

Reform, round two: Work harder

by [Marcia Z. Nelson](#) in the [June 14, 2003](#) issue

Funding for the 1996 law that changed welfare had an expiration date of September 30, 2002. So last year, Congress had an opportunity to renew and revise the system. The House and Senate disagreed, however, about funding amounts and changes for the system. Because fighting poverty was lower on the legislative agenda than fighting terrorism, only a funding extension won approval from a lame-duck Congress in the fall.

The Republican-controlled Congress has also had higher priorities—tax cuts first among them. Early this year, the House reauthorized funding for welfare as Bush had originally proposed, raising to 40 hours weekly the amount of work or training required of recipients. The bill also includes \$300 million for marriage promotion. By late May the Senate Finance Committee, which is responsible for welfare legislation, had not acted on the matter.

More from Marcia Z. Nelson on welfare reform:

[Insufficient funds: When hard work doesn't pay](#)

[Reponding to poverty: A faith-based tool](#)