

Siek

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According to a November 2011 report by the nonprofit Feeding America, which includes a nationwide network of some 200 food banks, one in five of America’s children are at risk of not having enough nutritious food to eat. For Hispanic and African-American children, the statistic is one in three.

The prevalence of poverty is higher for minorities – 27.4% of African Americans were living in poverty in 2010, according to Census data. For Latinos, the figure was 26.6%, and for Asians it was 12.1 percent. Nearly 10% of whites lived beneath the poverty line.

Poverty is generally defined as earning \$22,314 per year for a family of four. A person working 40 hours per week at the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour earns \$15,080 per year, gross. According to the National Association of Child

Care Resource and Referral Agencies, childcare alone can cost anywhere from \$3,582 to \$18,773 per year.

An Indiana University white paper released last Wednesday and prepared at the request of Dr. Cornel West and public television host Tavis Smiley, examined the impact of the recession on poverty and near-poverty in America. “At Risk: America’s Poor During and After the

We must rapidly begin the shift from a ‘thing-oriented’ society to a ‘person-oriented society.

When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered

more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.



“Like racism, the problems associated with poverty are like weeds that will spread when left ignored,” said Carson, who has spent most of his professional life studying King’s writings and speeches. “He would remind us that poverty and economic inequities threaten the future of American democracy.”

Great Recession,” concluded that the number of long-term unemployed between December 2007 and June 2009 was the highest since the government began recording such figures in 1948. “By the third quarter of 2011, 4.4 million people (32% of the 14 million people out of work) informed surveyors that they had been without work for more than a year,” the report said.

Using the official federal definition, 15.1% of the population is living in poverty – 46.2 million people. Using a supplemental measure that takes into account the geographical differences in cost of living, the number rises to 16%.

What would King have to say about it?

Kitzhaber

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did when he last addressed a joint session of the House and Senate two years ago. The November election gave Democrats control of the state House with a 34-26 majority after two years sharing power with Republicans.

Rep. Tina Kotek, of Portland, was elected speaker, becoming the first lesbian to lead a state legislative chamber in the United States. She took the oath of office alongside her partner, Aimee Wilson.

Kotek urged her colleagues to listen, not to be afraid of different perspectives and not to shy away from robust but constructive debates.

“All the voices need to be heard, from the most vulnerable to the most well-heeled, if we are to meet our moral obligation to represent and serve all Oregonians,” Kotek said.

Democrats retained control of the state Senate with a slight 16-14 edge. Sen. Peter Courtney, of Salem, was elected to a sixth term as Senate president – a position he’s already held longer than anyone else in Oregon history.

Lawmakers will have a busy calendar when they return next month to formally begin their business.

The economy has stabilized, avoiding the massive budget deficits that lawmakers have faced in recent years. But the costs of providing government services are rising faster than tax revenues, and the Legislature will still have to cut millions in spending to arrive at a balanced budget.

On top of budget issues – including school funding, pensions and prison sentences – lawmakers also will confront environmental issues, transportation funding and immigration issues.

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM



Willie's Lovers and the Dreaming in Cuba, 2002. Gelatin silver print, 40 x 40 in. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shannan Gallery, New York. © Carrie Mae Weems. Organized by the First Corner for the Visual Arts, Nashville, TN.

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