

# **Policy Considerations for Child SSI Program**

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**“Families with children with disabilities have real needs for additional income - but perhaps that money should be linked to meeting the specific needs of the child’s disability and, where possible, to supporting that child’s transition to productive adult life.”**

Dr. James Perrin, (*Boston Globe*)

[http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2010/12/12/with\\_ssi\\_program\\_a\\_legacy\\_of\\_unintended\\_side\\_effects](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2010/12/12/with_ssi_program_a_legacy_of_unintended_side_effects)

# Overview of Today's Presentation

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- Individual characteristics and outcomes
- SSI program trends
- Policy options



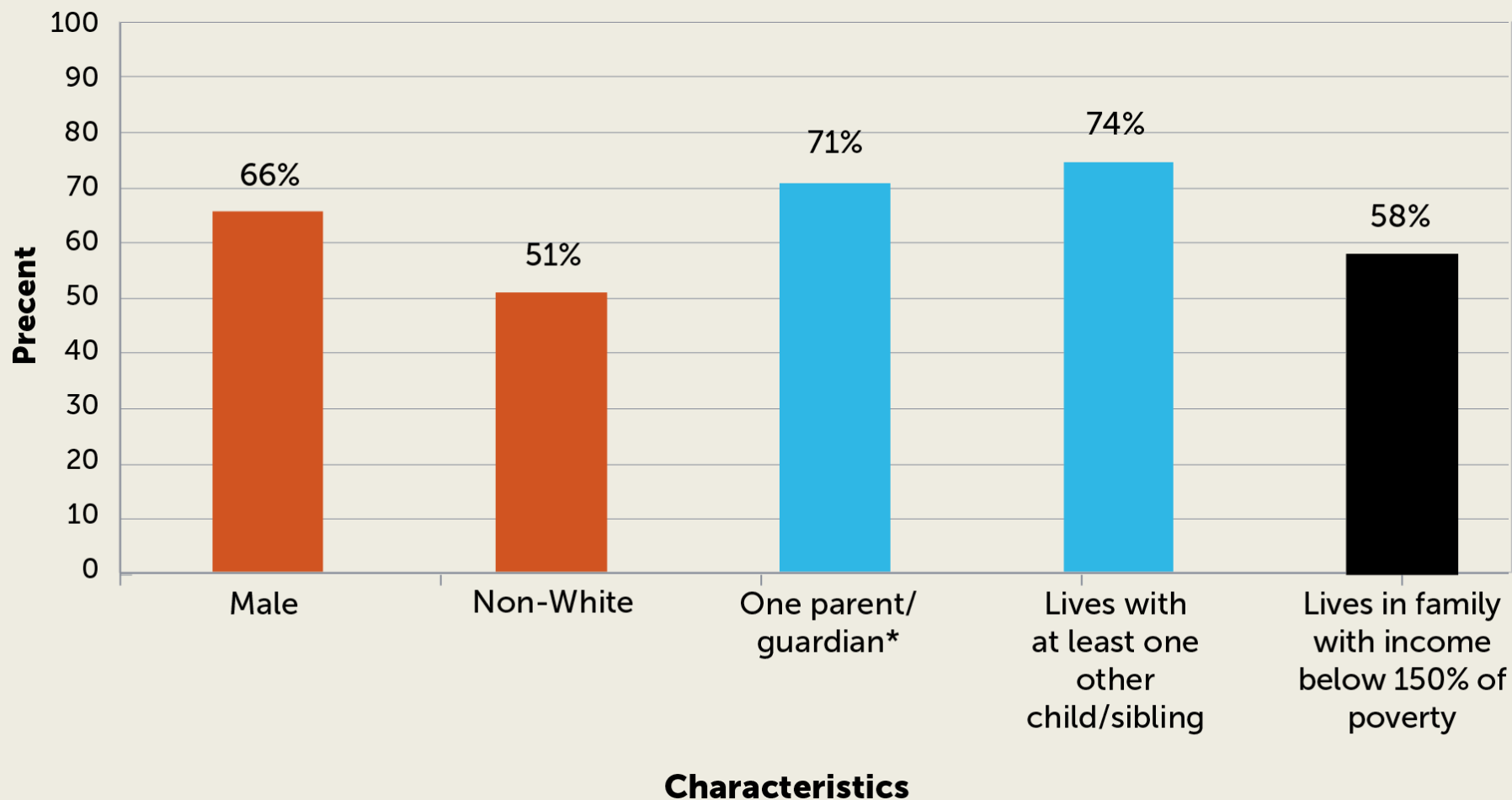
# Individual Characteristics and Outcomes



# Implications of Eligibility Requirements

- **Eligibility**
  - Limited incomes and assets
  - Marked and severe functional limitations
  - Few continuing disability reviews (CDR)
  - Age 18 redetermination
    - Redetermined under adult criteria
- **Implications**
  - Program focus on youth's disability
  - Targets low-income families
  - Potential adverse incentives for parents to invest in human capital development

# Characteristics of Child SSI Recipients



Sources: Except for single parent, characteristics from 2010 child SSI recipients reported in Stegman-Bailey and Hemmeter 2014; Single parent data from 2001 child SSI recipients reported in Davies et al. 2009

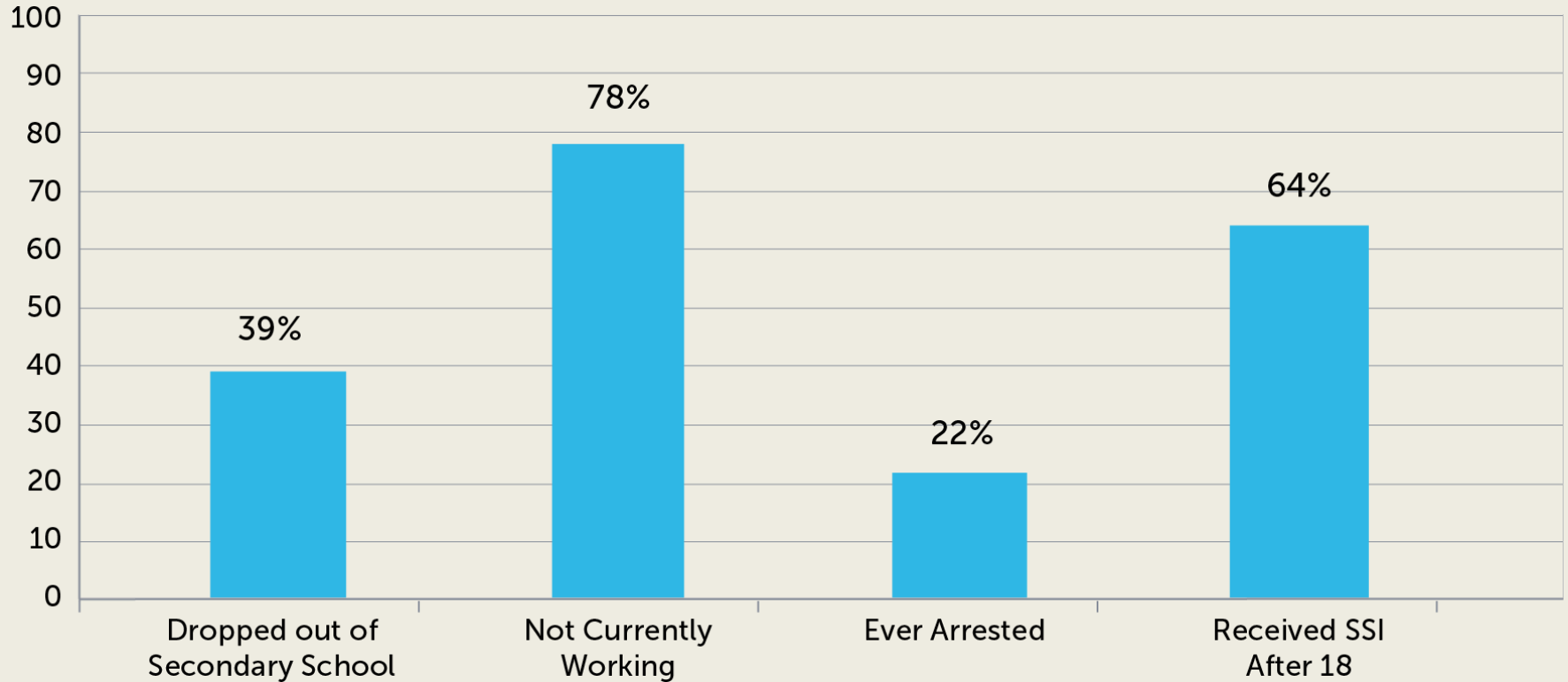
# SSI's Important Contribution to Family Income

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- SSI represents half the income for the family (Davies et al. 2009)
- 340,000 additional youth would live in poverty without SSI benefit added to family income (Stegman-Bailey and Hemmeter 2014)



# Former Child SSI Recipients (Age 19–23)



## Poor outcomes reflect multiple factors

- Fragmented system of supports
- Severe health conditions
- SSI disincentives

Source: Wittenburg (2011)

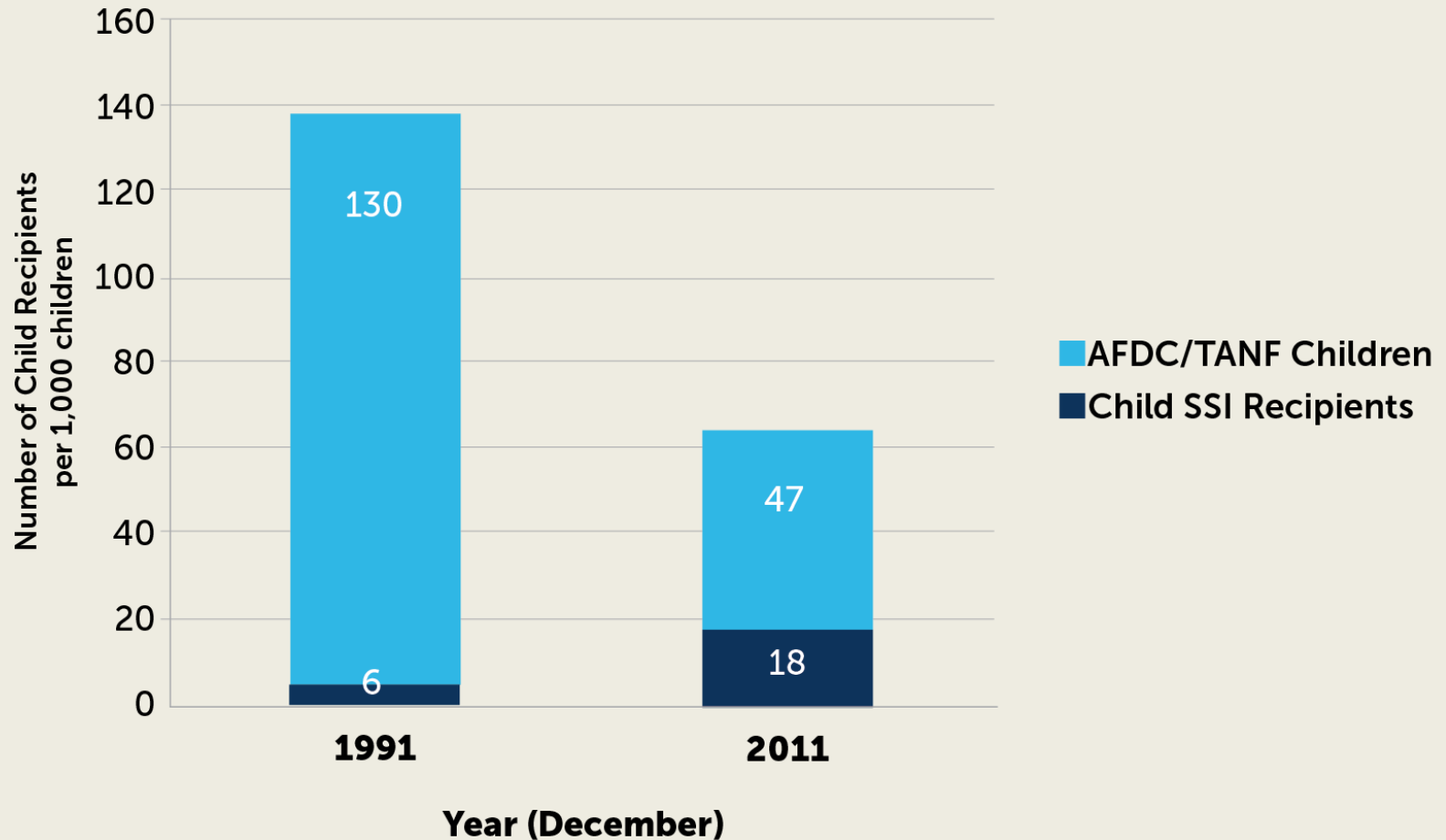


# SSI Program Trends



# Major Shift in Supports to Low-Income Families

## Number of Child SSI and Child AFDC/TANF Recipients Per Thousand



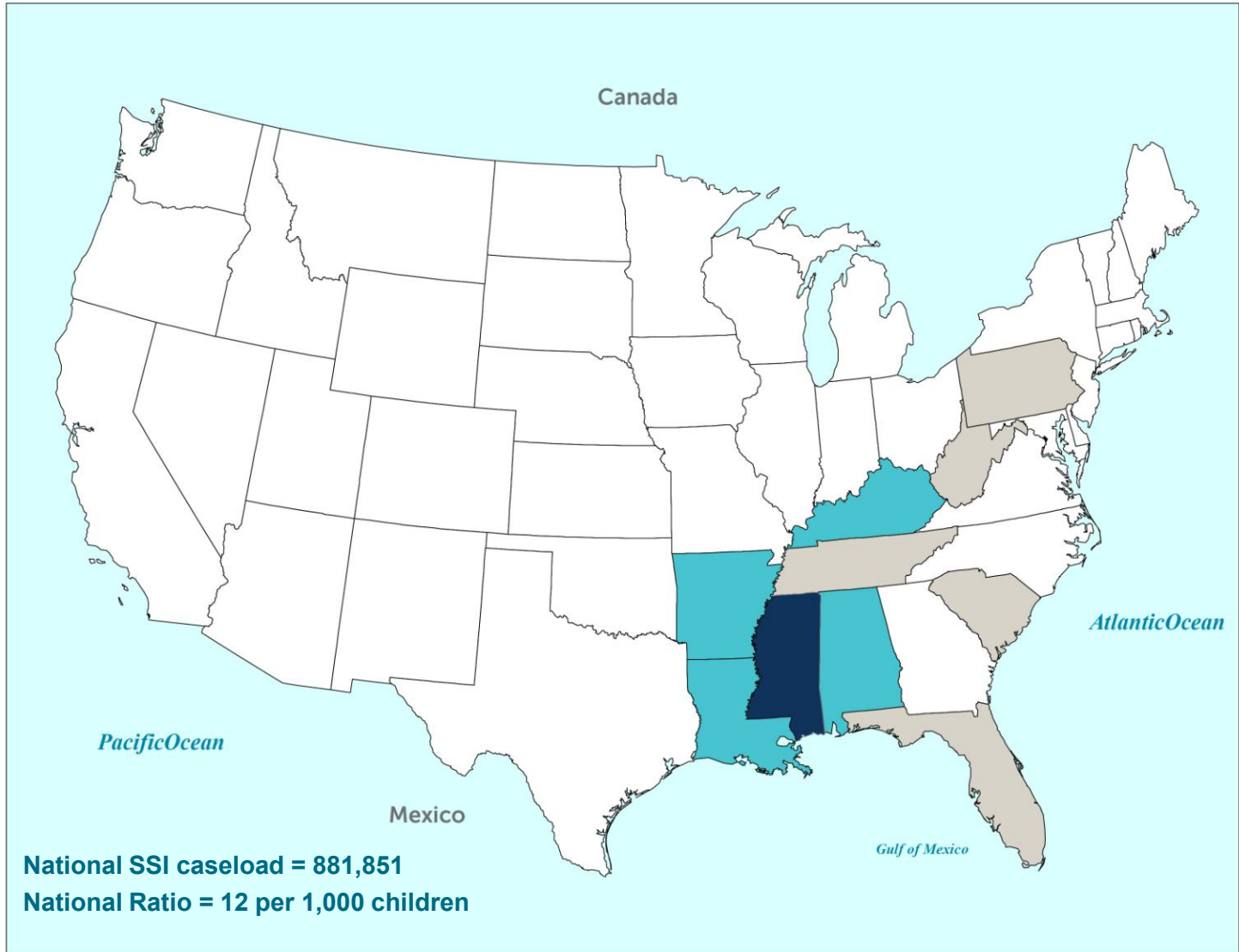
Source: Calculations based SSA and TANF administrative data from ASPE-HHS, Crouse (2013)

# Child SSI Recipients to Children by State, 2001



State Ratio of Child SSI Recipients to Children, 2001

- < 1.5%
- 1.5–2.0%
- 2.0–2.5%
- >2.5%

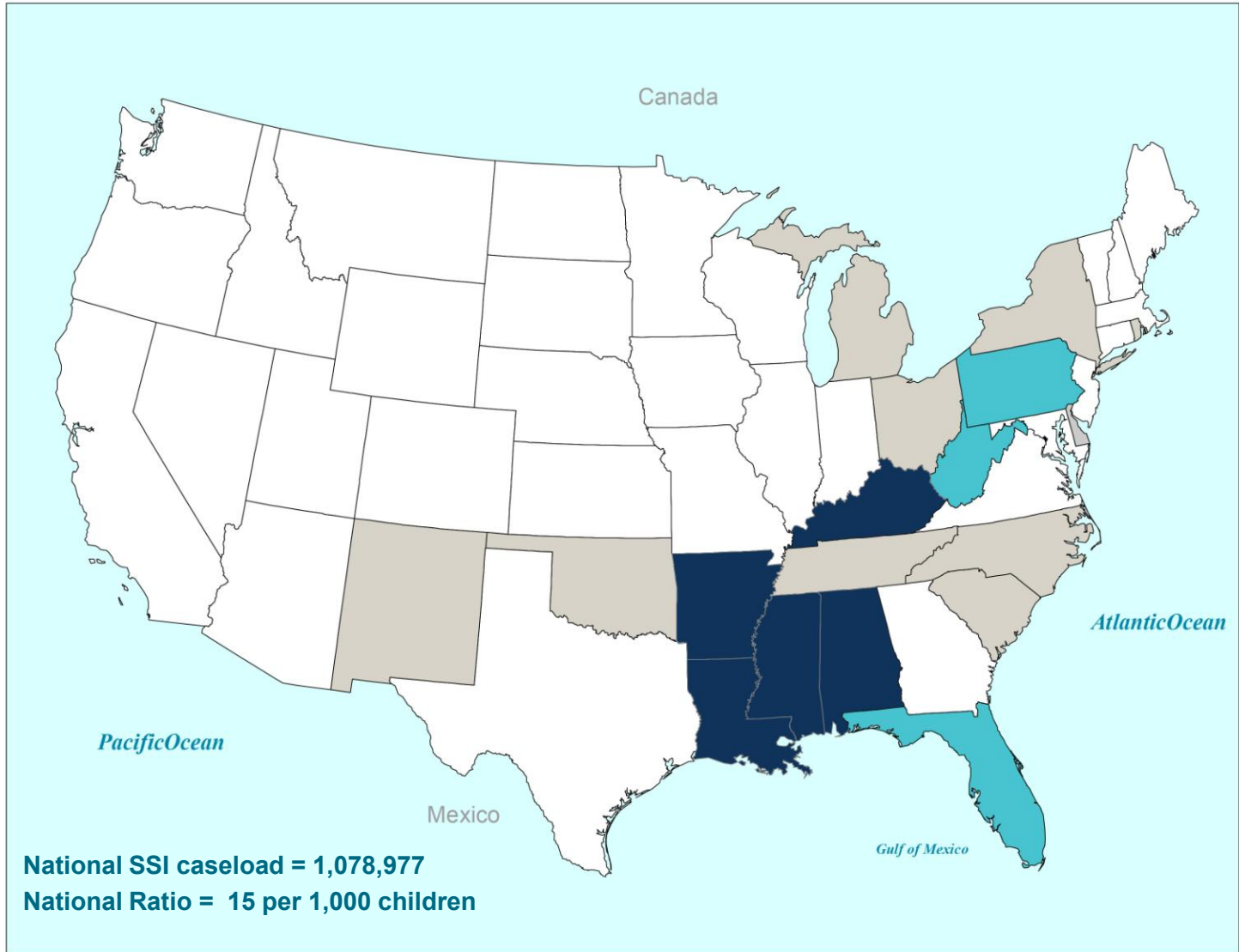


Source: Calculations based SSA and TANF administrative data from ASPE-HHS, Crouse (2013)

# Child SSI Recipients to Children by State, 2006



State Ratio of Child SSI Recipients to Children, 2006

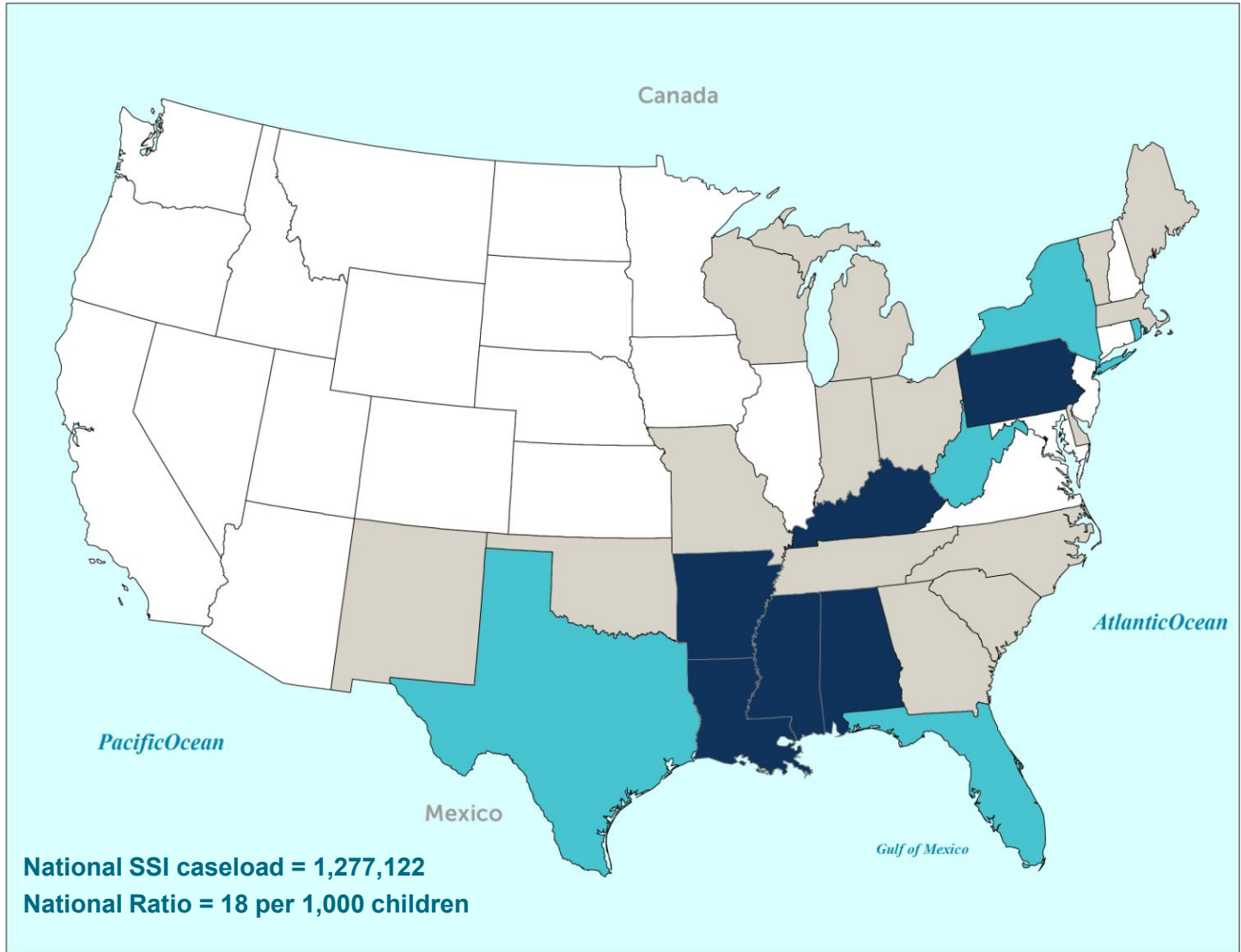
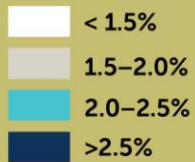


Source: Calculations based SSA and TANF administrative data from ASPE-HHS, Crouse (2013)

# Child SSI Recipients to Children by State, 2011



State Ratio of Child SSI Recipients to Children, 2011



Source: Calculations based SSA and TANF administrative data from ASPE-HHS, Crouse (2013)



# Policy Considerations



# Considerations in Developing Policy Options

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- **Heterogeneity of youth and family needs**
  - Balance poverty reduction goals and long-term human capital of youth
- **SSI role in the safety net varies substantially by state**
- **Lessons learned from demonstrations**
  - Customization of interventions to outcomes (e.g., job development)
  - Identifying well defined target populations

# Potential Directions: SSI Policy Options

- **Test options that focus on youth outcomes**
  - **Strengthen work incentives**
    - **Interventions: Youth Transition Demonstration and PROMISE**
    - **Incentives: enhancing return to work**
  - **Test alternative benefit paths based on youth's needs**
    - **Recognize that youth's needs change from adolescence to adulthood**
      - **One example: WID's Career Building Access Pilots for Youth**
      - **Several other options**



# Potential Directions: State options

- **State options to integrate SSI with other programs**
  - Recognize that SSI is part of broader safety net
  - Focus cash benefit options to meet low-income family's need's
  - Integrate other supports (e.g., education) so that youth can achieve long-term goals
- **Important caveat**
  - **State capacities to provide services differs substantially**
    - States should test and demonstrate capabilities
    - E.g. SSI might be stronger than current state options

# References

Crouse, Gilbert (ASPE-HHS). “SSI Child Reciprocity’s Association With Child Poverty, Unemployment, and Adults Not Employed: A County-Level Analysis” Presented at National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics 53rd Annual Conference , Chicago, Illinois . August 18 - 21, 2013

Davies, Paul S., Kalman Rupp, and David C. Wittenburg. “A Life-Cycle Perspective on the Transition to Adulthood among Children Receiving Supplemental Security Income Payments.” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 30, 2009, pp. 133-151.

Stegman, Michelle and Jeffrey Hemmeter. “Characteristics of Noninstitutionalized DI and SSI Program Participants, 2010 Update.” *Research and Statistics Note*, 2014,

# For More Information

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# Acknowledgements

A woman with glasses and a dark top is sitting on a star-patterned rug, reading a book to a group of children. The children are also sitting on the rug, looking towards the woman. The scene is indoors, possibly in a classroom or a library. The image is faded and has a red border.

❖ Pictures provided from the Boston Guide Series, SSI: The Other Welfare and from TransCen YES model program experience in Vermont.

# Change in State SSI Caseload Growth

