

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910789416203321
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Titolo	The failed welfare revolution [[electronic resource] ] : America's struggle over guaranteed income policy / / Brian Steensland
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, : Princeton University Press, c2008
ISBN	1-283-13471-3 9786613134714 1-4008-3748-0
Edizione	[Course Book]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (320 p.)
Disciplina	362.5/82
Soggetti	Public welfare - United States Guaranteed annual income - United States
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [283]-295) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Preface -- Abbreviations -- INTRODUCTION: Understanding the Failed Welfare Revolution -- CHAPTER ONE. The Rise of Guaranteed Annual Income -- CHAPTER TWO. Guaranteed Annual Income Goes Public -- CHAPTER THREE. The Origins and Transformation of the Nixon Plan -- CHAPTER FOUR. Nixon's Family Assistance Plan Stalls -- CHAPTER FIVE. Defeat and Its Policy Legacy -- CHAPTER SIX. Carter and the Program for Better Jobs and Income -- CHAPTER SEVEN. Lost Opportunities, Consequences, and Lessons -- CHAPTER EIGHT. Culture and Welfare Policy Development -- Notes -- References -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Today the United States has one of the highest poverty rates among the world's rich industrial democracies. The Failed Welfare Revolution shows us that things might have turned out differently. During the 1960's and 1970's, policymakers in three presidential administrations tried to replace the nation's existing welfare system with a revolutionary program to guarantee Americans basic economic security. Surprisingly from today's vantage point, guaranteed income plans received broad bipartisan support in the 1960's. One proposal, President Nixon's Family Assistance Plan, nearly passed into law in the 1970's, and President Carter advanced a similar bill a few years later.

The failure of these proposals marked the federal government's last direct effort to alleviate poverty among the least advantaged and, ironically, sowed the seeds of conservative welfare reform strategies under President Reagan and beyond. This episode has largely vanished from America's collective memory. Here, Brian Steensland tells the whole story for the first time--from why such an unlikely policy idea first developed to the factors that sealed its fate. His account, based on extensive original research in presidential archives, draws on mainstream social science perspectives that emphasize the influence of powerful stakeholder groups and policymaking institutions. But Steensland also shows that some of the most potent obstacles to guaranteed income plans were cultural. Most centrally, by challenging Americans' longstanding distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, the plans threatened the nation's cultural, political, and economic status quo.

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