

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Despite Some Progress, Too Many Mainers are Still Being Left Behind***

*Augusta, ME:* Data released by the Census Bureau last month show that poverty remains stubbornly high. In Maine, 14.1 percent of people (1 in 7) were poor in 2014 – roughly the same number as in 2013 when 14 percent were poor. The child poverty rate also rose, with 19.1 percent (1 in 5) of Maine children living in poverty in 2014 – an increase from 2013 when 17.1 percent of our children were poor.

“In order to cut child poverty in Maine we need to maintain and expand investments in programs with proven success in helping move people out of poverty,” said MaryLou Beaver, director of Every Child Matters in Maine. “Human needs programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) lifted 28,000 Mainers, including 14,000 children, out of poverty each year, on average, during 2011 to 2013. But if Congress does not act, funding cuts scheduled to take effect this fall will threaten to leave more Maine children and their families behind.”

Today *Every Child Matters in Maine* and the *Coalition on Human Needs* are releasing a report (attached) based on the Census Bureau data. Every Child Matters in Maine reached out to our four Members of Congress for their reaction to this report. Only Congresswoman Pingree responded by our deadline.

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree: “*This report makes it clear that we need to fight poverty and economic inequality on many levels. In Washington and Augusta we face continued attacks on the programs that make up our social safety net, with dozens of programs cut or eliminated in the last few years. But we also have to focus on a comprehensive approach to the problem of poverty—higher wages for parents, stable housing, greater access to health care and especially access to education at all levels.*”

“Maine continues to recover from the Great Recession, but progress is too slow” said Beaver. “It’s not too late for Congress to change course, however, and end sequestration. Increasing investments in safe and secure housing and to programs like Head Start will give these children a better foundation for success and will benefit Maine and our country as a whole in the future. And Congress can do so without cutting safety net programs like SNAP, EITC, CTC and Medicaid. The choice is theirs’.”

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*Every Child Matters in Maine is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan organization working to make public investments in children, youth, and families a national political priority. For more information visit our website at [www.everychildmatters.org](http://www.everychildmatters.org)*

*The Coalition on Human Needs (CHN) is an alliance of national organizations working together to promote public policies which address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable populations. For more information visit our website at <http://www.chn.org/>*