



Social Research Laboratory, PO Box 15301, Flagstaff, AZ 86011 (520) 523-1515

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For Immediate Release

For More Information:  
Teri Nelson (520) 523-1515

### **ARIZONANS SUPPORT TEEN MOMS -- WITH STRINGS ATTACHED**

Almost three out of four Arizonans feel the state should be required to provide health care for the children of teenage mothers, and 53% said that the state should also provide health care for the teenage mothers themselves. Most of the respondents (81%) also supported the idea of subsidizing daycare while the teen moms go back to school or work. "In spite of trends in welfare thinking that restrict benefits, Arizonans do care about the lives and health of the mothers and their children," according to Teri Nelson, Research Manager of the Social Research Laboratory, which conducted the statewide Arizona Survey.

This warm heart was accompanied, however, by some stern expectations of teen moms. A large majority of the respondents (93%) commented that teenage mothers should be required to attend school in order to receive assistance. Almost as many (84%) stated that teen moms should be required to work at least part-time in order to receive government assistance. And 78 percent

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of the people polled said the teens should be required to name the father, to assist in efforts to garner child support.

The telephone survey was conducted by Northern Arizona University's Social Research Laboratory from October 27 through November 14, 1997. A random sample of 400 Arizona residents participated in this survey. The margin of error for a survey of this size is +/- 5%, at a 95% confidence level.

### **OTHER STRINGS ATTACHED**

Respondents were asked if they would support giving additional government assistance to a teen mom who becomes pregnant again and is already receiving assistance. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents said that she should not receive additional assistance. Finally, 72% of the people stated that teen moms should be required to live at home or under adult supervision in order to receive government support. "Our state's residents don't want the children of teenage mothers to suffer, but in return for assistance they expect the moms to do their part to become self-reliant adults and to work with the system as much as possible," noted Teri Nelson.

### **ARE CURRENT STATE FUNDING LEVELS ACCEPTABLE?**

The NAU Social Research Laboratory asked Arizonans if they think that the state is spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on teenage pregnancy. Forty-three percent of the respondents expressed that the state is spending too little, while 23% said that the state is spending about the right amount and 26% responded that the state spends too much.

Researchers were also interested in respondents' opinions on other possible state programs that would provide aid to teenage mothers and their children. When asked if the state should provide cash assistance to teenage mothers and their children to pay for their living expenses, and 43% of the respondents responded favorably. Fifty-four percent of the respondents, however, opposed state provided cash to teenage mothers.

### **ARIZONA'S REACTION TO TEENAGE SEX**

Of the Arizonans polled, 43% responded that it is always wrong for teenagers to have sex before marriage. Another 17% replied that it is almost always wrong, while 26% replied that it is wrong only sometimes. Only 10% responded it is not wrong at all for teens to have sex before marriage. Arizona has the second highest teen pregnancy birthrate in the United States and about one third of these teens have been pregnant before.



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## **STATEWIDE TELEPHONE POLL**

**Social Research Laboratory  
Northern Arizona University**

### **BACKGROUND MEMO**

3-NAU012/Fall

The statewide telephone poll was conducted between October 27 and November 14, 1997. A random sample of 400 Arizonans was interviewed by telephone. Figures of this sampling size are subject to a sampling error of about +/- 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below.

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In your opinion, what is the most important issue currently facing Arizona today?

<b>Important Issues Facing Arizona</b>	<b>Total</b>
	%
Low paying jobs	2
Costly housing/Cost of living	.6
Nothing to do	.2
High taxes	4.4
Growth in tourism	.5
Environmental protection	4.9
Water conservation	10.3
Education	12.2
Crime	10.8
Rate of population growth	4.8
Style and type of growth	1.8
Traffic congestion/Trains	4.9
Lack of social services	.9
Fire danger	--
Economy	3.3
Other	26.8
Don't know	11.5
Refused	--

(N=400)

We are faced with many problems in Arizona, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. For each problem, please tell me if you think we are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount.

	Too little	Too much	About the right amount	Don't know/Unsure	Refused	Total	(N)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Crime	50.2	7.4	33.9	7.8	.7	100	399
Improving & Protecting the environment	54	9.2	31.8	4.2	.7	100	400
Health care	51.4	8.4	32.6	7.4	.2	100	400
Juvenile Delinquency	62.8	7.8	19.3	9.8	.2	100	400
Big City Problems	37.5	13	30.1	18.6	.8	100	400
Drug Addiction	44.2	11.4	32.5	11.6	.2	100	400
Teenage Pregnancy	41.7	16.1	30.4	11.3	.4	100	400
Education System	69.2	7.9	17.6	5.1	.2	100	400
Parks and Recreation	24.3	9.2	60.7	5.6	.2	100	400

If two teenagers have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Wrong only sometimes	Not wrong at all	Don't know/Unsure	Refused	Total	(N)
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Arizonans	42.5	16.9	25.7	10.3	4	.6	100	400

We are interested in your views on some ideas regarding the help that should be given to teenage mothers and their children. For each one, please tell me whether you would strongly oppose the proposal, somewhat oppose it, somewhat support it, or strongly support it.

	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support	Don't know/ Unsure	Refused	Total	(N)
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Living expenses for teen mom & children	29.6	24.3	33.3	9.8	2.6	.4	100	400
Health care for children	12.4	10.9	39.4	34	2.8	.4	100	400
Health care for teen moms	24.3	21	36.5	16.2	1.6	.4	100	400

If state cash or health assistance is provided, should the teenage mom be required to attend school to receive the help?

	Yes	No	Don't know/Unsure	Refused	Total	(N)
	%	%	%	%		
Arizonans	93.1	4.2	2.3	.4	100	400

If state cash or health assistance is provided, should the teenage mom be required to work full or part-time to receive the help?

	Yes	No	Don't know/Unsure	Refused	Total	(N)
	%	%	%	%		
Arizonans	84.1	11.5	3.8	.6	100	400

Do you favor or oppose government subsidy of daycare while teen mothers attend school or work?

	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know/ Unsure	Refused	Total	(N=)
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Arizonans	47.3	33.9	8	9.4	.9	.5	100	400

I'm going to read you some statements and I'd like you to tell me whether you disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, agree somewhat, or agree strongly.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Don't know/ Unsure	Refused	Total	(N=)
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Require father's name	12.5	8.7	16.4	61.8	.4	.2	100	400
No additional money for second child	15.2	11.4	18.6	50.5	4	.2	100	400
Teen should live under adult supervision	11.8	11.6	23.8	48.1	3.9	.7	100	400