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Texas Worst in the Country in Uninsured Children while too many Children Still Remain in Poverty

835,000 Texas children are uninsured, and 1 in 5 children live in poverty

Austin, Texas – After years of slow improvement, Texas’s uninsured rate ticked up to more than twice the national average according to new data released by the U.S. Census Bureau, with more than 17 percent of Texans uninsured in 2017. While states that expanded Medicaid continue to see their rate and number of uninsured residents decrease, Texas is heading in the wrong direction with our children dragged along for the ride. We now rank dead last in the country with the most uninsured children – 834,670 (more than 500,000 more than the next worst state) and we have the highest percentage (10.7 percent).

Too many children also remain poor. Despite the appearance of a growing economy, the child poverty crisis continues across the country. The Children’s Defense Fund analysis of new 2017 state data released by the U.S. Census Bureau shows more than 1.5 million Texas children still live in poverty. With 20 percent of our children in poverty, our state’s rate exceeds the national rate (17.5 percent). The Children’s Defense Fund believes no child should live in poverty and all children must be afforded the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Protecting children against the lifelong consequences of poverty will improve their life and reduce child poverty in future generations.

This week’s census data release confirms that Texas is on the wrong track when it comes to ensuring the health and well-being of our children. It's hard to look at painfully slow progress in reducing poverty and serious backslides in health insurance coverage, knowing that lawmakers in Washington and Austin have prioritized tax cuts instead of investing in education, health care, and programs that support families.

Health insurance and programs like SNAP (formerly food stamps) and school lunches support families and help lift children out of poverty. We can see that children are
struggling, yet Congress is working to pull apart the fragile safety net that helps families keep their children healthy and nourished.

“2018 midterm voters are health care voters. A majority of Texas voters have said that health care is a top priority heading into the 2018 midterm election, and that they approve of expanding Medicaid. Every candidate for state and federal office should be telling voters how they plan to reduce the growing uninsured rate. 835,000 uninsured children and 1.5 million living in poverty deserve better than they’re getting from their elected representatives,” said Patrick Bresette, Children’s Defense Fund-Texas’s Executive Director.

Click here for New Children’s Defense Fund Complete Analysis for National Poverty.

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The Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for more than 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children.

The Children’s Defense Fund 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.

CDF provides a strong, effective and independent voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor children, children of color and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown.