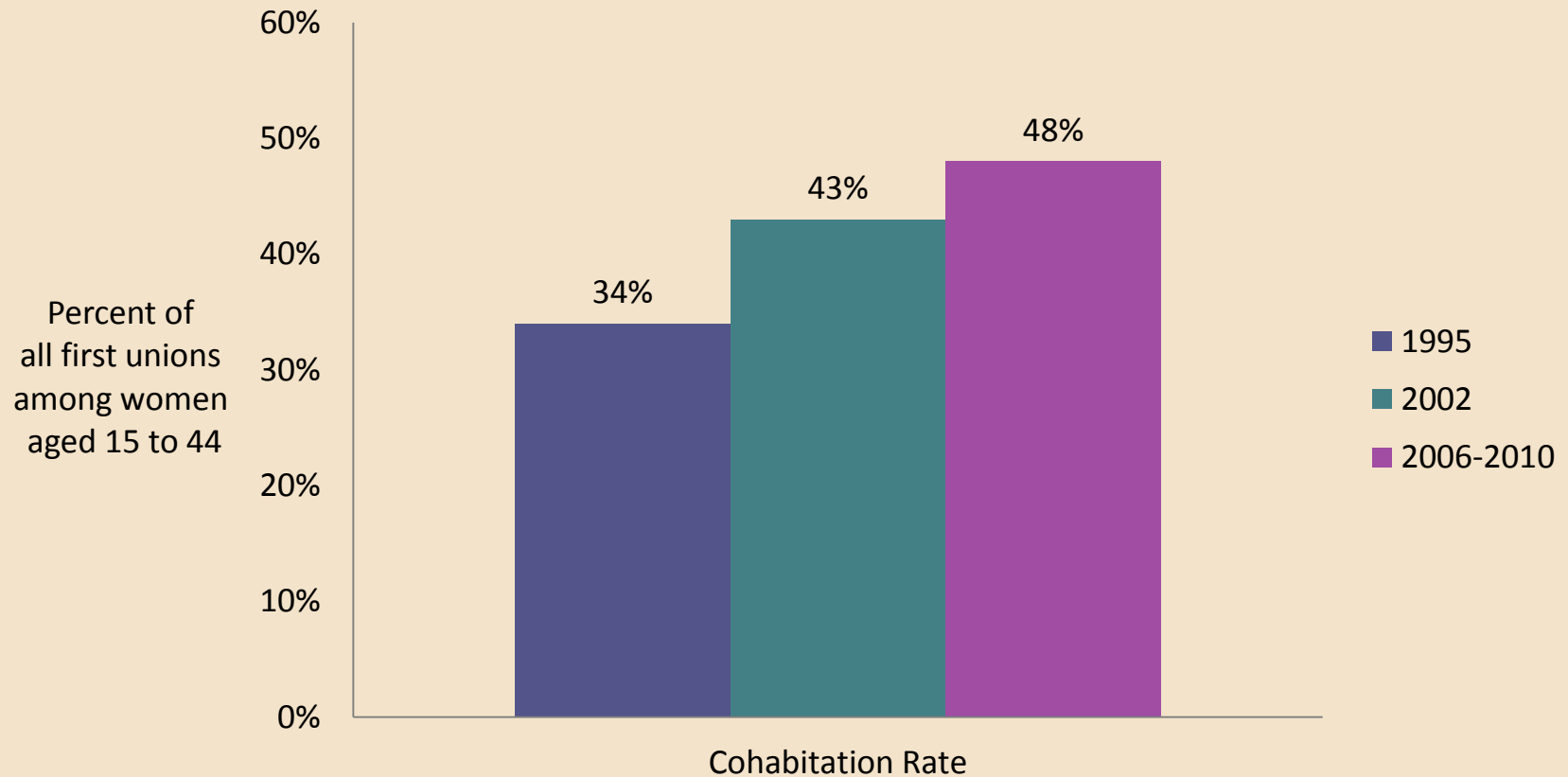
# Is Unwed Childbearing Going to be the <sup>4</sup> New Normal?

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

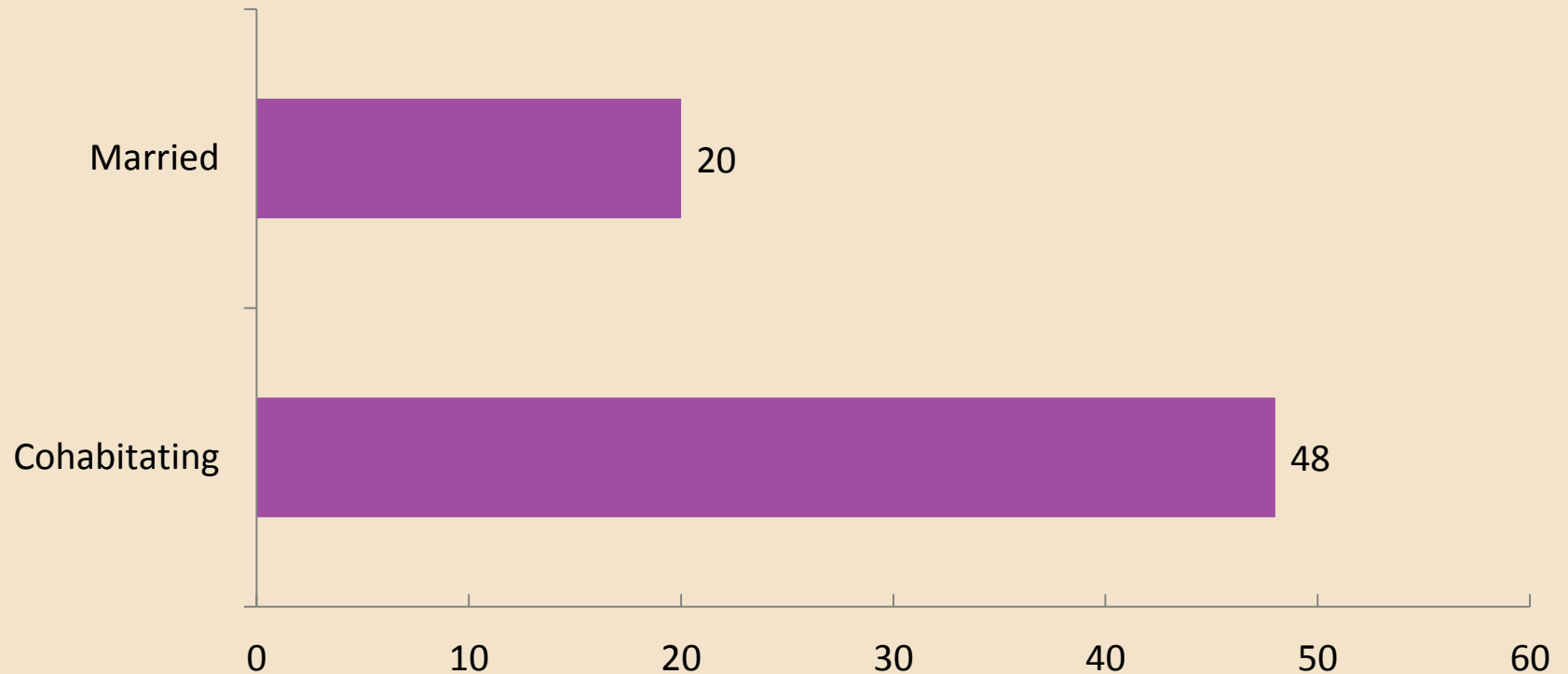


Source: Copen, Casey E., Kimberly Daniels, and William D. Mosher. 2013. "First Premarital Cohabitation in the United States: 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth". 64. National Health Statistics Reports. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr064.pdf>.

# 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

Contraception and Abortion

Changing Social Norms

# Why it Matters

- Children fare better in stable two-parent family; child poverty rates are much higher in single-parent families
- Married adults are happier, healthier, and longer-lived
- Family breakdown: a new class divide, leading to less social mobility
- Costs to society



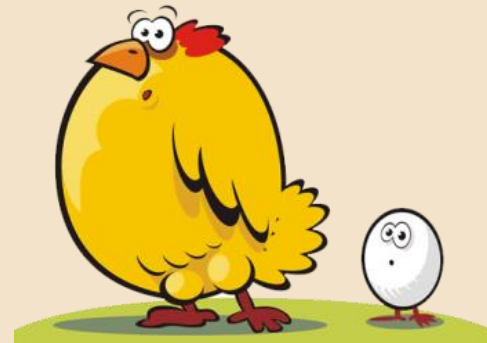


# Chicken and Egg

Does poverty → family breakdown

OR

Does family breakdown → poverty?



# Costs to Society

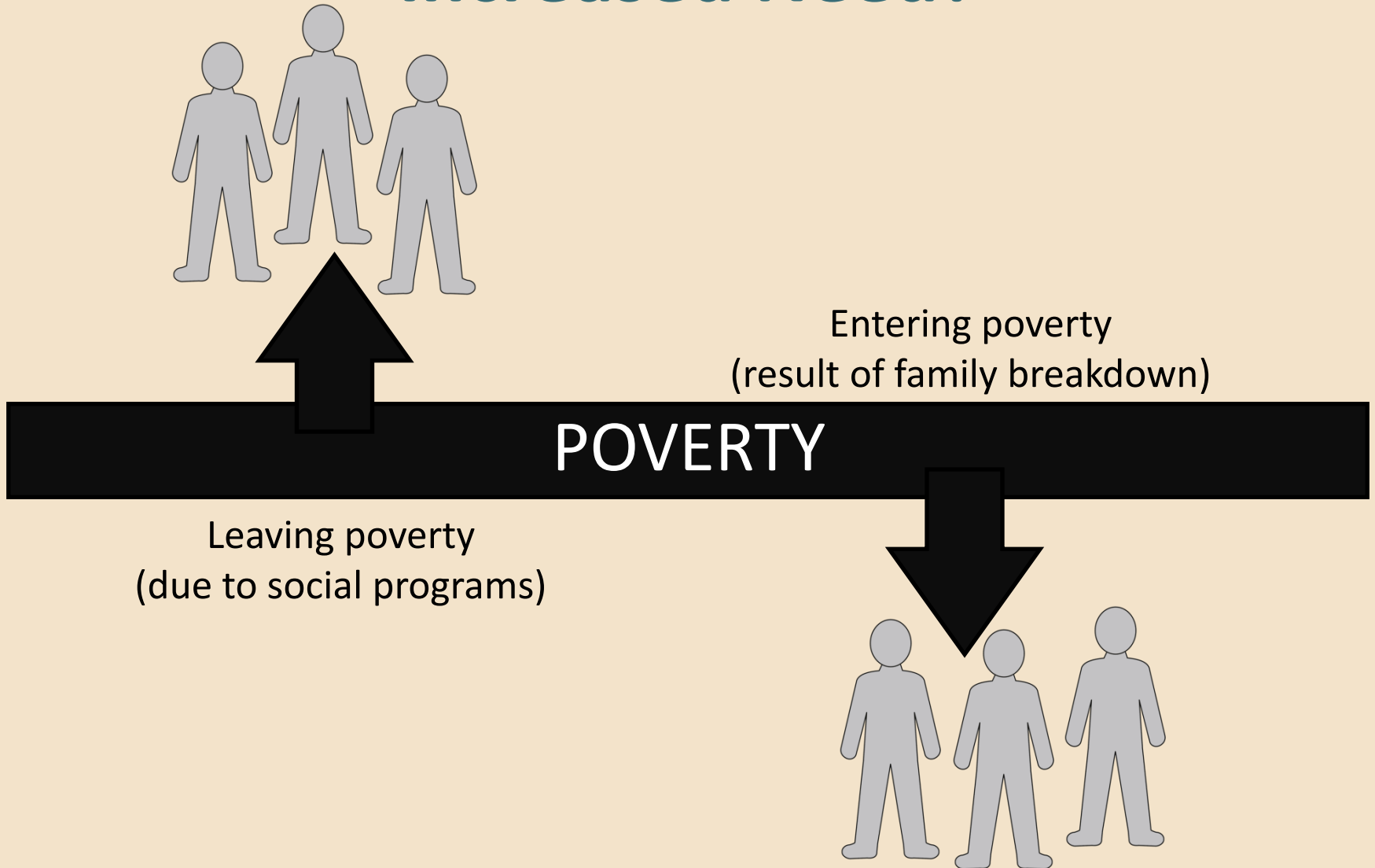
The typical single parent family receives around \$6000 in government benefits per year.<sup>1</sup>

The SNAP program alone cost about \$80 billion in 2013 and reduced child poverty by 3 percentage points.<sup>2</sup>

The growth of single parenthood since 1970 has increased child poverty by 5 percentage points.<sup>3</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.
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>.
3. 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).

# Can Social Policy Keep Pace with Increased Need?



# 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.”

# Changing Drifters into Planners

OR

Changing the Default from  
Childbearing by Chance to  
Childbearing by Choice

# What is Drifting?

- Doing something impulsively or without intention
- “Thinking fast,” not “thinking slow” (Kahneman)

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Percent of young women agreeing with the following statement: “It doesn’t matter whether you use birth control or not; when it’s your time to get pregnant it will happen.”

# Planners vs. Drifters



Finish college



Get a job



Get married



Have kids



Finish high school



Move in together



Have a kid



Break up



# Drifting into Parenthood is Common

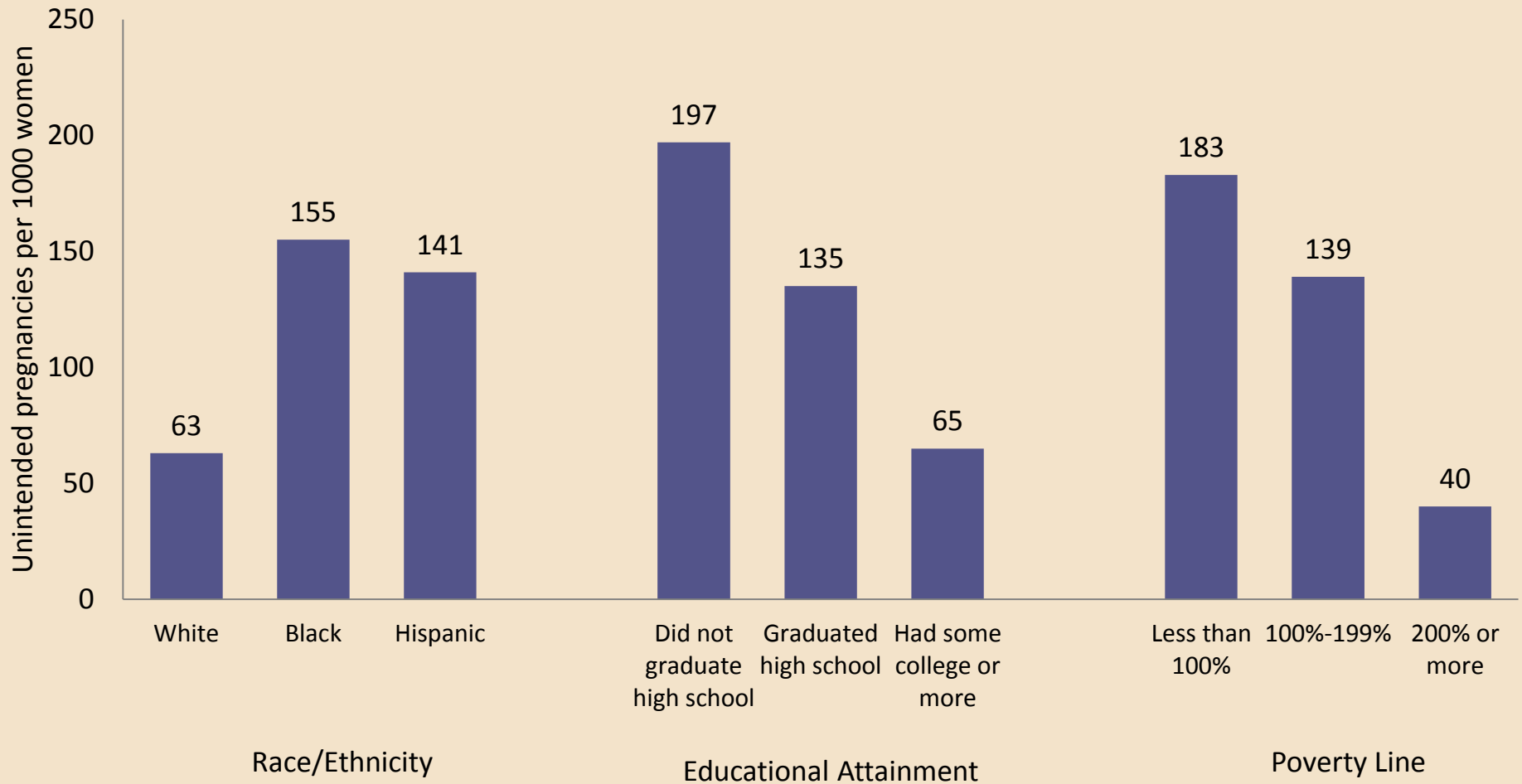
**60% OF BIRTHS TO  
SINGLE WOMEN  
UNDER 30 ARE  
UNPLANNED**



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.

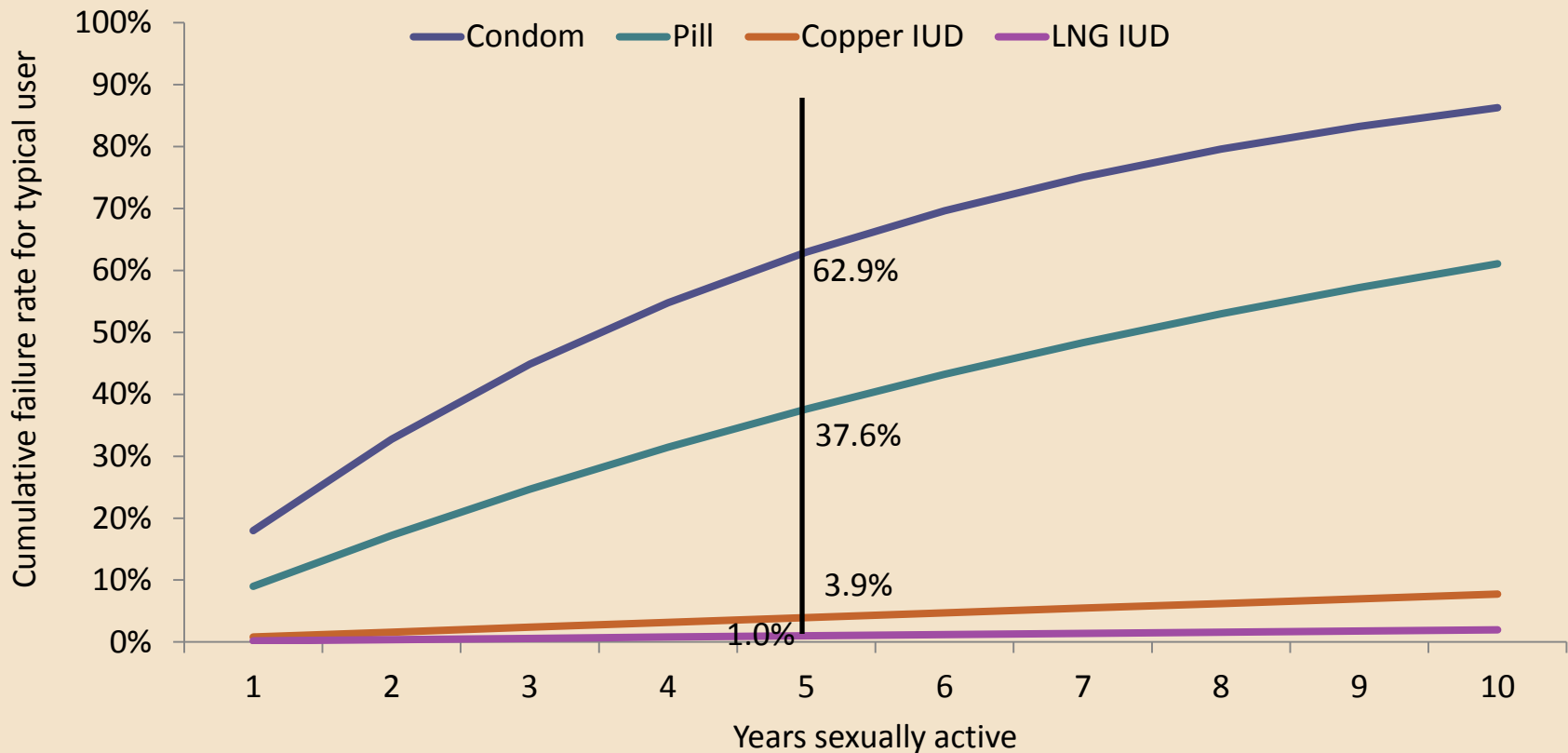


# Less Advantaged Women Have Highest Rates of Drifting



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.

# 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

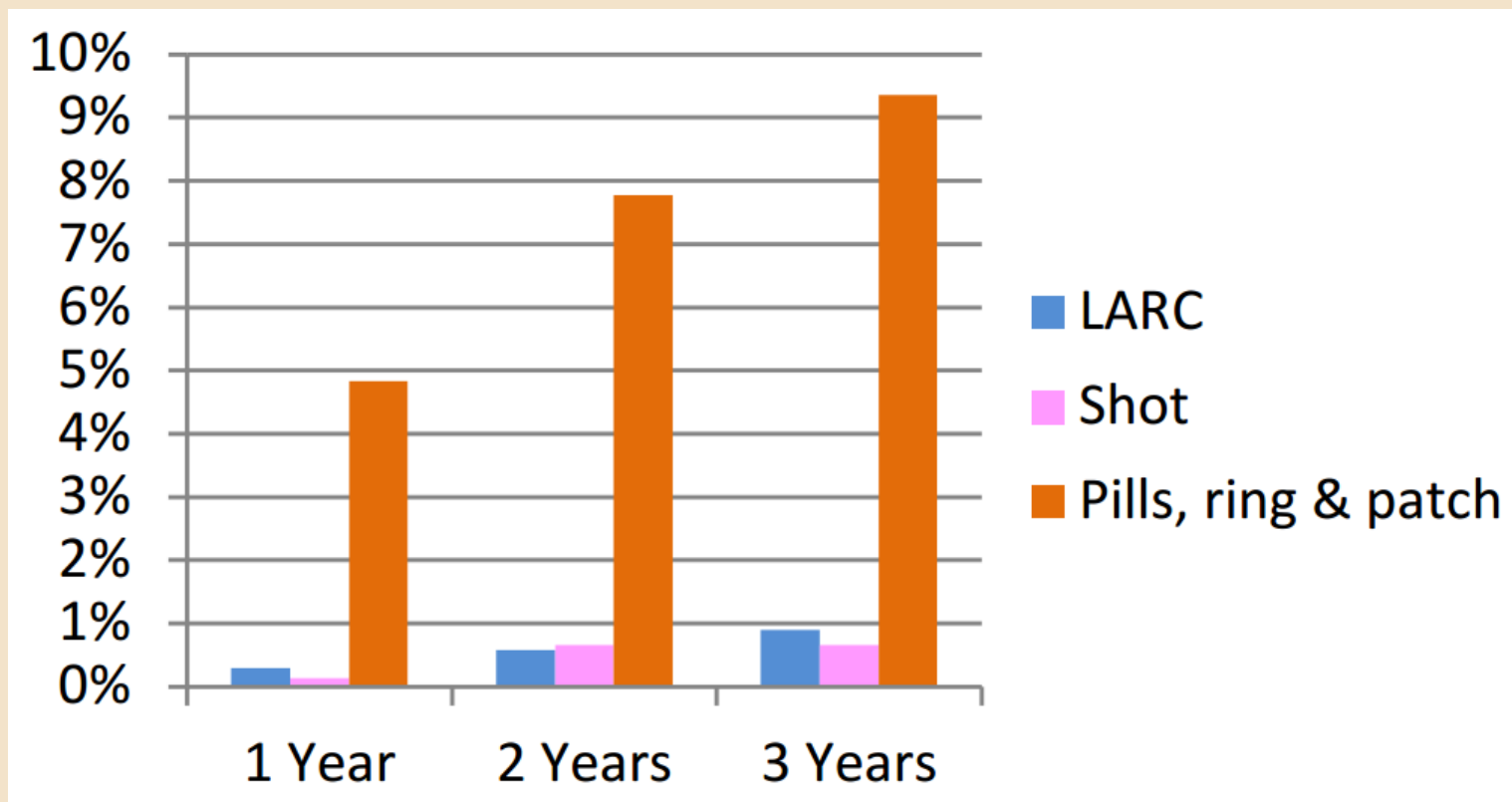
St. Louis: The CHOICE Project

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

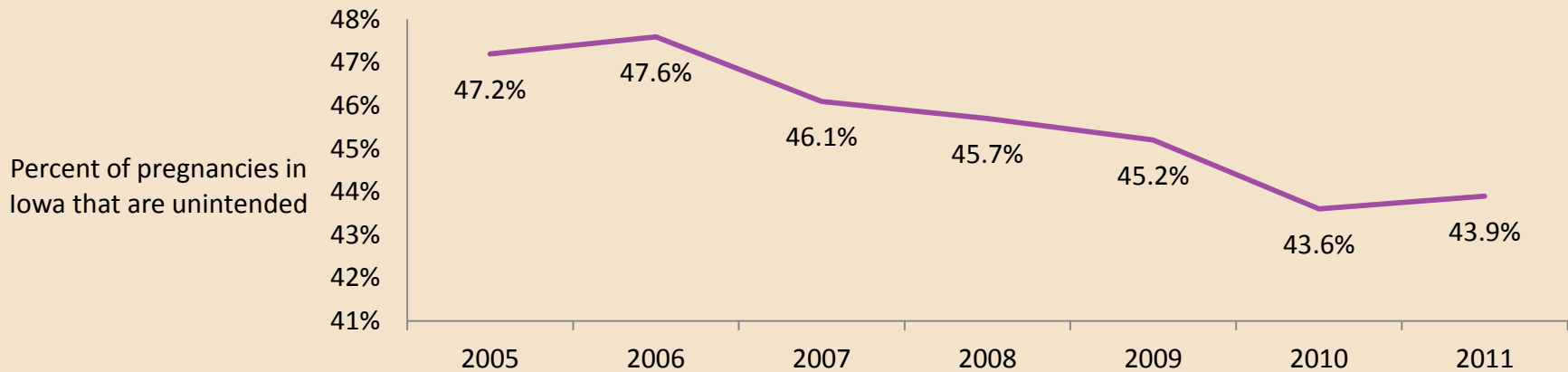
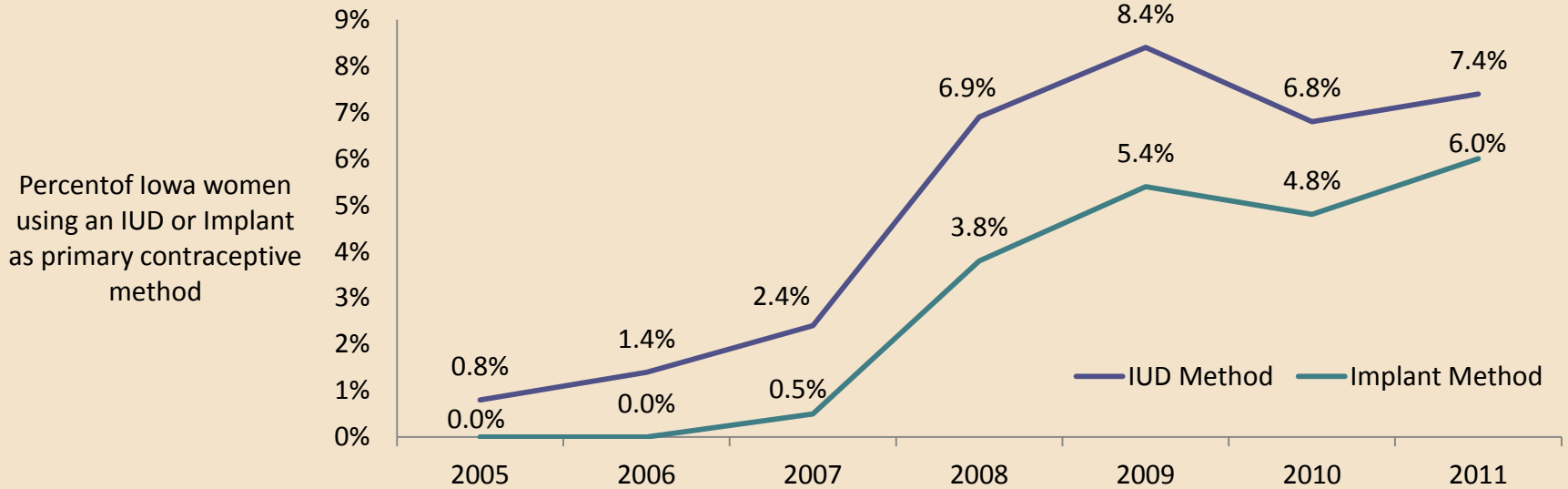
Expanding access to LARCs caused a

**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



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).

# 5 Inconvenient Truths About Sex and Parenthood

1. Likelihood of pregnancy using a condom alone for 5 years is 63%. Use the pill – or even better – an IUD.
2. An early unplanned birth affects a child's success later in life.
3. Cohabitation is **NOT** a substitute for marriage.
4. Later marriages are more stable than early ones, so waiting is a good idea.
5. Children are expensive – expect to spend about \$500,000 to \$1 million per child.

# What Government Needs to Do<sup>24</sup>

Create more opportunity:

- Evidence-based programs (SGM)
- More career and technical education
- Raise minimum wage; expand EITC

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