

LEGAL **momentum**
The Women's Legal Defense
and Education Fund

For Immediate Release

Contact: Timothy Casey
646-281-0218 and tcasey@legalmomentum.org

TOO LITTLE PROGRESS: LEGAL MOMENTUM ISSUES REPORT ON 50 YEARS OF THE “WAR ON POVERTY”

New York, NY (January 7, 2014). Tomorrow is the 50th Anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson's declaration of the “War on Poverty.” To mark the occasion, Legal Momentum has issued a report assessing the progress that has been made since that time.

The report, by Timothy Casey, senior staff attorney and director of Legal Momentum's Women and Poverty Program, concludes that there has been too little progress in ending poverty since President Johnson's declaration of the war on poverty in his January 8, 1964 [State of the Union Message](#). Over one-seventh of Americans—more than 46 million people—still are poor. Recent poverty rates are among the highest since the declaration of a war on poverty. Women, children, Blacks, and Hispanics are still disproportionately poor. Without public benefits, many more would be poor. The U.S. has an exceptionally high relative poverty rate among high-income countries, at least in part because our public benefits do less to reduce poverty. Official poverty measurement does not capture the sizeable gains in health care coverage for the poor since the 1960s, but health care coverage in the U.S. still falls far short of the universal coverage that is now standard in other high-income countries.

To measure progress in the war on poverty, the federal government created an official poverty measure that has been used since the 1960s to calculate official poverty rates. Legal Momentum uses this and other measures to analyze and report on the issue of poverty in the U.S.

The full report, titled *Too Little Progress: Reflections on Poverty in The U.S. on The Fiftieth Anniversary of President Johnson's Declaration of a War on Poverty*, is available online at <http://www.legalmomentum.org/resources/reflections-poverty-50th-anniversary-declaration-war-poverty>, or by contacting Timothy Casey at tcasey@legalmomentum.org.

About Legal Momentum

Legal Momentum is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1970 to advance the rights of women by using the power of the law and creating innovative public policy in three broad areas: economic justice, freedom from gender-based violence and equality under the law. Legal Momentum advocates for policies that mitigate and reduce poverty.