Written by
Thursday, 01 November 2012 11:16

NEW YORK - A recent claim by U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) that he is committed to strengthening the social safety net stands in stark contrast to the budget bill he proposed, which decisively dismantles it, National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial said.

"If Rep. Ryan's budget were to become law, it would sharply intensify the deep economic disparity hampering the recovery," Morial said. "Ryan's remarks are completely at odds with his devastating plan."

The proposed $1.9 trillion in across-the-board cuts in social safety net programs that Ryan has proposed would gut critical safety net programs such as SNAP, Supplemental Security Income for the elderly, disables and poor, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, unemployment compensation, school lunch and other child nutrition programs.

Morial called Ryan's claim that existing anti-poverty programs don't work "baffling."

"Making nutritional food available to 18 million children who would otherwise go without is hardly a failure of mission," Morial said. "More than three-quarters of the recipients of Temporary Aid for Needy Families are children, and half of those live in households where there are no adult recipients."

In his speech, Ryan again alluded to a false and widely condemned claim that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has weakened welfare work requirements.

"In fact, quite the opposite is true," Morial said, "Several states had asked the federal government for more flexibility in connecting welfare recipients with jobs, and the Department of Health and Human Services granted it, on the condition that the changes produced 20% increases in the number of people getting work.

"Why would Rep. Ryan object to an initiative that results in 20% more welfare recipients getting jobs?" Morial wondered.

Ryan also claimed that growth in the economy would benefit the poor and middle class as well as the wealthy, but the fact is almost all of the growth in incomes over the last 30 years has gone to the top 1%, and almost half of the growth in the top 1% has accrued within the top 0.1%

"Rep. Ryan's budget plan would not reverse this trend, but accelerate it," Morial said.