

For Immediate Release

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**STATE OF THE UNION MUST CONSIDER THE STATE OF OUR CHILDREN;
LEADING CHILD POLICY ORGANIZATION POINTS TO INCREASING
POVERTY RATES AMONG CHILDREN**

--Organization faults speech for failure to address the real needs of America's children--

To suggest that the state of our union is strong ignores the fact that our most vulnerable citizens—our nation's children—face an increasingly harsh reality. The number of children living in low-income families has been on the rise since 2000. Research conducted by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) shows that on average, families need an income of twice the federal poverty level to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, health care, transportation, and child care. The 2006 poverty level is \$20,000 for a family of four.

“When we examine the state of our union and we look to the future of this country, we *must* include the economic security of our children and families in the equation,” said Dr. Jane Knitzer, Director of NCCP. “It’s disingenuous to talk about access to health care one night and then the following day support a measure to cut funding for Medicaid,” she continued.

Over 13 million children live in official poverty, reflecting a 12 percent increase over the last five years. But the poverty measure, developed 40 years ago, is widely acknowledged to grossly underestimate what families need to get by. NCCP’s analyses indicate that 40 percent of American children—29 million—are growing up in families that lack sufficient financial resources. After years of decline, this number has steadily increased every year since 2000. More than half of these low-income children have at least one parent who is employed *full time*. As real median income continues to fall, as it has each year since 2000, our children are losing ground.

“If we expect to develop a competitive workforce with the expertise and skills necessary to lead this country in the 21st century, then we better get serious about providing the resources needed to help our children develop into healthy, productive citizens,” warned Dr. Nancy K. Cauthen, NCCP’s Deputy Director. “Child poverty is a serious national problem, and we need to start treating it as such,” said Cauthen.

The strength of any country cannot be assessed without appreciation for the realities and hardships faced by our most vulnerable citizens. As more and more hard-working families struggle to make ends meet, any conversation about the key issues facing America must include a serious discussion of how to reverse this unfortunate trend.

To see more information on the state of our children and families, visit www.nccp.org. To schedule interviews or to speak with someone from the National Center for Children in Poverty, call Mike Morey at 914-833-7093 or mmorey@douglasgould.com.

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and policy organization at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Our mission is to use research to identify and promote strategies that prevent child poverty in the United States and that improve the lives of low-income children and families.