

# **POVERTY ISSUE IN THE USA**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Article**

### **US poverty rate hits 15.1%, highest since 1993**

By *Rob Lever* | AFP – 18 hrs ag, September 14, 2011

The US poverty rate rose in 2010 to 15.1 percent, the highest since 1993, according to census data showing a record number of Americans classified as poor and highlighting a struggling economy after the end of the Great Recession. The Census Bureau report released Tuesday showed a sharp increase in the poverty rate from 14.3 percent in 2009, and a fourth consecutive rise in the number of people below the poverty line, to 46.2 million. The number of people living in poverty was the highest since data collection began in 1959, although the rate was 7.3 percentage points lower than in 1959.

The US definition of poverty is an annual income of \$22,314 for a family of four, and \$11,139 for a single person in 2010. The survey showed struggles for the rest of Americans, with median annual household income falling 2.3 percent to \$49,445. The Census Bureau also said the number of people without health insurance coverage rose to 49.9 million in 2010 from 49.0 million in 2009, while the percentage without coverage -- 16.3 percent -- was not statistically different from the rate in 2009. The census report said there was no "statistically significant" change in inequality between 2009 and 2010 based on its index. The poverty rate for blacks and Hispanics was much higher than for the overall population at 27.4 percent and 26.6 percent, respectively. Among regions, the South had the highest poverty rate at 16.9 percent and the highest percentage without health insurance, 19.1 percent.

The Asian population saw a decline in poverty to 12.1 percent from 12.5 percent a year earlier. The poverty rate increased for children under 18 to 22 percent from 20.7 percent in 2009. The Children's Leadership Council, an advocacy group, called the news "unacceptable in America."

"We are paying the price for child poverty today, and we will pay the price for decades to come," said the organization, calling for lawmakers to avoid further cuts to child welfare. "The rising numbers of children living in poverty is a direct result of the choices made by political leaders who put billionaires before kids," the group said. "America's children should be our top priority." The report, showing the first full year since the recession officially ended in June 2009, supports the notion that Americans have been losing ground economically. It showed real median incomes fell 6.4 percent from pre-recession levels in 2007 and were 7.1 percent below the peak in 1999.

Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said the report shows "the news on economic well-being in the US is not good," and that the trend is likely to continue. "Given the widely accepted projections that both unemployment and in particular long-term unemployment will continue at high rates for the next several years, we can expect this pattern of continuing low income and high poverty rates for many years," Haskins said. "Safety net programs run by the federal and state governments are helping millions of families avoid poverty, but these programs could be subject to cuts at the federal and state level because of continuing deficit and debt problems," he said. "The main message of today's release in income and poverty numbers from the Census Bureau is that if we don't like the way things are now, we better get used to it."

A Brookings analysis shows that the poverty rate is projected to approach 16 percent in 2014, "meaning that the Great Recession will have added nearly 10 million people to the ranks of the poor by mid-decade."

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Article

### Nearly 1 in 6 Americans in Poverty, Census Says

By HOPE YEN Associated Press  
WASHINGTON September 13, 2011 (AP)

The ranks of the nation's poor have swelled to a record 46.2 million — nearly 1 in 6 Americans — as the prolonged pain of the recession leaves millions still struggling and out of work. And the number without health insurance has reached 49.9 million, the most in over two decades.

The figures are in a Census Bureau report, released Tuesday, that offers a somber snapshot of the economic well-being of U.S. households for last year when joblessness hovered above 9 percent for a second year. The rate is still 9.1 percent at the start of an election year that's sure to focus on the economy and President Barack Obama's stewardship of it.

The overall poverty rate climbed to 15.1 percent, from 14.3 percent the previous year, and the rate from 2007-2010 rose faster than for any similar period since the early 1980s when a crippling energy crisis amid government cutbacks contributed to inflation, spiraling interest rates and unemployment. For last year, the official poverty level was an annual income of \$22,314 for a family of four.

Measured by total numbers, the 46 million now living in poverty are the most on record dating back to when the census began to track in 1959. The 15.1 percent tied the level of 1993 and was the highest since 1983.

Broken down by state, Mississippi had the highest share of poor people, at 22.7 percent, according to calculations by the Census Bureau. It was followed by Louisiana, the District of Columbia, Georgia, New Mexico and Arizona. On the other end of the scale, New Hampshire had the lowest share, at 6.6 percent.

The share of Americans without health coverage rose from 16.1 percent to 16.3 percent — or 49.9 million people — according to Census Bureau revisions. The increase was due mostly to continued losses of employer-provided health insurance in the weakened economy.

Congress passed a health overhaul last year to address rising numbers of the uninsured. While the main provisions don't take effect until 2014, one aspect taking effect in late 2010 allowed young adults to be covered under their parents' health insurance until age 26.

The uninsured rate for adults 18 to 24 actually declined last year, from 29.3 percent to 27.2 percent, noted Brett O'Hara, chief of the Health and Disability Statistics branch at the Census Bureau. That was the only age group that posted a decrease, and he said "the law change certainly could be a factor."

For last year, the median — or midpoint — household income was \$49,445, down 2.3 percent from 2009.

The poor include Nekisha Brooks, 28, of Fort Washington, Md., who lost her job as a customer service representative for AT&T several months ago in a round of layoffs. Raising five young children, she is now on food stamps and partly leaning on friends and family for help.

"It's hard on the kids," Brooks said, describing how her family has had to cut back on clothing and restaurant outings. "I've been putting in job applications every day and calling around, from housekeeping to customer service to admin or waitresses, but nobody seems to be hiring right now."

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Article

## U.S. Poverty Rate Up, Household Income Down

By ARLETTE SAENZ (@ArletteSaenz), Sept. 13, 2011

An estimated 46.2 million Americans lived in poverty last year, or 15.1 percent, the highest rate since 1993, new data from the Census Bureau released today showed.

Median household income declined at the same time and the number of people without health insurance coverage rose, highlighting the consequences of the recent recession.

The nation's 2010 poverty rate increased 0.8 points from 14.3 percent in 2009, while the percentage of children living in poverty last year rose 1.3 points to 22 percent from the previous year, according to the Census Bureau. The poverty rate also rose for people between the ages of 18 and 64 from 12.9 percent to 13.7 percent.

Since the recession began in 2007, the poverty rate has increased by 2.6 percentage points. The average poverty threshold for a family of four is \$22,314.

Blacks and Hispanics experienced the greatest poverty levels, with the poverty rates among those groups coming in at double the rate for non-Hispanic whites.

The South saw the greatest increase in its poverty rate, rising at double the rate of the Northeast, Midwest and West.

As the poverty rate increased nationwide, real median income in 2010 declined by 2.3 percent from the previous year to \$49,445, according to the Census Bureau.

Black households experienced the greatest decline in median income, while non-Hispanic whites, Hispanics and Asians experience relatively little statistical change. Median household incomes were lowest in the South.

While the poverty rate rose and the median household income declined, the number of people without health insurance coverage rose to 49.9 million, up 900,000 since 2009. But at the same time, the number of insured increased to 256.2 million from 255.3 million.

Nearly 10 percent of children younger than 18 did not have health insurance coverage. Asians saw the greatest increase in the number of people without insurance while Hispanics saw the most people obtaining insurance.

As many young people have struggled to find jobs, 5.9 million young adults between the ages of 25 to 34 are now living with their parents, compared to 4.7 million before the recession. Young adults living with their parents had an official poverty rate of 8.4 percent. Based on their individual incomes alone, however, 45.3 percent of those living with their parents are living at the poverty rate.

The 2010 estimates come one year after the end of the recession and reflect similar trends from previous recessions. The poverty rate increased in the first calendar year after the end of the past three recessions, but the poverty rates decreased the subsequent year for the recessions that ended in 1961 and 1975.

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/poverty-death-sentence-asks-senator/story?id=14508084>