

Child Poverty in America Is Indefensible

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The Trump administration's proposals on the annual budget, the efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), and restructuring of the tax system all point to a sad and even tragic conclusion. The poor will be poorer, dilapidated towns will continue to crumble, and crime will rise; but worst of all, our underprivileged children will be weaker, suffering from a lack of medical care and malnutrition with little or no prospect for better and brighter tomorrows.

The state of poverty in the United States, particularly among children, is abhorrent and scandalous, putting America, the richest and most powerful country in the world, in a shameful light. Successive American administrations are guilty of outrageous negligence toward poor children and have inflicted incalculable damage to millions who continue to suffer, causing a tremendous loss of human resources and productivity to the country.

The following heart-wrenching statistics demonstrate the magnitude of the problem. One in 11 children, approximately 6.5 million nationwide, live in extreme poverty (an average of \$12,129 per annum for a family of four). One in five infants-to-preschool-aged children (4.2 million) live in conditions of foreboding poverty, compounded by the fact that this age is a time of rapid brain development. Black and Hispanic children are disproportionately suffering from poverty—one in three and one in four respectively—compared to one in eight for their white counterparts. If this is not the result of a colossal failure in the US economic system and its defunct policies, then it is difficult to think what that would be.

There is no part of the country that does not experience intense poverty from which children suffer the most. Here are some samplings: in Boston, MA, the child poverty rate is 26.9 percent. In Marion County, IN, 31 percent of children under 18 live in poverty. In Doña Ana County, NM, the child poverty rate is 39 percent; and in Cameron County, TX, the child poverty rate is a shameful 47 percent.

A more explicit case in point provides a most gloomy picture about the plight of poor children in this wealthy country. The state of Kentucky is such an example of the cyclic and greatly threatening effects of childhood economic deprivation to our general society. With 25% of their child population in poverty, it is common to hear that right down the road from an economically stable community is an area of deep impoverishment and scarcity. These Americans are unable to rely on the support of any community, as they are often assigned a stigma by those more privileged and must hide what little they do have from others who are equally desperate and hungry.

The children of these families suffer from developmental issues resulting not only from malnutrition but also from broken homes, lack of education, and the absence of any stable emotional base. The most saddening truth of the situation is that these children were born

into a mentally, emotionally, and physically oppressive system. A report by a USA Today affiliate, The Courier Journal, found that these children of poverty could be aided by an Earned Income Tax Credit for their families—one of the very programs hit with funding cuts in Trump’s proposed budget.



Source: [MarketWatch](#)

In his inaugural address, Trump stated that

“The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer... Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities... students deprived of knowledge...their success will be our success.”

If this was his pledge, why is he cutting support from the very programs which sustain these ends?

By now of course we have become used to Trump’s hypocrisy and his disdainful policies which set the country backward while subjecting a substantial segment of another generation of youth to hopelessness and deprivation. Instead of giving these millions of destitute children every opportunity to flourish in an open society and contribute to the well-being of their communities, he is stifling their growth and making them permanently dependent on government aid as they continue to struggle in silent desperation.

Many of these children do not finish high school; they wander the streets, jobless and adrift, and end up turning to crime. Tens of thousands are incarcerated for petty theft or other minor misdemeanors. When they leave the prisons, many commit more serious crimes. Their prospect of becoming positive and productive citizens further dissipates. For them, the American dream is a living nightmare which is heightened by Trump’s ill-conceived budget that the Republican-dominated Senate brazenly passed a week ago.

Here is the glaring cruelty of Trump’s budget cuts. Over the next 10 years, \$190 billion is being cut from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), and \$616 billion cut from Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In addition, the cut from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare) is \$21.6 billion. There is a proposed cut of \$40.4 billion from earned-income tax credits and child tax credits.

The Brookings Institution’s analysis of the Graham-Cassidy Bill (which would effectively terminate the ACA) found that around 21 million people would lose health coverage through

2026. It is predicted that his plan to end subsidies for the Affordable Care Act - received by nearly 6 million people (over half of all people who buy insurance through exchanges) in 2017 - will cause premiums to rise for all customers, as well as foist unbearable out-of-pocket costs on low-income Americans.

Under the pretext of correcting fraudulence in such social welfare programs, Trump's plan will eliminate significant funding from children whose lives depend on it.

Even further, his tax plan would greatly benefit the wealthiest Americans, only benefit the middle class modestly, and have no direct impact on the bottom third of the population, keeping the poor, poor, and creating even more poverty.

These notions do not only contradict his promises to lift the downtrodden from their daily misery, but only reaffirm his indifference to the plight of deprived children and his bigoted attitude toward the Hispanic and black among them, who constitute a majority. What most people are unaware of is that according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development rankings of child income poverty rates, the United States disgracefully falls in between Mexico and Lithuania.

Meanwhile, Trump insists on appropriating \$1.5 billion to build a shameful wall along the Mexican border, defying the premise that the country's greatness was made possible because generations of new immigrants contributed so much to the creative and moral fabric of our society.

Even though the final budget and healthcare bill may somewhat be modified by the House, the fact that Trump proposed such deep cuts speaks volumes about his disregard of the most critical segment of the population. Millions of poor children live in families that have little or no means to improve their lot, which has a significant impact on their growth and character. Here is where the billions of dollars should be invested, which could make a real difference in the lives of our precious children instead of being wasted on useless projects such as the Wall.

It is a choice that Trump and his Republican party which is in disarray must come to grips with. No American child should be left behind. That is something which bipartisan representatives of the American people fought for in 2011, and that is the humane principle that we must defend today.

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