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Census To Shine Light On Rising Child Poverty *Coming Data Demand Officials' Attention*

LANSING – New Census data to be released this week showing rising child poverty in 2010 should sound an urgent alarm for Congress and Michigan's Legislature to act now to invest wisely in kids who need the most help.

Thursday's coming release of the American Community Survey follows last week's Current Population Survey, and will offer more definitive data on specific demographics. All indicators raise expectations that the data will shine a beacon on the increasing struggles our children faced last year and the perilous position in which government cuts are placing our most vulnerable youngsters whose health, education, safety and very futures depend on decisions being made right now.

The data come at an opportune time as federal lawmakers debate program spending and a Congressional super-committee reviews ways to reduce the federal deficit. Michigan with such high unemployment and growing poverty, holds a powerful position with two members on that committee. Letters sent earlier this month by Michigan's Children to Reps. Dave Camp and Fred Upton implored them to prioritize children and families in their recommendations to Congress.

"Data don't lie: our kids are hurting, and with our state's and nation's limited resources we must invest wisely and put the money where it will have the greatest impact," said Jack Kresnak, President & CEO of Michigan's Children.

Recent Census data show the percent of children living in Michigan families with earnings less than the federal poverty level increased by 64 percent in the past decade with nearly one out of four Michigan children living in poverty. This increase in child poverty was fully three times the national average.

Among those most vulnerable are children of color, who are more likely to live in deep poverty and who also make up one of Michigan's fastest growing demographics. "Michigan's Changing Demographics and the Future", a new report from Michigan's Children, lays out some of the challenges Michigan faces with this population shift and the wide inequities among the races and ethnicities that will become even more pronounced and problematic in coming years as our state becomes more diverse. Among them:

- An African American baby born in Michigan is three times more likely to die before his first birthday than a White baby.
- More than half of African American children and 44 percent of Hispanic/Latino kids under age 5 live in poverty, compared to 19 percent of White children.
- White children have doctor visits twice as often as children of color, receive higher quality care and are less likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes.
- Racial and ethnic disparities in educational achievement in Michigan are among the worst in the nation, with African American and Hispanic youths more than twice as likely as White students to drop out of school. In Detroit, half of African American males do not graduate high school in four years.

"We have to act now to help right this sinking ship," Mr. Kresnak said. "We can't cut spending under the name of 'protecting our children's future' and then cut the very same programs kids need to ensure that they even have a future – education, health care, nutrition and other anti-poverty programs."

Mr. Kresnak and policy staff from Michigan's Children will be available this week to assist reporters in analyzing the ACS data and its implications. Please call (517) 485-3500 to set up an interview.

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*Michigan's Children is a statewide, independent voice for children and their families.
We work with lawmakers, business leaders and communities to make Michigan a place where all children have the opportunity to thrive.*