To household of

Dear household member,

In the next few weeks you will receive a call from one of our interviewers asking you to participate in an important study called the **Family Choices Study**, which is being conducted by researchers at Pennsylvania State University. Your household has been randomly selected to be part of a study of life decisions, especially family decisions, and how they affect people’s well-being. We will be talking to people all over the country to determine how they make decisions about having (or not having) children and how these decisions affect and are affected by their work, their relationships, and their well-being.

Most people who have participated find the interview interesting and the questions easy to answer. The telephone survey itself may take as little as 2 or 3 minutes or as long as 35 minutes. Some people will be selected by the computer to answer more detailed questions than others. If you are selected for the longer interview and find it inconvenient to answer the questions in one call, we can easily arrange to have you complete the interview in shorter calls over a period of time.

We are enclosing a $2 bill to provide a small token of our appreciation for the time we are asking you to take for the study. We realize your time is valuable, and we hope this small gesture communicates our sincere appreciation for your cooperation.

We are writing because we have found that many people like to know ahead of time that they will be called. Please show this letter to other people in the household who may answer the telephone when we call. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you can raise them when we call or you can talk to us before we call you. Additional information about the study, the sponsors, and how to contact us is provided on the back of this letter.

We look forward to talking to you and hope you will agree to participate in the **Family Choices Study**.

Cordially,

David R. Johnson, PhD
Survey Research Center
Pennsylvania State University

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1. How was my household selected?

Your telephone number was selected by a computer as a part of a scientifically representative sample of all residents in the United States. The computer selects form a list of all telephone numbers, listed as well as unlisted numbers.

2. What are the questions about?

The questions concern issues important to many people, such as decisions about marriage and having children, social support, overall well-being and quality of life, as well as some basic demographic background questions.

3. What if I don’t want to answer specific questions?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and you may decline to participate with no negative consequences. If you do decide to participate, your responses to the questions will be completely confidential. You may decline to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you may terminate the interview at any time.

4. Why should I participate?

Results from this study may help shape national policy about families. Whether you have no children or two or three, we think you will find the questions are about issues that you have thought about seriously and that are very important to you. Although the study results will probably not affect your life, we think you will enjoy doing the interview and having a chance to talk about issues important to you. Of course, we will be happy to send you results of our study.

5. Who is responsible for this study? How can I contact them?

The interviews are being conducted at the Survey Research Center at the Pennsylvania State University. The Director of the Survey Research Center is Dr. David R. Johnson, who is also the Penn State Project Director. You may contact Dr. Johnson personally at the research center (office phone 814/863-0170 or email drj10@psu.edu), and you may visit their website at http://www.srri.psu.edu/survey to find out more about the organization.

6. What about my rights as a research subject?

This project has been approved by the Social Science Institutional Review Board of the Pennsylvania State University on February 28, 2005 as meeting appropriate standards for protecting human participants (including maintaining confidentiality). Approval will expire on February 27, 2006. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research participant that we do not answer to your satisfaction, you may contact the Pennsylvania State University Office for Research Protections (814/865-1775).