



2013 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 120

March 19, 2014 – Introduced by Representatives MASON, BARNES, RIEMER, GENRICH, JOHNSON, SARGENT, SINICKI, SHANKLAND, HINTZ, OHNSTAD, ZAMARRIPA, BERCEAU, C. TAYLOR, WRIGHT, HESSELBEIN, GOYKE, KAHL, HULSEY and JORGENSEN, cosponsored by Senators MILLER, SCHULTZ, WIRCH, VINEHOUT, L. TAYLOR and HARRIS. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the War on Poverty in the
2 United States and Wisconsin.

3 Whereas, fifty years ago President Lyndon B. Johnson declared: “This
4 administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in
5 America”; and

6 Whereas, President Johnson stated: “Our aim is not only to relieve poverty, but
7 to cure it and, above all, to prevent it”; and

8 Whereas, President Johnson introduced an Omnibus Housing Act that
9 provided \$8 billion to build low-income housing and provided rent supplements for
10 low and middle-income families; and

11 Whereas, in the decade after the introduction of the War on Poverty, America’s
12 poverty levels dropped by 43 percent; and

13 Whereas, during President Reagan’s administration the most dramatic
14 spending cuts targeted low-income housing subsidies, and in his first year in office

1 President Reagan cut the budget for public housing in half and over the next few
2 years sought to eliminate federal housing assistance to the poor altogether; and

3 Whereas, funding for low-income housing as well as for job training and other
4 programs have never returned to pre-Reagan levels; and

5 Whereas, the national debate has focused on attacking the underfunded safety
6 net programs, which has led to a stagnating effort to fight poverty; and

7 Whereas, at the same time the global economy has undercut the ability of
8 workers to obtain family-supporting jobs and the minimum wage has not kept up
9 with inflation or productivity; and

10 Whereas, our nation is preoccupied by partisanship rather than being
11 dedicated to rebuilding an economy that will minimize poverty through investments
12 in education, job creation, and programs that assist struggling families; and

13 Whereas, in the words of President Johnson, the War on Poverty must include
14 efforts toward “better schools, and better health, and better homes, and better
15 training, and better job opportunities”; and

16 Whereas, this loss of focus on programs that assist and empower the poor has
17 resulted in unacceptable levels of poverty and inequality in the United States today;
18 and

19 Whereas, according to the Center for American Progress, today one in three
20 people in the United States live on the brink of poverty, 70 percent of whom are
21 women; and

22 Whereas, this is the first post-recession recovery since 1970 where women have
23 lost jobs while men have gained jobs; and

1 Whereas, according to the 2014 Shriver Report, households headed by women
2 have a 46.7 percent poverty rate and the poverty rate for children under 18 is 21.8
3 percent; and

4 Whereas, 42 million women and the 28 million children who depend on them
5 are living one economic incident away from poverty; and

6 Whereas, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2011, approximately
7 one-third of all Americans will spend at least two months in poverty in their lifetime;
8 and

9 Whereas, the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that the hardest-hit
10 demographic since the beginning of the recession in 2007 has been single-mother
11 families and families that are dependent on women's wages; and

12 Whereas, the overall poverty rate in Wisconsin is 13.2 percent; and

13 Whereas, today in Wisconsin the poverty rate for children is 18 percent and the
14 poverty rate for women is 14 percent; and

15 Whereas, the percentage of low-wage jobs in Wisconsin is 20.7 percent and
16 more than half of people enrolled in Wisconsin support programs earn less than \$10
17 an hour; and

18 Whereas, the minimum wage in Wisconsin is \$7.25 an hour, and a full-time
19 minimum-wage worker earns an annual salary of just \$15,080; and

20 Whereas, although fifty years have passed since President Johnson declared
21 the War on Poverty, our devotion to alleviating the effects of poverty as well as
22 preventing its fundamental causes has wavered for far too long; now, therefore, be
23 it

24 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the legislature
25 honors President Johnson's commitment to the War on Poverty, and pledges a

1 renewed call to action in pursuing the eradication of poverty in Wisconsin and the
2 United States.

3 (END)