

**THE REAL WEALTH OF NATIONS  
PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVE**

**SAMPLE FACT SHEET ON THE UNITED STATES**

While specific metrics for Real Wealth Impact Statements (RWIS) have still to be developed, many metrics are already easily available. Here are examples of international metrics for the United States that can be used as *base lines*:

**Health**

- **Infant mortality rates:** The United States ranks 44<sup>th</sup>, behind every industrialized nation and behind much poorer nations such as Andorra, Malta, and Cuba, according to the 2008 CIA Fact Book (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2091rank.html>).
- **Maternal mortality rates:** The United States ranks 41st, behind much poorer nations, according to UN analysis of maternal mortality rates in 171 countries (<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=39642>).
- **Health care costs:** The United States spends much more on health care than any other industrialized country, according to a study of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported in Health Affairs, 24, no 4 (2006): 903-914 (<http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/24/4/903>)
- **Health care delivery recipient satisfaction:** The United States ranks behind Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, according to the Commonwealth Fund 2004 International Health Policy Survey of Primary Care in Five Countries (<http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/21/3/182>).

**Families**

- **Teenage pregnancy rates:** The U.S. has the highest teen pregnancy rates in the industrialized world, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, with 8 in 10 of these pregnancies unintended and 81 percent to unmarried teens. (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/12504-teen-pregnancy-rates-usa/>)

**Education**

- **Early Childhood Education:** The Save the Children early childhood development "report card" comparing 25 wealthy nations on how they meet 10 key benchmarks of early childhood development shows that Sweden meets all ten, Finland, Denmark, France, and Norway meet eight, and the United States only meets three. (<http://www.savethechildren.org/newsroom/2009/sweden-first.html>)

## Workplaces

- **Paid parental leave:** Of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, only the United States does not provide for paid parental leave. Many lower-income nations also have paid parental leave. Costa Rica and El Salvador, for example, provide for three months leave after a baby is born, at 80 percent and 70 percent of pay respectively. (Ariane Hegewisch and Janet C.Gornick, “Statutory Routes to Workplace Flexibility in Cross-National Perspective,” Washington DC: Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 2008).

## Democracy and Equality

- **Representation of women in national legislatures:** The U.S. ranks 66<sup>th</sup>, according to Emily’s List, “Women in Office Make a Difference,” 2007. ([http://www.emilyslist.org/assets/news/resources/women\\_in\\_office.pdf](http://www.emilyslist.org/assets/news/resources/women_in_office.pdf))

## Other Quality of Life Measures

- **International comparison of military spending:** The U.S. is responsible for 45 per cent of the world total military expenditures, distantly followed by the U.K., China, France, and Japan each with 4 to 5 per cent of the world share, according to chapter 5 of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)’s 2008 Year Book on Armaments, Disarmament and International Security for 2007 (<http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending>)
- **Poverty levels:** The U.S. had the highest overall poverty rate (17.0%) of the 17 OECD countries where data was available. Australia (14.3%), Italy (12.7%), the United Kingdom (12.5%), and Ireland (12.3%) had the next highest poverty rates after the US, according to the *International Comparisons* chapter of The State of Working America 2004/2005 ([http://www.epi.org/page/-/old/books/swa2004/news/swafacts\\_international.pdf](http://www.epi.org/page/-/old/books/swa2004/news/swafacts_international.pdf)).
- **Child and elder poverty levels:** The U.S. had the highest child poverty rate (21.9%) of industrial nations and the second-highest elderly poverty rate (24.7%). Finland (5.4%), Norway (6.4%), and Sweden (6.5%) had the lowest overall poverty rates, according to the *International Comparisons* chapter of The State of Working America 2004/2005 ([http://www.epi.org/page/-/old/books/swa2004/news/swafacts\\_international.pdf](http://www.epi.org/page/-/old/books/swa2004/news/swafacts_international.pdf)).

**These are sobering statistics that must be brought to the attention of policymakers and the American public. They demonstrate the urgent need for reassessing U.S. government policies and business practices – and hence the urgent need for Real Wealth Impact Statements.**