



New Measures Reveal the True Impact of America's Anti-Poverty Programs

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Once again, GOP Budget Chairman Paul Ryan is calling for huge cutbacks in U.S. anti-poverty programs he denounces as unsuccessful. But research using updated measurements reveals that federal benefits and taxes have lifted millions of Americans out of poverty.

Waldfoegel's new SSN Key Findings [brief](#) reports on research she has done with colleagues to develop and deploy an updated measure of U.S. poverty trends, including the impact of federal social benefits and taxes since the 1960s. Last December, this pathbreaking research was [featured in an article by Eduardo Porter](#) in the *New York Times* and also [discussed by Zachary Goldfarb](#) in the *Washington Post*.

A leading researcher focusing on the impact of public policies on child and family wellbeing, [Jane Waldfoegel](#) serves as Professor for the Prevention of Children and Youth Problems at Columbia University and as Visiting Professor at the Center for Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economics. In addition to her work on the proper measurement of poverty, she has probed the impact of economic inequality on school achievement in the United States and other nations.

Waldfoegel is the author of a [previous SSN brief](#) tracking the U.S. safety net for America's families and children over the past half century. Her brief and others were featured in an [October 2013 SSN spotlight](#) highlighting findings from *Legacies of the War on Poverty*, co-edited by Martha J. Baily and Sheldon Danziger and published by the Russell Sage Foundation in the fall of 2013.

To see the full list of briefs by SSN scholars on poverty and anti-poverty programs, [click here](#). And [click here](#) for SSN's spotlight "Dispelling the Mystery of Ryan's Republican Budget Cuts." The 2014 version of the Ryan budget is similar to the previous versions analyzed in the spotlight, and it repeats his longstanding proposals for major cuts in federal anti-poverty programs that would, if enacted, shred America's already tattered social safety net for the poor. Recently, Waldfoegel has [commented critically](#) on Congressman Ryan's misrepresentation of her research and the research of other scholars who have studied poverty trends and the accomplishments of U.S. anti-poverty programs.