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Contact: John Rankin, 202-224-4208

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## **BROWNBACK STUDY: EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE ARE BEST ROUTES TO SUCCESS**

*Income inequality study shows that marriage and education play key role*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Sam Brownback today released a study on income inequality showing that marriage, work and education play the largest role in distinguishing earners at both ends of the income spectrum.

“America’s economy has generated real gains for people across the entire income range, and most evidence indicates that our economy provides many opportunities for people to move up the scale,” said Brownback. “Getting a college education, holding a job and forming a family through marriage are three key factors that distinguish high-income households from those at lower ends of the economic spectrum. Federal policy designed to address income inequality should focus on improving education and removing obstacles to work and marriage, rather than harming economic growth, job creation and our standard of living by increasing taxes.”

The study found that education levels are the single best explanation for why some households have more income and wealth than others. Additional differences between the highest and lowest income groups include age, as households in the highest income group tend to consist primarily of workers in their peak income years, and marriage, as married families are more economically secure than unmarried families.

Common measures of income inequality paint a misleading picture by evaluating households only by cash income, which results in comparing households with striking differences in size, age and number of active workers. A more comprehensive approach would compare total after-tax income, including public benefits, among households equal in size and labor force participation.

Under this approach, a Heritage Foundation study estimated that households in the highest 20 percent of the adjusted-income distribution receive about \$3 for every \$1 received by households in the lowest 20 percent, rather than the roughly \$14 to \$1 ratio indicated in the commonly-used U.S. Census measure of income inequality.

The ten-page report, prepared by the Senate Republican staff of the Joint Economic Committee, is available online at:

<http://jec.senate.gov/republicans/index.cfm?FuseAction=Studies.Home>

Brownback is the Senior Republican Senator on the Joint Economic Committee.

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