

Increasing self-sufficiency through policy: Improving health by encouraging work

Robert Doar



Overview

- About 9 million nondisabled adults on Medicaid do not work at all (CEA, 2018)
- Work requirements increase employment and decrease poverty
- Work is good for health
- Medicaid-eligibility verification matters

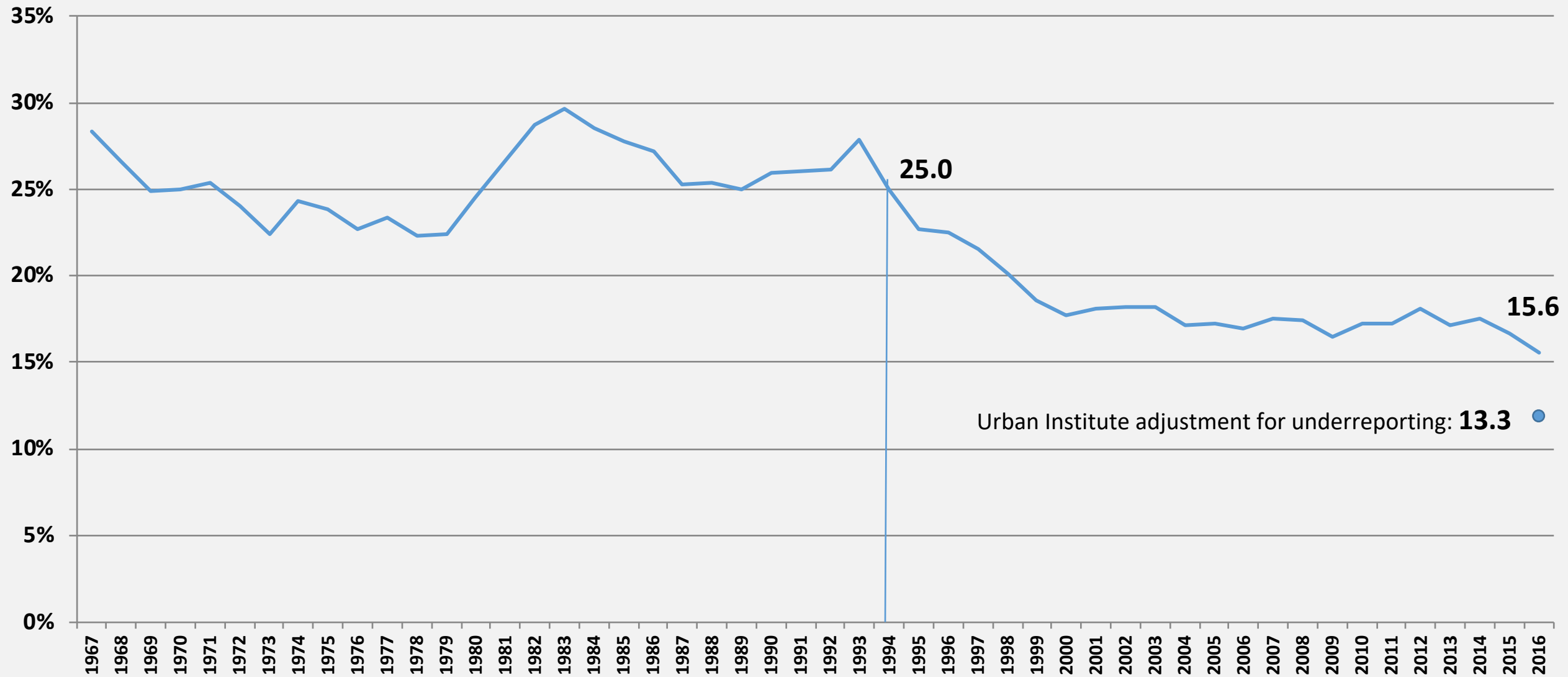


Require work, reward work

- State waivers and Welfare Reform in mid-1990s increased focus on work in AFDC/TANF
- I saw the difference work requirements made in New York
- Data from across the US shows decrease in child poverty



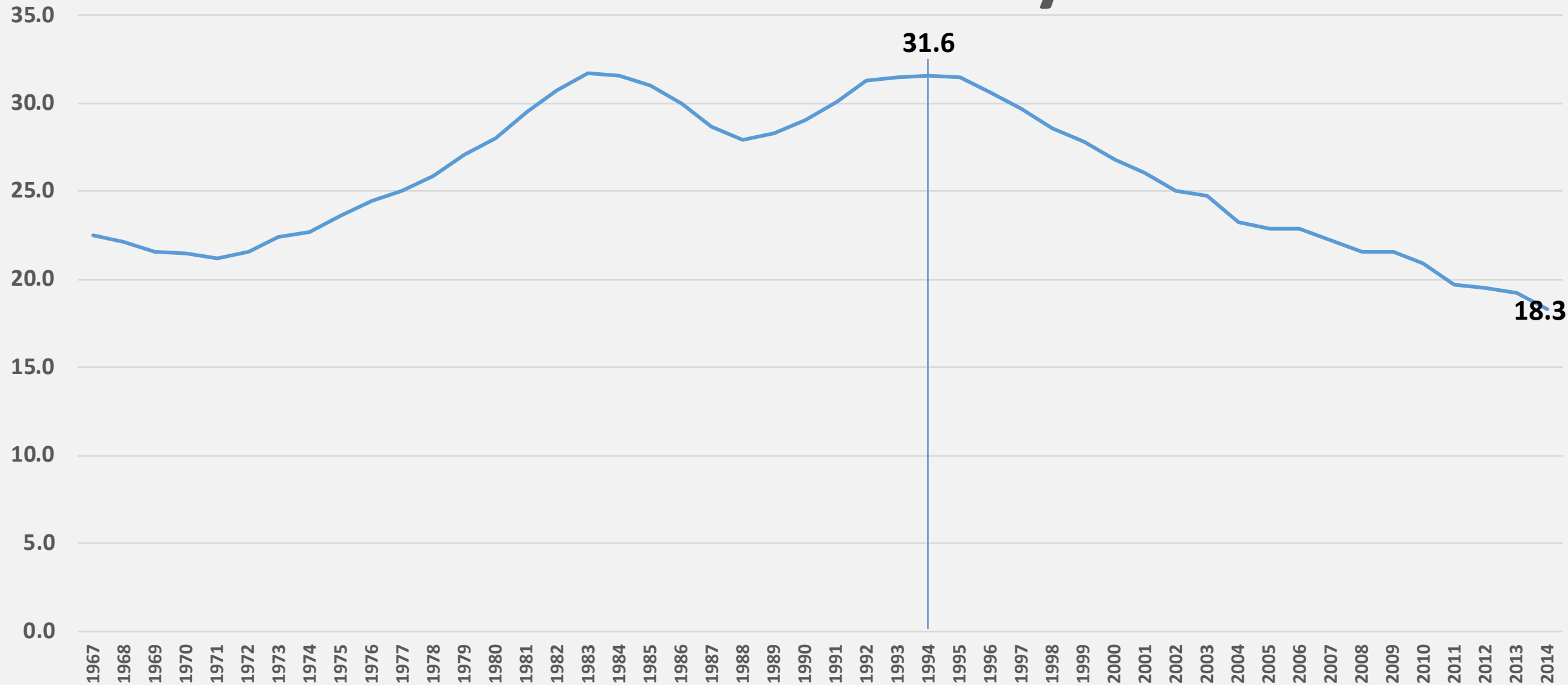
US Child Poverty



Source: Wimer (2017) and Urban Institute TRIM3
Numbers reflect Supplemental Poverty Measure, not adjusted for underreporting



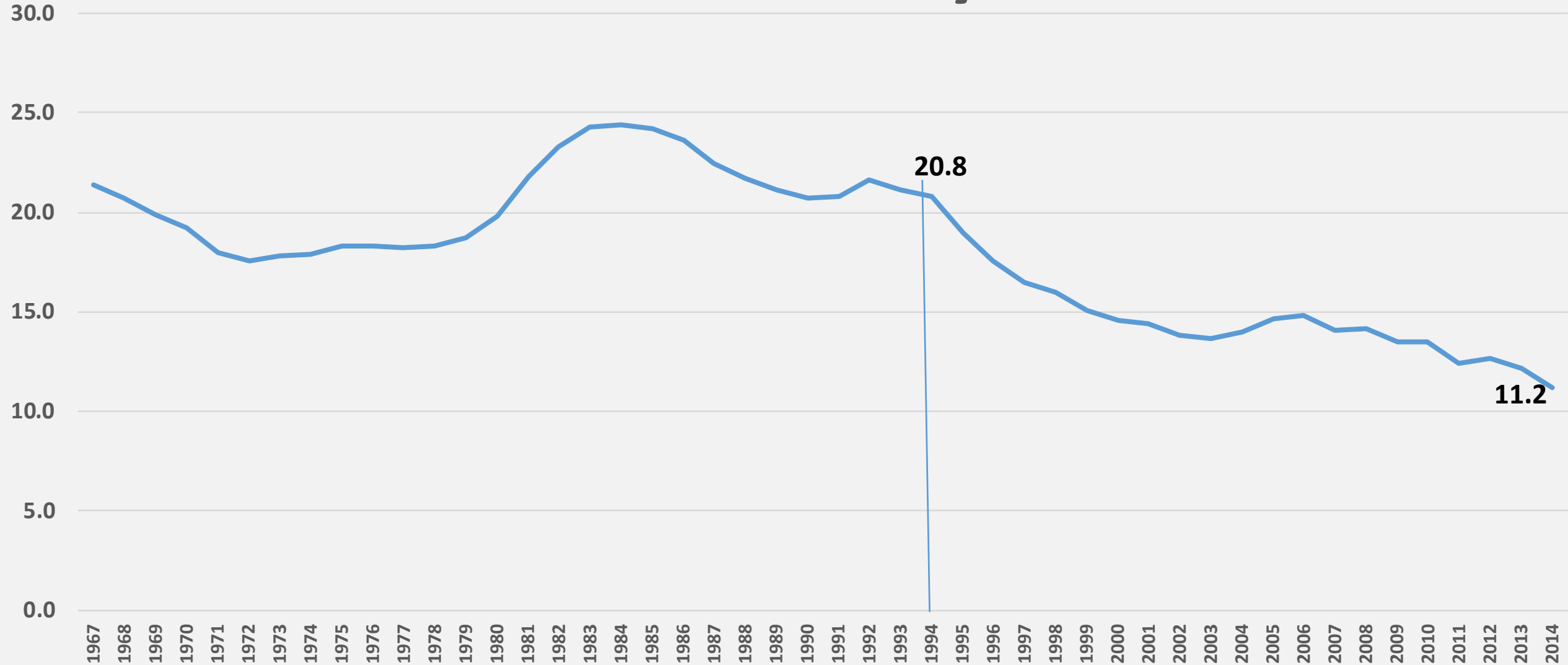
New York Child Poverty Rate



Source: Center on Poverty & Social Policy at Columbia University
Numbers reflect Supplemental Poverty Measure, not adjusted for underreporting



Ohio Child Poverty Rate



Source: Center on Poverty & Social Policy at Columbia University
Numbers reflect Supplemental Poverty Measure, not adjusted for underreporting



Work is good for health

- “Overall, the beneficial effects of work outweigh the risks of work, and are greater than the harmful effects of long-term unemployment...There is a strong evidence base showing that work is generally good for physical and mental health and well-being.” (Waddell and Burton, 2016).
- For those struggling with substance abuse: “Employment is associated with positive outcomes among substance users in treatment and unemployment is associated with relapse” (Wetzler, 2018).



Work requirements can work in a variety of ways

- Many activities can fulfill requirements, for any given number of hours per week
- Case management is key: Expectations and consequences must be clear and certain, and focused on getting recipients into employment



Questions about the Medicaid application/verification process

- What methods of verification are required of program administrators? How does the state run its means test for Medicaid?
- Currently no asset testing for Medicaid eligibility. Does asset testing have a role to play?
- Is self-attestation allowed?

