



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 16, 2014

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For the First Time Since the Great Recession, Poverty Has Declined; But for 45 Million People, Route Out of Poverty Remains Blocked

Coalition on Human Needs Calls on the House of Representatives to Stop Slowing Progress Against Poverty

Editor's note: Executive Director Deborah Weinstein is available for interviews today.

Washington, D.C. After four years of economic growth, low-income families have finally seen a reduction in poverty. Poverty continues to afflict 14.5 percent of Americans, down from 15 percent in 2012. But poverty remains at stubbornly high levels, up from 14.3 percent in 2009, the year the recession officially ended. Children remain the age group most disproportionately poor, with nearly one in five living in poverty (19.9 percent). However, child poverty is down from 2012, with the latest figures showing 14.6 million children poor, compared with just over 16 million in 2012. African Americans continue to experience depression-level poverty: 27.2 percent, with no change from 2012. Poverty for Latinos also continues to be high: 23.5 percent (but down from their 2012 rate of 25.6 percent). ([Summary Table.](#))

“In the face of stubbornly persistent poverty, the House of Representatives has insisted on cutting or eliminating help for the poor,” said Deborah Weinstein, executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs. “Today’s Census report shows that when SNAP/food stamps are counted in the measurement, 3.7 million people are lifted out of poverty. If the House had not pressed for reductions in food stamps, some of which were enacted, more people would have escaped poverty. Unemployment Insurance prevented poverty for 1.2 million people, but fewer were helped than in the past, in part because the House leadership insisted on letting jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed expire, and blocked all efforts to restore help for the jobless.

“Nearly 9 percent of our children are living in a family at half or below the poverty line – well under \$9,500 a year for a family of three. More than four in ten of all poor children are so deeply poor. Every day we allow such deep poverty to persist is a day when barriers to health and success grow harder for a child to overcome. The House leadership must be held accountable for the steep barriers millions of children now face. The House majority has worked to deny food, affordable housing, and jobless benefits to poor families. They have rejected efforts to create jobs parents desperately seek, or to raise the minimum wage so work can lift families out of poverty. At the same time, the House has voted to make permanent hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts for the rich and for corporations, and plan to take some of them up again this week. These tax cuts according to economists create few jobs. But they do worsen inequality. These misplaced priorities are harming millions of children and endangering our future.”

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The Coalition on Human Needs (CHN) is an alliance of national organizations working together to promote public policies that address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable populations. The Coalition’s members include service providers and faith groups, civil rights, religious, labor and professional organizations and those concerned with the well-being of children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities. For more information, please visit www.chn.org.