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Dear Editor:

By: Edward J. Barrett – February 20, 2013

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A census as called for and provided by the Constitution was conducted fairly recently. Some of the statistics compiled are rather interesting. Earlier this year, the Cato Institute released an analysis describing at least 126 different federal programs that profess to be fighting poverty.

When the state and local government efforts are tossed into the mix, along with the Federal programs, the total being spent approaches a trillion dollars, or \$20,610 for every "poor" person in the country. Over the next decade, according to Cato, federal and state welfare spending is expected to total \$10.3 trillion over the next decade. Over that period, this would result in spending of \$250,000 for every American currently in poverty, or \$1 million for every poor family of four. Do not take any of these comments to be seen as an attack on those in genuine need. But realistically the United States is not dealing with real poverty. Here are some of the not-so-dire living conditions of those said to be poor: 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning. Nearly three-fourths have a car or truck, and 11 percent have two or more vehicles. Nearly two-thirds have cable or satellite television. Two thirds have at least one DVD player and 70 percent have a VCR. Half have a personal computer, and 1 in 7 have two or more computers. More than half of poor families with children have a video game system, such as an Xbox or PlayStation. 43 percent have Internet access. One-third have a wide-screen plasma or LCD television; and one-fourth have a digital video recorder system, such as TiVo. The poor in this country are much better off than most of the so-called privileged in other countries around the world.