



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Rockefeller Foundation & Yale University Political Science Professor Jacob Hacker to Launch the “Economic Security Index” — A New Measure of Economic Risk for American Families

To Be Released: New Statistics on Percentage of American Families with a 25% or Greater Income Loss in 2010

WASHINGTON, DC (July 13, 2010) — The Rockefeller Foundation & Yale University economic security expert Jacob Hacker invite the media to attend the launch of the “Economic Security Index” (ESI). The ESI is the first simple, integrated measure of income insecurity. The ESI launch will highlight new statistics on the percentage of American families with a 25% or greater income loss in 2010 and in prior years.

The presentation of the Economic Security Index will take place from 10:00 – 11:30am on July 22, 2010 at the New America Foundation. The event will be moderated by E.J. Dionne Jr. of the *Washington Post*.

WHAT: Economic Security Index (ESI) Public Presentation

WHO:

- E.J. Dionne Jr. (Moderator), Columnist, *Washington Post*
- Jacob Hacker, Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science, Yale University
- Janice Nittoli, Associate Vice President & Managing Director, The Rockefeller Foundation
- David Gray, Director, Workforce and Family Program, New America Foundation
- Henry Aaron, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, Brookings Institution
- Gary Burtless, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, Brookings Institution
- Robert Greenstein, Executive Director, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

WHEN: Thursday, July 22, 2010 from 10:00 – 11:30am EST

WHERE: New America Foundation
1899 L Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

About the Economic Security Index

The ESI is the first integrated measure of the economic insecurity of American families.

- The ESI measures the percentage of American families who are economically insecure.
- A *higher* ESI indicates *greater* insecurity.

The ESI is both easy to understand and a powerful analytic tool.

- The ESI demonstrates long-term trends in economic insecurity for American families, above and beyond short-term economic fluctuations.
- The ESI examines the differences in economic insecurity across several demographic characteristics, including: Age, Race/Ethnicity, Education Level, Household Income, Household Type

The ESI represents the share of Americans who experience at least a 25 percent decline in inflation-adjusted “available household income” from one year to the next.

- “Available household income” includes all private and government sources of income, including the estimated income value of defined-contribution retirement accounts, such as 401(k)s, for households with heads aged 60 or older.
- Individuals with adequate holdings of liquid financial wealth are not treated as insecure even when they experience 25 percent or greater income losses.
- The ESI includes data from 1985 to 2007, with projections for 2008, 2009 and 2010, and a more limited version of the index available back to the late 1960s.

The ESI was developed by renowned experts on economic insecurity.

- The ESI was developed by Yale University economic security expert Jacob Hacker and a multi-disciplinary research team.
- The ESI team was guided by a technical committee retained by the Rockefeller Foundation and comprised of seven leading experts on economic security, including:
 - Henry Aaron (Brookings Institution)
 - Gary Burtless (Brookings Institution)
 - Henry Farber (Princeton University)
 - Robert Greenstein (President, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)
 - Larry Mishel (Director, Economic Policy Institute)
 - Alicia Munnell (Director, Boston College Center on Retirement Research)
 - Robert Solow (Nobel Prize in Economics, 1987)
- The ESI is part of the “Campaign for American Workers” initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation. The initiative strives to improve economic security among American workers and their families, in part by improving knowledge and understanding among policymakers and thought leaders of the dimensions of American economic security.

About the Rockefeller Foundation

Since its establishment in 1913, the Rockefeller Foundation has sought to identify and attack at their source the underlying causes of human suffering. The Foundation attempts to harness the creative forces of globalization, supporting breakthrough solutions to 21st century challenges. This is smart globalization: ensuring that the opportunities unleashed by globalization are accessible to more people, more fully, in more places -- and that poor and vulnerable people are equipped to seize them. For more information, visit www.rockefellerfoundation.org.

About the Yale University Institution for Social and Policy Studies

The Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS) strives to facilitate interdisciplinary inquiry in the social sciences and research into important public policy arenas. Recognizing that important social problems cannot be studied adequately by a single discipline, the Yale Corporation established the Institution for Social and Policy Studies in 1968 in order to stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration within the university. Through these activities, ISPS seeks to speak to important social science and policy questions, both in the United States and abroad.

About Jacob Hacker

Jacob S. Hacker, Ph.D., is Stanley Resor Professor of Political Science at Yale University, where he is also a Resident fellow of the Center for the Study of American Politics and the Institution for Social and Policy Studies. An expert on the politics of U.S. health and social policy in cross-national perspective, he is the author of five books, including the influential *The Great Risk Shift*, as well as numerous journal articles, and a wide range of popular writings on American politics and public policy, with a focus on health and economic security. He is a frequent media commentator, often testifies before Congress, and has promoted ideas— notably, a proposal to create a public health insurance option competing with private health plans—at the center of American political debate. In 2007, *Details* magazine named him one of 27 “mavericks”—“agents of change who are bending the future to their will.”

About the New America Foundation

The New America Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy institute that invests in new thinkers and new ideas to address the next generation of challenges facing the United States.

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