

More than Forty Percent of American Children Are Living in Poverty

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A January 2015 report from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health reveals that forty four percent of children (those under 18) are living in de facto poverty. The Federal Government issues an artificially low annual official poverty level that radically understates the real level of US poverty. For 2015 the official level of poverty for a family of four, for example, is roughly an income \$24,000 a year or less. This is for a family with 2 adults and 2 children.

This income figure, however, does not reveal the true level of poverty in the US The National Center for Children in Poverty, located at Mailman, states that it would take twice that amount, or about \$48,000 to cover just the “basic expenses” of a family of four.

Now, any family that can't pay for its basic expenses is a family living in poverty, therefore any such family of four that has a yearly income of less than \$48,000 is, despite what the U.S. government says, poor and living in poverty.

The government likes to make a distinction between “poor” and “low income” but this is just a semantic game to try and hide the true level of economic deprivation Washington is willing to inflict on millions of children in order to avoid comprehensive welfare reform and realistic taxation polices directed at Wall Street and the 1 percent.

These figures for the four person family can be extrapolated across the board to all families of whatever composition to arrive at realistic figures regarding the number of children under 18 who are suffering in poverty. There are over 30 million such children living in poverty.

Scientists have determined that children living in poverty are liable to suffer permanent physical and mental handicaps which children who are not poor will not have to face. This means it is a national crisis when 44% of the nation's children are not getting their basic needs met and face permanent life long damage due to the policies of their own government.

These facts are well known to our elected leaders and other policy makers in the government yet public awareness does not seem high. In the recent televised debate of the Republican presidential candidates, for example, this national disgrace wasn't even mentioned.

Due to the institutional racism perpetuated by the present economic and political system some minorities are disproportionately affected by these figures. According to *Science Daily* over 60 percent of Hispanic, Black, and Native American children are living in de facto

poverty. ["Four in 10 American children live in low-income families, new report shows," SD 1-21-2015]. Reflecting on these figures SD quotes Renée Wilson-Simmons, National Center for Children in Poverty director, as saying "Far too many American children live in economically insecure families, and this serious threat to our nation's future does not get the attention it deserves."

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