

## NEW CENSUS DATA: POVERTY AND UNINSURANCE RATES REMAIN HIGH IN LOUISIANA

### Beauregard Daily News

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DeRidder, La. — September 13, 2011) Poverty has grown in Louisiana and across the country, according to preliminary state Census Bureau figures released today. Approximately one in every six Louisianans, 797,000, lived in poverty in 2009 and 2010. Nationwide, one in seven lived in poverty.

These state figures from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey are preliminary. On September 22, the Census Bureau will release more definitive 2010 state specific data as part of the American Community Survey, which is a larger review.

"Louisiana continues to have one of the highest proportions of people in poverty in the United States. Despite this, the Jindal administration's budget policies focus on cutting taxes and preserving tax loopholes that benefit the well-connected and the well-to-do at the expense of working families," said Edward Ashworth, director of the Louisiana Budget Project. "That makes it harder for these struggling families to get by, and it also undermines the state's ability to invest in education, health care, economic development, and infrastructure that are the building blocks of job creation and economic growth that lift people out of poverty."

Government investment in health care through Medicaid has helped cushion the effects of the recession, particularly for children. Medicaid covered 19.8 percent of Louisiana residents under 65 in 2009-2010, a statistically significant increase from 16.7 percent in 2006-2007. In Louisiana, coverage of children has risen 8.4 percentage points since 2006-2007.

The protective role of Medicaid illustrates the critical importance of implementing the new federal health law. Once in effect in 2014, an additional 32 million people nationwide will gain coverage under Medicaid or through health insurance exchanges as part of the new law.

"We need to step up our efforts to help Louisianans weather the recession – not make it harder. Our state needs to take a balanced approach to budgeting that includes generating additional revenues. Not only will that help struggling Louisianans, but it will improve our economy in the long run," said Edward Ashworth.

Louisiana's recently enacted budget contained deep cuts to education, health care and other services that support struggling families as well as the investments that are the foundations of the state's ability to create jobs and promote prosperity over the long-term. Policymakers will continue to face tough decisions about how to fill budget shortfalls in 2013, and possibly beyond.

Taking a balanced approach that includes revenue instead of a cuts-only approach will be crucial to keeping more families from falling through the cracks as well as maintaining education, health, public safety, and other services that are so crucial to Louisiana's future.

The Baton Rouge-based Louisiana Budget Project provides independent research and analysis of Louisiana fiscal issues and their impact on low and moderate income residents. For more information on the Louisiana Budget Project visit [www.labudget.org](http://www.labudget.org).

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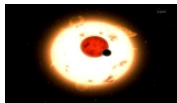
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