



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

# *Wicked Problems of Child Welfare*

## *North Carolina Problems, North Carolina Solutions*

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# *Wicked Problems*

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A term coined in the policy sciences to describe a problem that defies ordinary solutions because of contradictory definitions of the nature of the problem, the problem's interconnectedness to a lot of other problems, and the lack of consensus about what constitutes successful or unsuccessful resolution of the problem.



# *Evidence-Based Solutions*

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- Extend foster care support beyond age 18.
- Prioritizing adoption over long-term foster care.
- Supporting permanent guardianship over diversion to informal kinship care.
- Extending post-adoption support and preservation to insure these home remain intact.
- Investing in evidence-based, post-permanency solutions to reverse the effects of child maltreatment on brain development and to ensure children's social and emotional well-being remains secure.

# *Scope of Public Interest*

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## **CONSTRAINED**

(Narrow Scope of Public Interest)

### *Safety*

Should public child welfare be satisfied primarily with the safe reduction in the number of children entering foster care or should it set its sights on a diffuse range of child well-being improvements, such as fostering secure parent-child attachments, intervening when child development lags behind normative milestones, and offering extended support to youth who age out of the foster care system?

### *Well-Being*

## **UNCONSTRAINED**

(Diffuse Scope of Public Interest)

# *Locus of Responsibility*

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**PRIMARY  
GROUPS**

(Particularism-Ascription)

*Continuity*

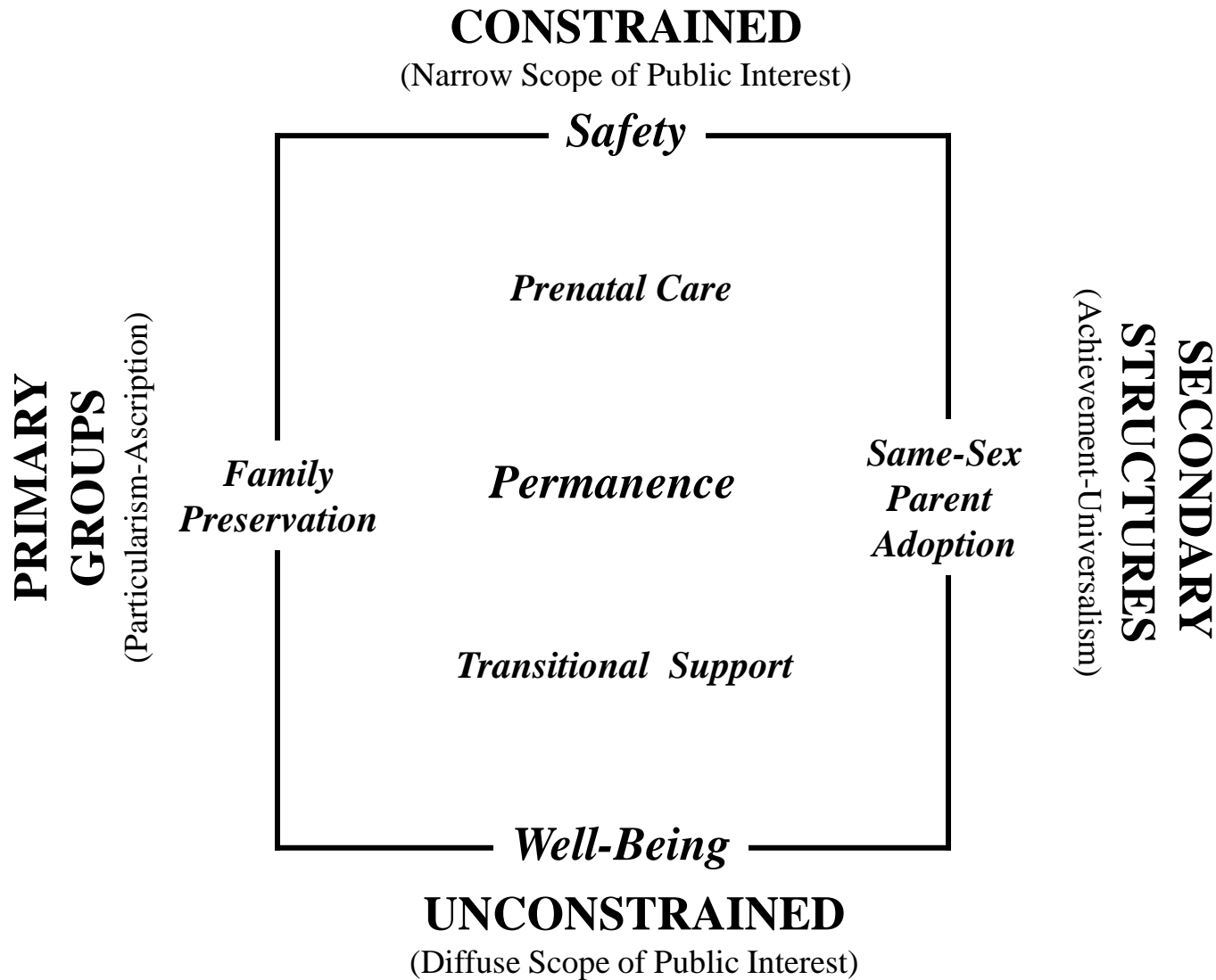
Should the primary group relationships of family, extended kinship, and voluntary association be responsible for achieving these aims largely on their own, or should the secondary structures of market institutions and state authority ultimately be held accountable for ensuring equal developmental opportunities and minimum well-being for all children?

*Stability*

(Achievement-Universalism)

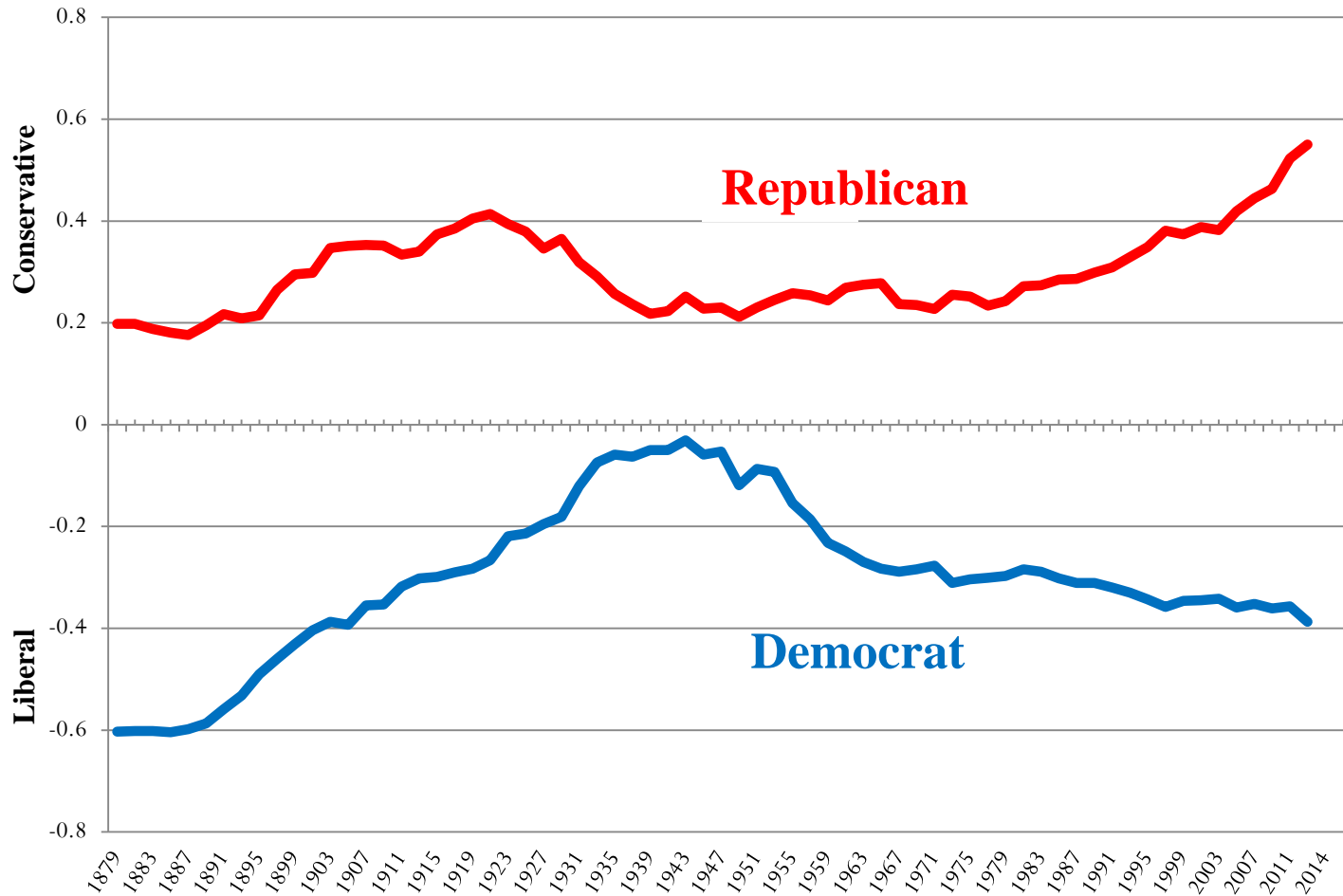
**SECONDARY  
STRUCTURES**

# Matrix of Alternatives

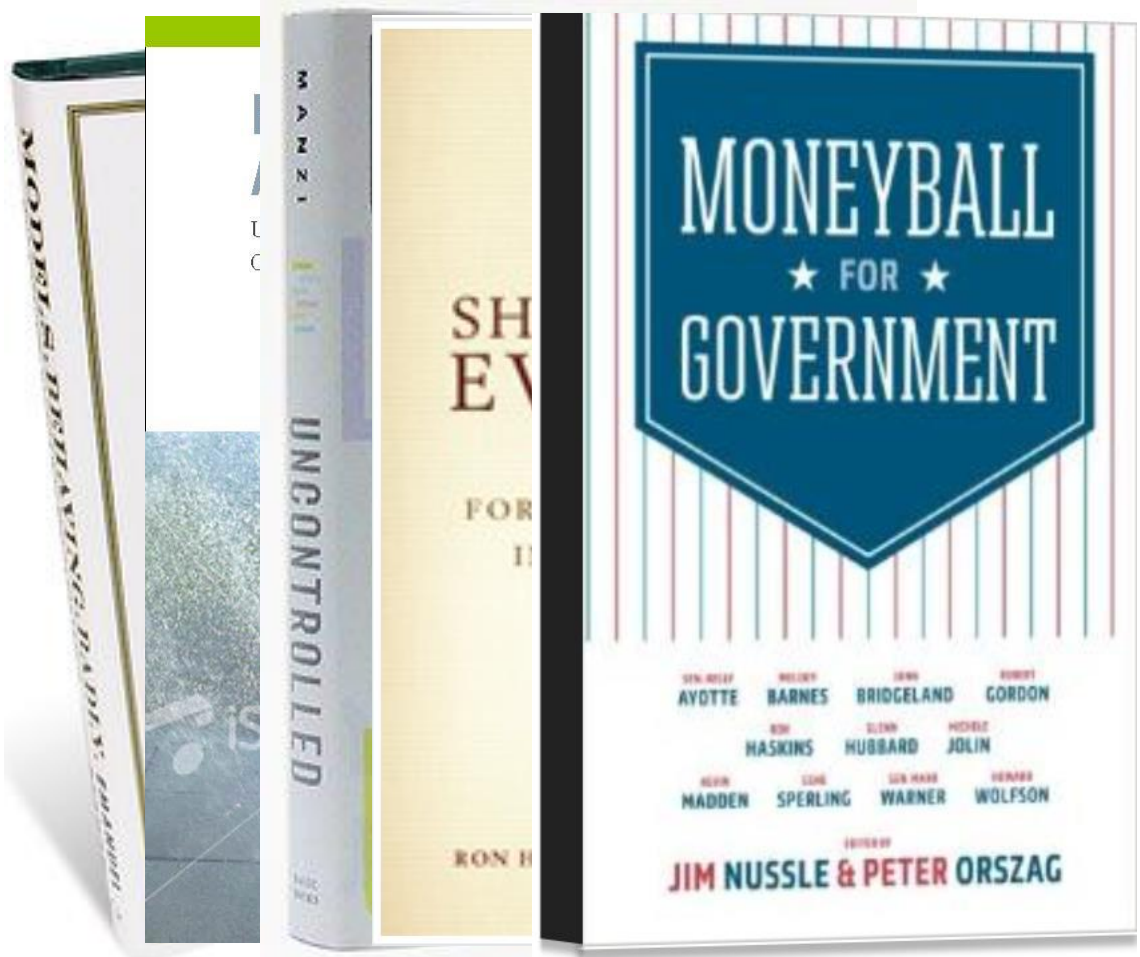


# Political Polarization

U.S. Senate 1879-2013  
Party Means on Liberal-Conservative Dimension



# *Calls for Policy Waivers and Rigorous Experimentation...*





# *...Fuels Congressional Interest in Evidence-Based Policymaking*

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April 17, 2015 WASHINGTON — Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) announced that they have introduced their Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2015 and working to pass it this Congress. The bill would establish a 15-member commission to study how best to expand the use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of federal programs and tax expenditures.

## **A BILL**

To establish the Commission on Evidence-Based  
Policymaking, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

# *Wicked Problems Perspective*

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## ***PRINCIPLES***

- You don't understand a wicked problem until you have found an evidence-based solution that works.
- The interconnected nature of wicked problems necessitates an interconnected response.
- Child well-being is an appropriate metric for evaluating the effectiveness of child welfare interventions to support safe and permanent homes for children.



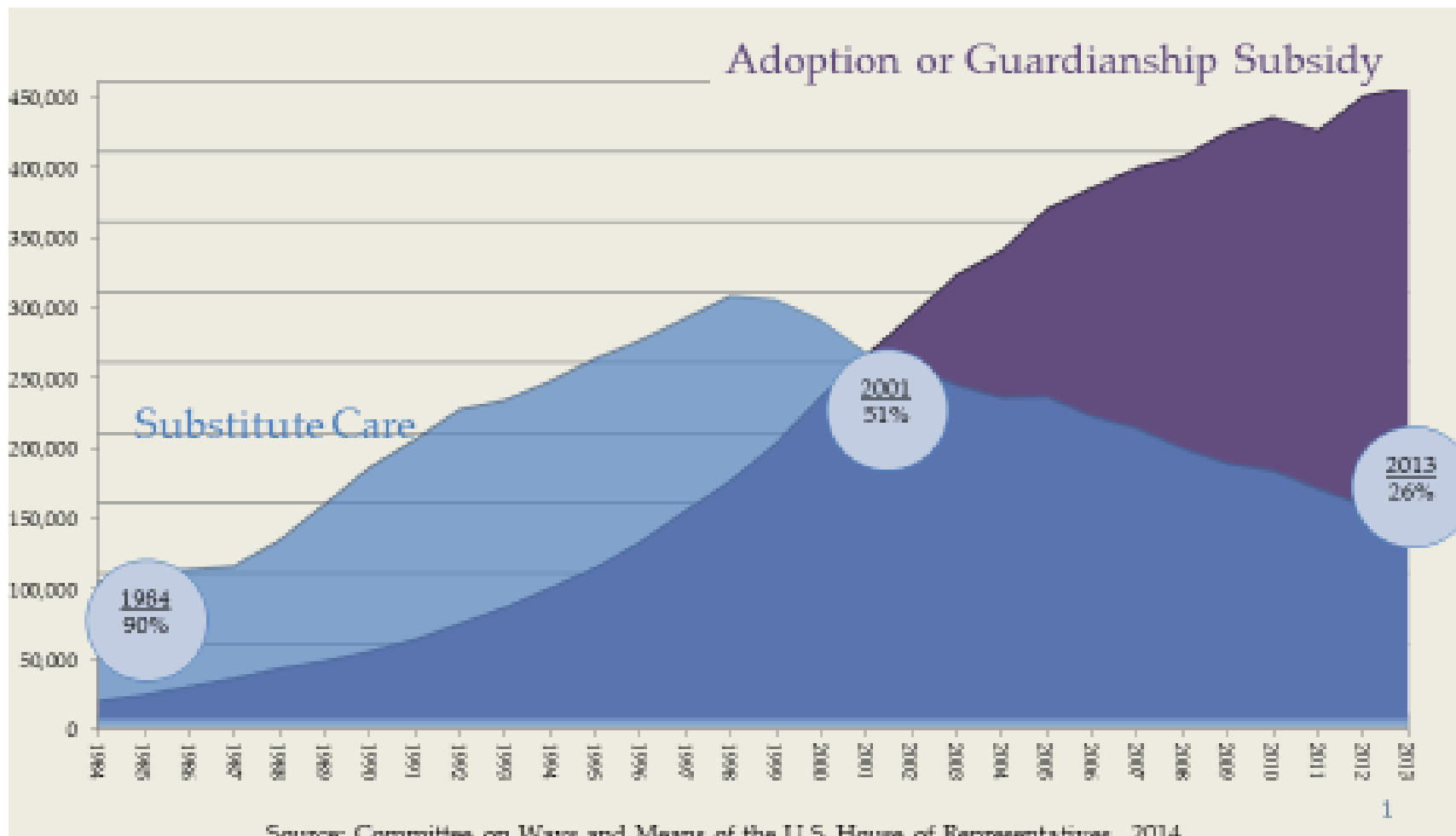
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Children's Home Society  
OF AMERICA

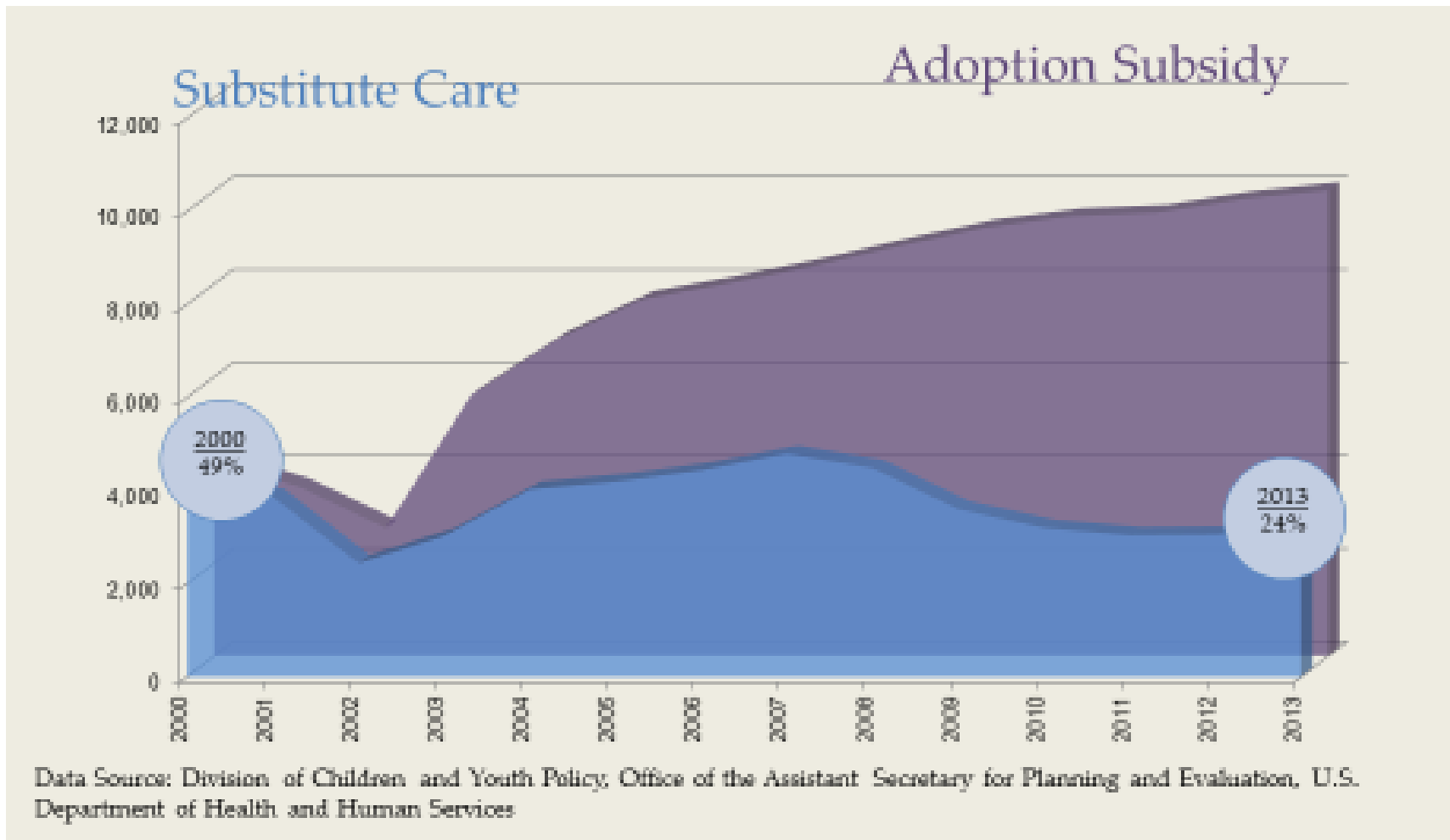
We use the term "wicked" in a meaning akin to ... "tricky" ...  
Rittel & Webber. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*

# National Average Monthly IV-E Funded Caseloads



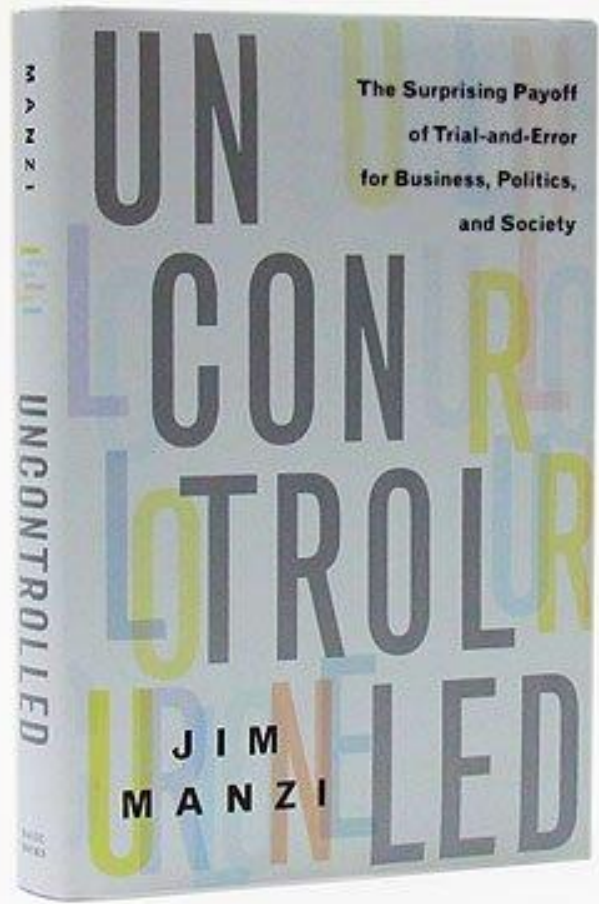
Source: Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives, 2014

# North Carolina Average Monthly IV-E Funded Caseloads



# *Restoration of IV-E Waiver Program*

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Within extremely broad limits, states should be permitted to change almost any aspect of federally mandated laws and policies on a trial basis—anything from school eligibility rules, to medical reimbursement schedules, to drug-use penalties—as long as they participate in the same kind of structured experimentation program that was operated during the welfare reform period of the 1990s.

- Manzi (2012) *Uncontrolled*, p.242-243..

# *Early experience shapes brain development*

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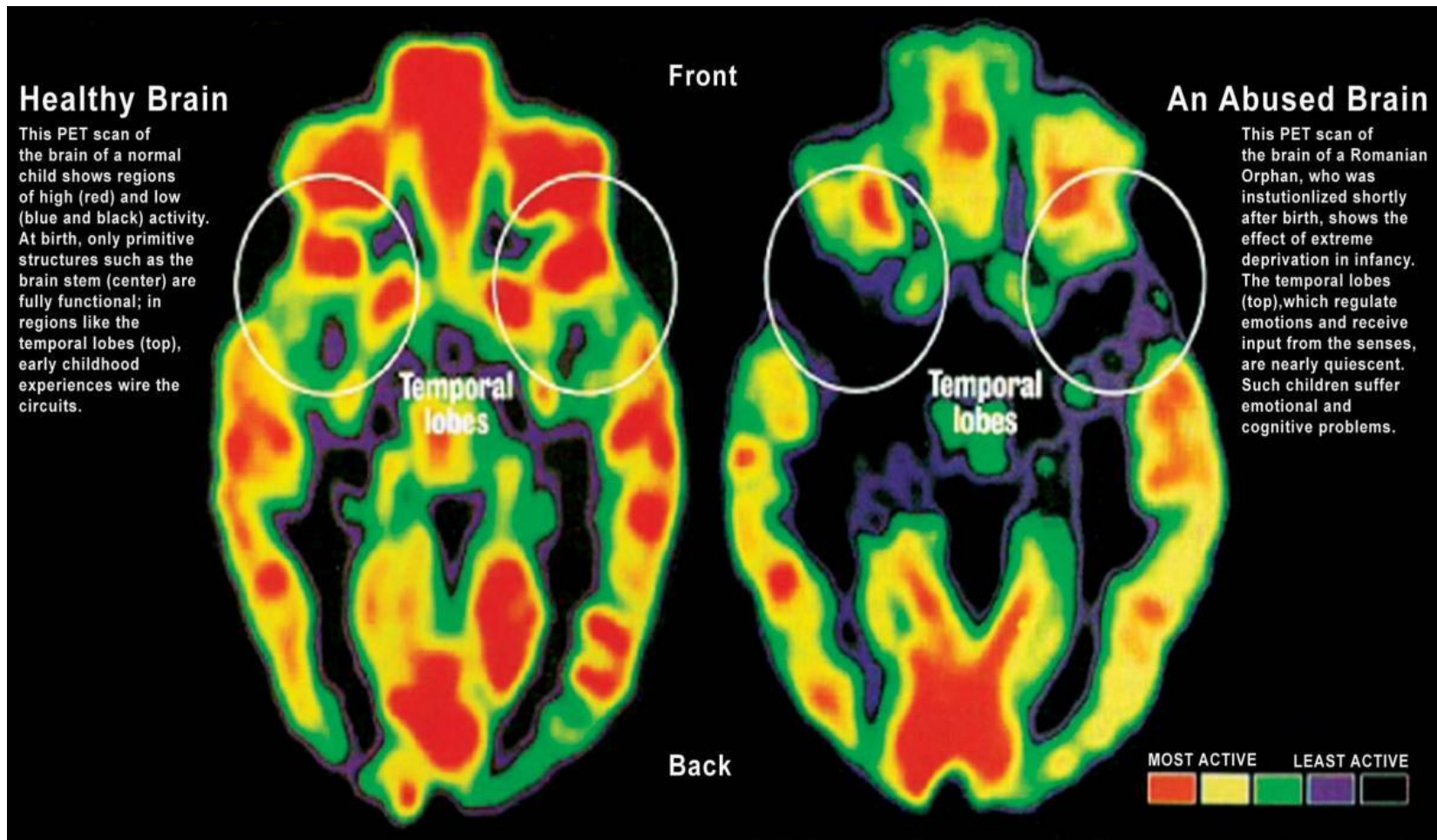


“Virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain’s evolving circuitry to the child’s capacity for empathy is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning in the prenatal period and extending throughout the early childhood years.”

**Source:** Shonkoff, J. and Phillips, D. (eds.) *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. 2000, p. 6.



# Reversing the Damage

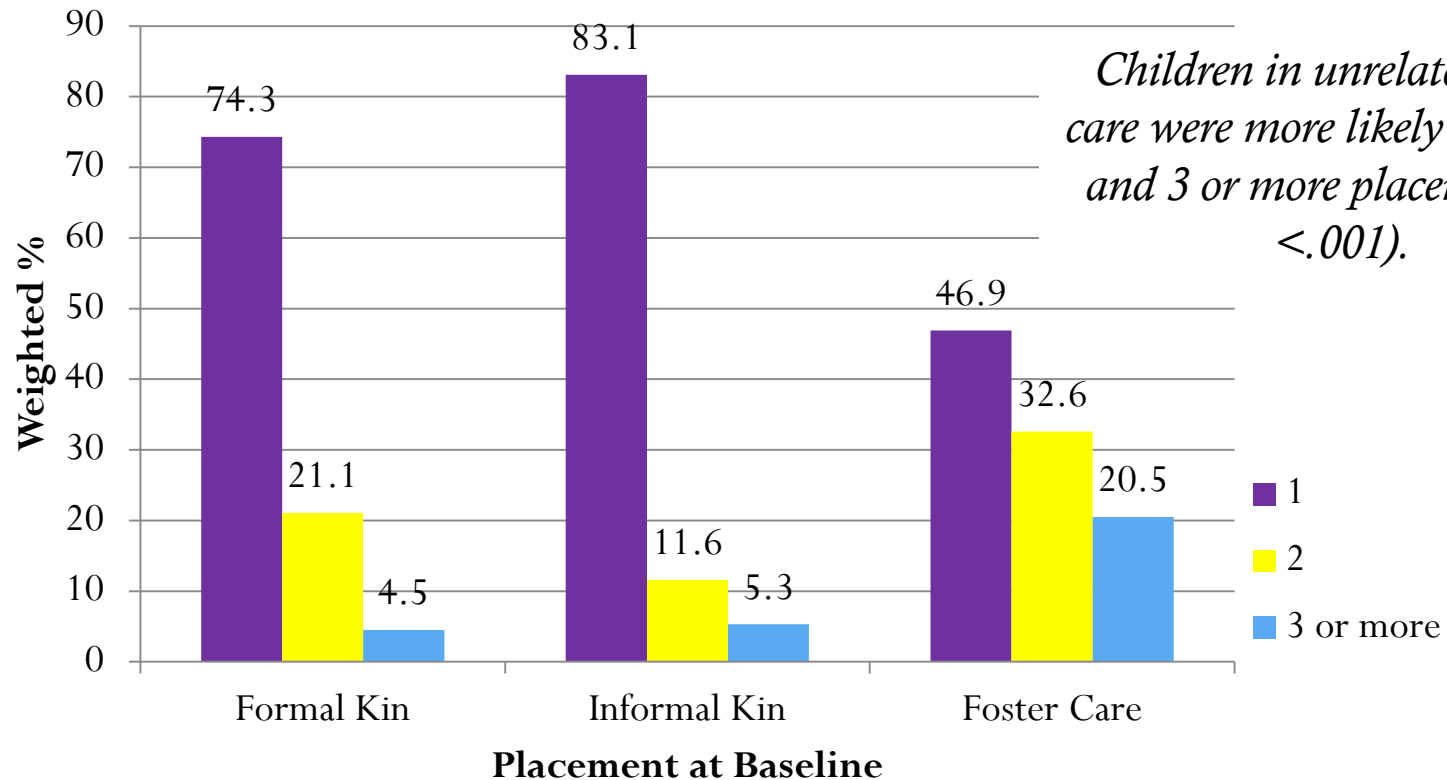


Source: <http://www.langmaidpractice.com/tag/tools/>

# Kinship Care is Very Stable

NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING

NSCAW-II 18 mos. follow-up



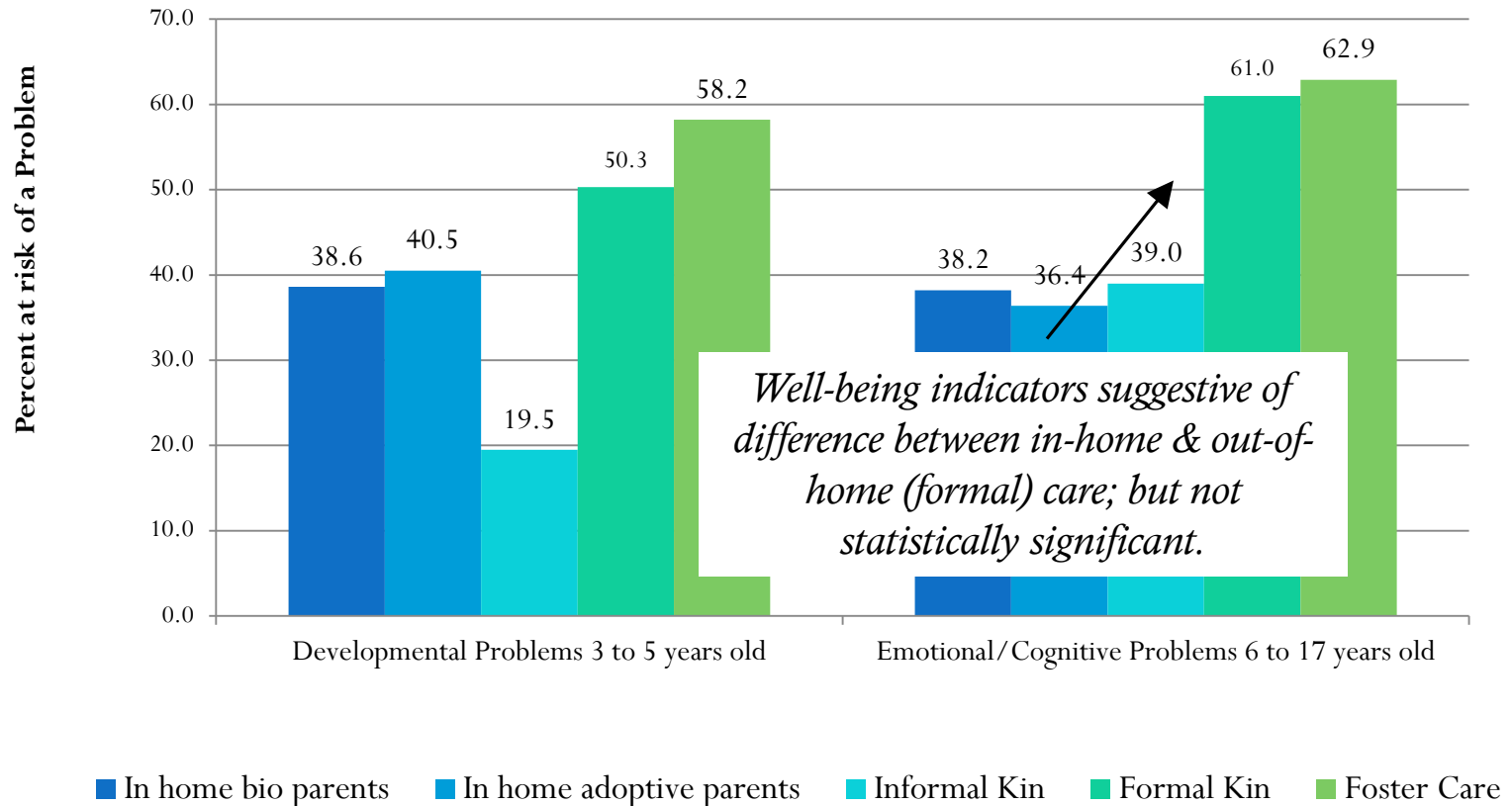


# Children Still Exhibit Extensive Developmental or Emotional/Cognitive Problems 3 Years After Investigation

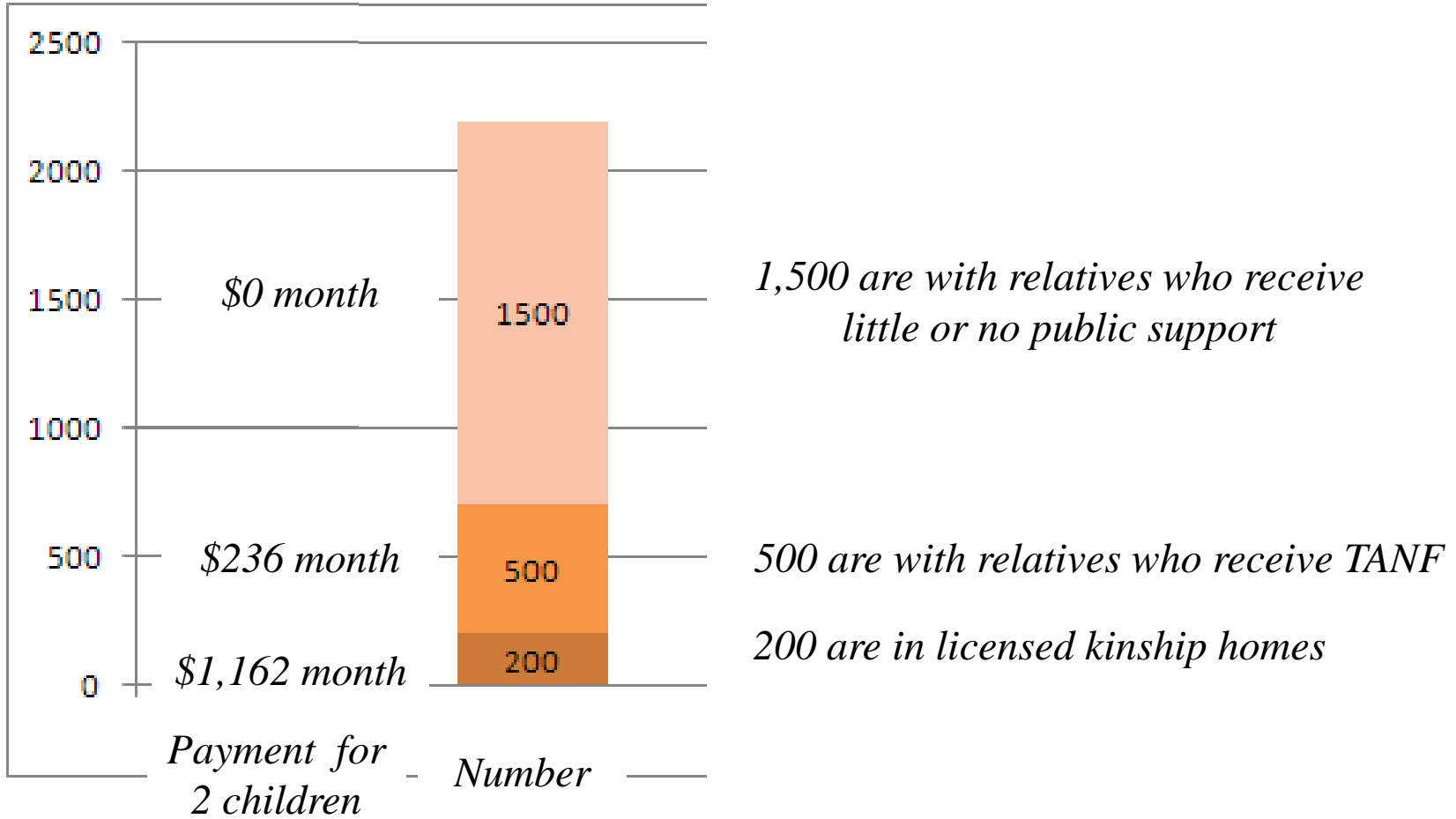
NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING

NSCAW-II 36 mos. follow-up

Well-Being Indicators by setting

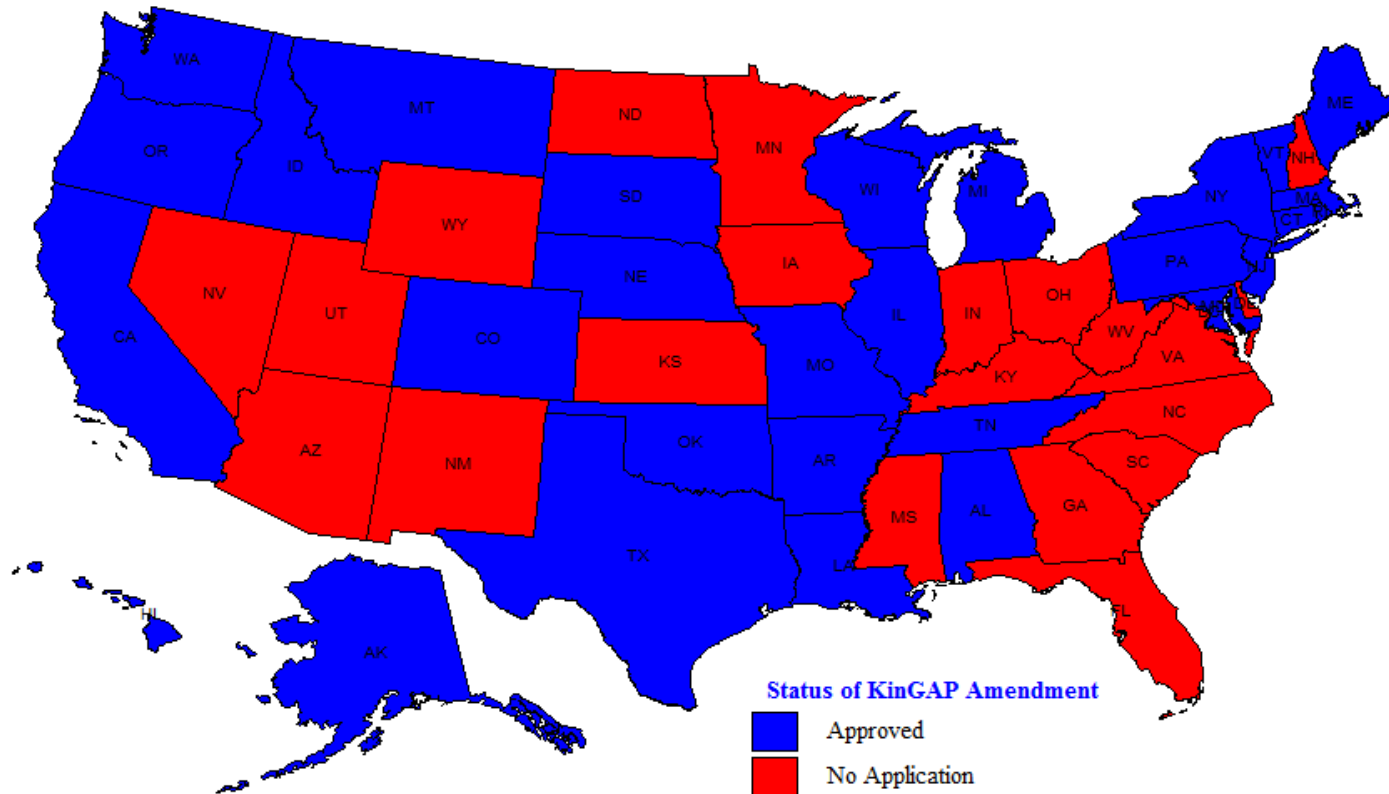


# *Is NC doing enough to support alternative caregiving by relatives?*



# *Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program*

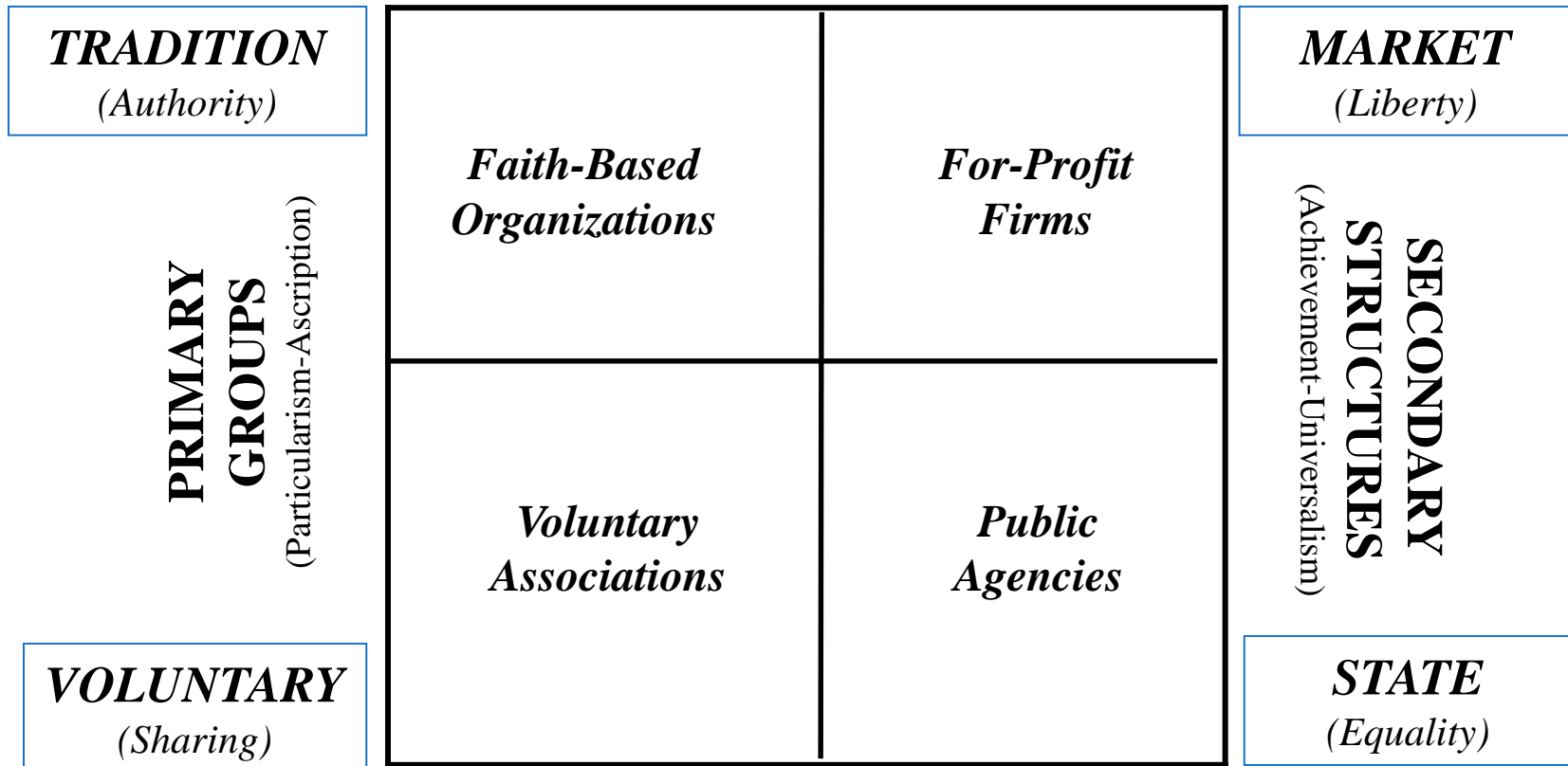
Status of IV-E Plan Amendment, June 2013



# Brokering Partnerships

## CONSTRAINED

(Narrow Scope of Public Interest)



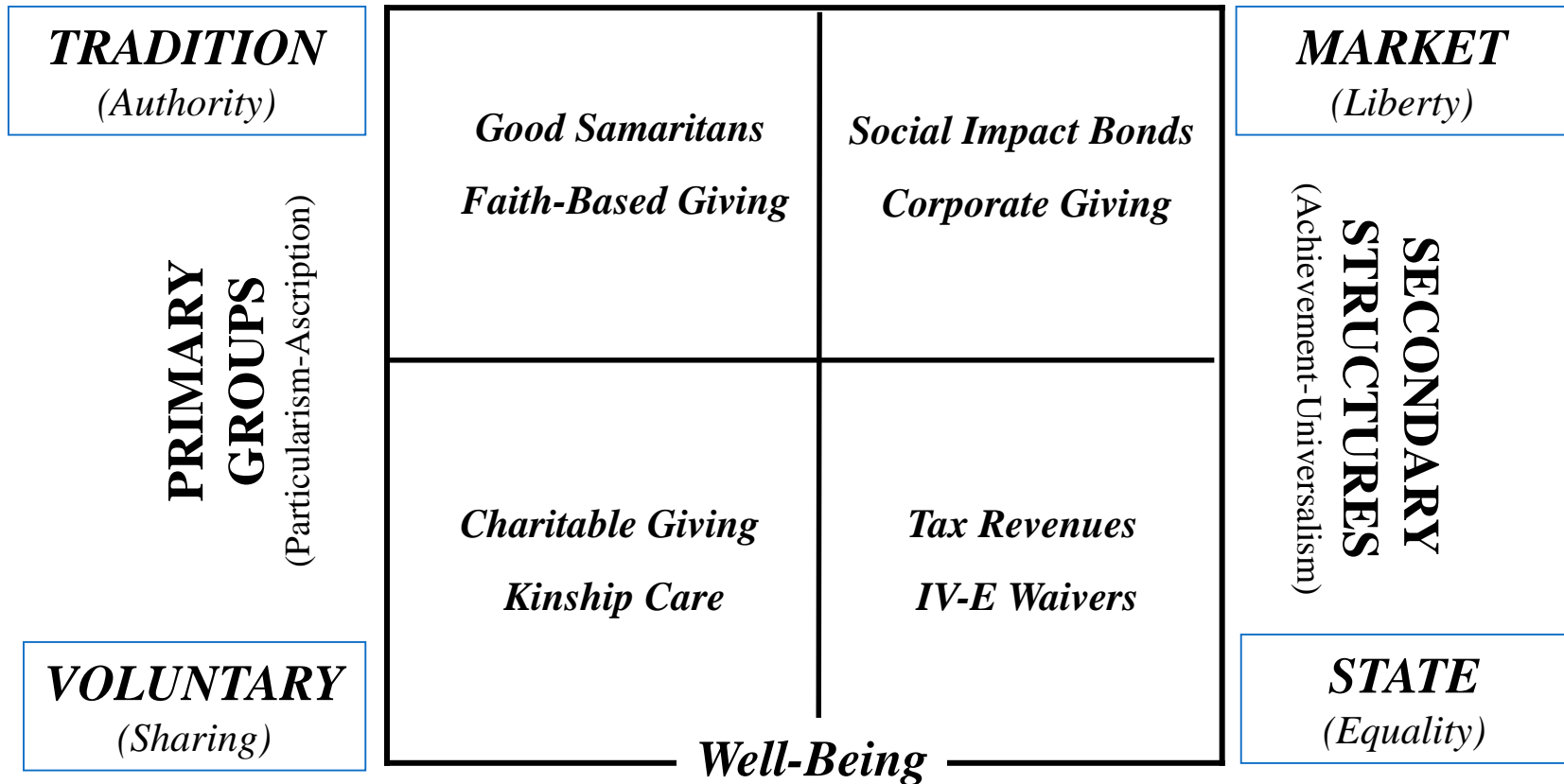
## UNCONSTRAINED

(Diffuse Scope of Public Interest)

# Diversifying Revenue Streams

## CONSTRAINED

(Narrow Scope of Public Interest)



## UNCONSTRAINED

(Diffuse Scope of Public Interest)

# Contact Information

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