

Growth of Marriage Promotion Industry is Based on Political Ties, not Anti-Poverty Results

For Immediate Release

Contact: Ms. Nicky Grist

718-788-1911

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Promotion Industry is Based on Political Ties, not Anti-Poverty Results

Today, the Alternatives to Marriage Project (AtMP) re-released *Let Them Eat Wedding Rings*, its acclaimed critique of government-funded marriage programs. The first edition of *Let Them Eat Wedding Rings* was published in early 2002; it has been cited by media and used in college classrooms around the country. The 2007 edition is fully updated and revised. New features include:

- How the marriage money has been spent, and its new political spin.
- More reasons for skepticism about using marriage as an anti-poverty tool.
- A wary celebration of the demise of the "Illegitimacy Bonus";
- Suggestions for program evaluation and further study.

In the five years since AtMP first published *Let Them Eat Wedding Rings*, government-funded marriage programs have grown explosively. Compared to the late 1990s, government officials play down their desire to convert the unmarried to marriage and the purported link between marrying and leaving poverty. However, influential non-governmental commentators avidly tout marriage as better for children and as a solution to the increasingly visible problem of economic inequality.

Therefore, as observers who care deeply about fairness for all families, AtMP today renews its call for the

critical evaluation of government-funded marriage programs based on these three principles:

1. The purpose of welfare is to reduce poverty.

2. Individuals and families should be treated fairly regardless of their marital status.

3. Policies designed to help children should support all the types of families in which children really live.

Nicky Grist, AtMP's Executive Director, says "Our elected officials are sponsoring a marriage-only perspective that ignores the reality of the majority of American households. They are callously ignoring the fact that marital status discrimination causes real hardships for unmarried people. Unmarried people are an important voting bloc and must hold politicians accountable."

Ms. Grist adds "The federal government diverted three-quarters of a billion dollars from the nation's anti-poverty budget to fund marriage programs, so the American people should demand an evaluation of the programs' impact on poverty."