

Marriage Boosts Prosperity, Helps Children-US Study
Associated Press (Reuters)

Stable marriage can increase the financial prosperity of couples and improves the lives of American children, including those being raised by same-sex couples, according to a report released on Tuesday.

The report by the Brookings Institution and Princeton University showed that while the poor see lack of money as a barrier to marriage, even when they have children out of wedlock, healthy marriage actually ensures them healthier finances in the long run.

"The decline in two-parent families since 1960 has been closely linked with a rise in child poverty, primarily because poverty rates are far higher in single-mother families than in two-parent families," according to the report.

The proportion of single-parent families doubled to 26 percent in 2003 from 12 percent in 1970, according to the report, "The Future of Children," a series of articles on marriage and children.

Children already being raised by same-sex couples can also benefit when those couples marry, the study suggested.

"First, marriage may increase children's material well-being through such benefits as family leave from work and spousal health insurance eligibility," the report said. "Second, same-sex marriage may benefit children by increasing the durability and stability of their parents' relationship."

The report comes as the Bush administration proposes some \$1.5 billion in spending over the next five years on marriage programs and as the debate over same-sex marriage hits a fever pitch.

The study stressed the need for educational initiatives that could help with relationships and parenting, saying this can help reduce divorce, domestic violence and single-parent child-rearing.

At a forum on the report, panelists urged the Bush administration and Congress to direct more funding toward job growth for the poor and minorities.

"Men without jobs do not form families," said Eleanor Holmes Norton, the Washington, D.C., delegate to the House of Representatives.