



For Immediate Release:
September 13, 2011

Contact: Roberta Heine, heine@voices.org, 202 380-1781
Terry Haven, terryh@utahchildren.org 801-364-1182

Census: More than One in Five children living in poverty
New child poverty data demands greater investment in America's youth, child advocates say

WASHINGTON – Voices for America's Children, the nation's largest network of multi-issue child advocacy groups, today called for more government action on behalf of America's youth following the release of new Census data showing that the number of children living in poverty rose last year to 16.4 million, or more than one in five.

"As the national poverty rate climbs for the fourth consecutive year, it's clear that we must do more for children and families struggling in the wake of the recession," said Bill Bentley, president and CEO of Voices for America's Children. "Economists have declared the recession over, but it's clear that families still need us to bolster programs like food stamps, unemployment insurance, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and other anti-poverty programs to see them through."

The number of children without health insurance remained steady at 9.8 percent even as poverty increased. Child advocates credited the new health reform law with expanding the number of young adults with coverage as provisions taking effect last fall allowed children to remain on their parents' insurance plans up to age 26.

"We're deeply concerned that children now make up 35 percent of the nation's poor," said **Karen Crompton, executive director for Voices for Utah Children** and Voices member. "The number of children in poverty should alarm policymakers and the public alike, and drive calls for new investment in the programs that keep children safe, healthy and able to succeed." **In Utah, children under the age of 18 make up 42.8% of people living in poverty.**

Child advocates urged the congressional "super committee," convened this fall and tasked with cutting the federal deficit, to spare safety net programs and continue investments in education, health and economic security for children.

"The alarming child poverty numbers coming from the Census Bureau today underscore the urgency of protecting children and families in need. Research shows even temporary poverty has long lasting impacts on children," said Charles Bruner, executive director of Iowa's Child and Family Policy Center and Voices member. "If the congressional 'super committee' proceeds with deep cuts to government support for families, these numbers will only be worse next year."

"There are many long-term risks associated with child poverty, as children living in poverty have a higher risk of dropping out of school, poor health, and poor employment outcomes," said Dr. Robert Sanborn, president and CEO of Texas' CHILDREN AT RISK and Voices member. "It is up to us as a society and nation to change these statistics so our children have every opportunity to succeed."

#

As the nation's largest network of multi-issue child advocacy organizations, Voices for America's Children (Voices) has been on the forefront of every major child policy victory for the past quarter-century. With 62 members nationwide, Voices speaks up for kids, and mobilizes and advocates for public policies to improve the lives of all children, especially those most vulnerable, throughout the United States. Visit us at www.voices.org. Voices is a founding member of the Children's Leadership Council, a coalition of more than 50 leading national policy and advocacy organizations. www.childrensleadershipcouncil.com.