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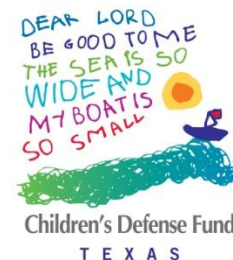
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Children of Texas Continue Slide Into Poverty *Thousands of New Faces of Child Poverty*

Houston, Texas — New state by state poverty data released by the U.S. Census Bureau reveals more bad news for Texas children. The percentage of Texas' children and families living in poverty spiked in 2009 and continued to climb in 2010. In 2010, there were more than 1.75 million poor children in Texas (more than 1 in 4), up 5% from 2009, and more than 655,400 under six years old.

"New poverty numbers released this week paint a grim portrait of Texas children," said Beth Quill, Executive Director of Children's Defense Fund-Texas. "We must not allow poverty to scar our children, and hunger and homelessness to cast dark shadows over our children's future potential. Texans recently emerged from a devastating legislative session for children, and now our Congressional leaders are again deciding the fate of millions of poor children by proposing cuts to important social safety nets. Together we must hold our leaders accountable and demand they protect children in their budget decisions."

Census Bureau data released this week shows:

- Of the 6,800,902 Texas children under age 18, more than 1,751,180 (25.7% or more than 1 in 4) were poor in 2010. Of the 2,283,924 children under age 6, more than 655,400 (or 28.7%) were poor.
- Ten percent of children under 18 in Texas -- 720,680 -- were extremely poor; 284,689 children under six were extremely poor.
- Poverty is defined as an annual income of below \$22,314 for a family of four -- \$1860 a month, \$429 a week, or \$60 a day. Extreme poverty, defined as an annual income of less than half of the poverty level, means \$11,157 a year, \$930 a month, \$215 a week, or \$30 a day for a family of four.
- Texas now ranks 9th among the fifty states in child poverty (1st being the worst), and ranks 17th in extreme poverty.
- The number of poor children in Texas increased by 5 percent between 2009 and 2010. While the percent change for poor young children under six was down 2 percent from 2009-2010, one year prior it had risen by almost 10 percent.
- Child poverty is increasing at the same time as government programs, most of which provide supports for children and the poor were cut by more than \$15 billion (or 8%) in our state. In particular, healthcare for the poor was underfunded by nearly \$5 billion and public education was cut by \$4 billion.

To give perspective on Texas' ranking:

- The number of poor children in the state is now more than the combined populations of Fort Worth, El Paso and Corpus Christi, or greater than the populations of either Dallas or San Antonio.
- The number of poor children under age six in the state is greater than the population of the city of Brownsville.
- The increase in poor children in Texas between 2009 and 2010 was 89,787 -- greater than the entire seating capacity of Houston's Reliant Stadium, and more than twice filling Minute Maid Park.

Children's Defense Fund president, Marian Wright Edelman, asked, "Is this the best America can do? Is this the reflection of our values as a nation? These child poverty statistics are morally and economically indefensible. The toxic cocktail of poverty, family joblessness and stress, food insecurity, lost homes and growing hopelessness are a national human disaster requiring the most urgent response from our political and business leaders in every party and place."

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The Children's Defense Fund's Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.