

Good morning everyone.

My name Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. I am honored to be here today on behalf of New York's 14th district.

First, I want to thank Chairman Connolly for participating in this week's historic series of hearings to examine the Trump Administration's proposed regulations on poverty.

Ending poverty should **not** be a partisan issue. Today's hearing is one of the first steps to creating a **just society** for all people, specifically our children. When we recognize how many Americans are living in poverty, we can start to address some of the more systemic issues in our economy and grow together. Recognizing poverty, in its truest form, allows us to do our jobs as Representatives to create a future for our children rather than burdening our communities with financial debts and lack of opportunities.

Right now, we are facing a time of extreme economic justice in America. We are at our richest point and we are at our most unequal.

About 40 million Americans live in **recognized** poverty today, that's **1 in 10**.

18.5 million Americans live in recognized **extreme** poverty.

5.3 million Americans live in recognized **absolute** poverty.

I say "recognized" because these numbers only reflect what the government sees as poverty, not what families are experiencing around the nation. **Poverty is not just an income number- it is a lived struggle.**

The Trump Administration's proposal to change how inflation is used to define poverty, threatens our most vulnerable community members and future generations.

My constituents are no strangers to poverty. In 2016, Elmhurst and South Corona, Queens faced a 22.3 percent household poverty rate. The Bronx had a household poverty rate of 28.4 percent - 10 points higher than the citywide average.

The Bronx also had the highest child poverty rate at 40.1 percent. However, these numbers do not account for the families that are only a few points over the poverty threshold and struggling to make ends meet every day.

The proposed system under the Trump Administration would leave even more families out of government programs that are critical to their survival. For example, according to Spotlight on Poverty: West Virginia there are 219,470 children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP, 137,000 children receiving SNAP, and 23.6 percent of children are living in poverty. The Trump Administration's proposal would cut life-saving programs for these children and create even larger barriers for children living in poverty.

When we miscalculate and choose to not recognize poverty in the world we live in today, we are ignoring the necessary cost of living, the cost of food, the cost of the internet and more.

My bill, the Recognizing Poverty Act, requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, to work with the National Academy of Sciences to change the poverty line, adjusting for family size and geographic differences in the cost of goods and services.

That is why we must look at where our children live and what they need.

Under the Recognizing Poverty Act, the poverty threshold would be raised to account for health insurance costs, work expenses, childcare, and consideration of new necessities such as internet access.

In a modern, moral, and wealthy society, no American should be too poor to live.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.