

THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

In 2018, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival released its [Poor People's Moral Agenda & Declaration of Fundamental Rights](#). Its demands address systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism, and a distorted moral narrative that keeps these systemic injustices intact. The connections between these 5 themes are why we must continue to build power among the 140 million poor & dispossessed of this nation. Fight poverty, not the poor!

IN Rhode Island:

Poverty:

- 36% of people in Rhode Island are [poor or low-income](#)—a total of 368 thousand residents. This includes 47% of children (99 thousand), 40% of women (213 thousand), 64% of Black people (39 thousand), 69% of Latinx people (113 thousand), and 29% of White people (220 thousand).
- From 1979 to 2012, [income](#) for the top 1% grew by 139%, while income for the bottom 99% only grew 25%.

Systemic racism:

- 61% of the voting-eligible population in the state turned out to vote in 2016, out of 766 thousand [eligible voters](#).
- More than 3 thousand residents cannot vote due to [felony disenfranchisement](#).
- Of the over 2 thousand people [imprisoned](#) in Rhode Island as of 2017, about 57% are people of color.
- Black residents of Rhode Island are [incarcerated](#) at over 8 times the rate of White residents.

Militarism and the war economy:

- From 2008 to 2014, RI law enforcement received at least \$8.5 million in [federal military equipment](#).
- Rhode Island taxpayers contributed \$2.26 billion [to the military](#) in 2018.
- Over 16 thousand veterans have incomes [below \\$35,000](#)—this is 23% of the RI veteran population as of 2015.
- Rhode Island has 2 [ICE detention centers](#) as of 2019. Meanwhile, 30 thousand residents of the state are [undocumented](#), and 7% of K-12 students have undocumented parents.

Ecology and health:

- 40 thousand people in Rhode Island are [uninsured](#) as of 2018.
- 17% of census tracts in Rhode Island are at-risk for being [unable to afford water](#).

Family, community, and education:

- Rhode Island currently ranks 28th of all states in quality of [child education](#). 61% of fourth graders are [not proficient in reading](#), and 70% of eighth-graders are [not proficient in math](#) as of 2017.
- Nonwhite [school districts](#) receive an average of \$2,450 less in funding per student than white districts. Poor nonwhite school districts receive \$418 less per student than poor white districts.
- 171 thousand people benefit from the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) monthly as of 2016.
- As of 2015, 38 thousand children live in [food-insecure households](#), 18% of all children in Rhode Island.
- 31% of children in Rhode Island have [parents without secure jobs](#) as of 2016 – that's 66 thousand children.

Everybody's got a right to live:

- Over 1 thousand people in Rhode Island are [homeless](#) as of 2018.
- Working at the 2018 state minimum wage, it takes 79 hours of [work per week](#) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.
- 187 thousand make [under \\$15 an hour](#)—40% of RI's workforce as of 2018, the 44th highest of all states.
- The minimum wage in Rhode Island is \$10.50 in 2019. A [living wage](#) in the state in 2019 would be \$25.49 an hour.

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NATIONWIDE:

- Voting rights protections in many states are weaker than they were 50 years ago. 1 in 4 eligible voters isn't registered.
- The United States imprisons, detains and/or deports more people than any country in the world.
- 140 million people in the U.S. are poor or low-income – over 43.5% of the population – including 60.4% of Black people (26 million), 64.1% of Latinx people (38 million), 40.8% of Asian people (8 million), 58.9% of Native and Indigenous people (2.14 million), and 33.5% of White people (66 million).
- 53 cents of every federal discretionary dollar is spent on the military; only 15 cents goes to anti-poverty programs.
- At least 28% of children (20.7 million) in the U.S. have parents who don't have steady jobs. This includes 43% of Black children (4.4 million), 46% of Native/Indigenous children (265,880), 21% (781,935) of Asian children, 33% (6.2 million) of Latinx, and 22% (8.5 million) White children.
- 13.8 million U.S. households cannot afford water, and the poor are bearing the brunt of climate change effects.
- Native & Indigenous people are living with the ongoing legacy of genocide & systemic racism, with disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness, & overrepresentation in the US military, and continuous struggles to defend sovereignty & land rights. Organizers can explore native-land.ca to acknowledge the Indigenous territory on which you reside.

IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.

Contrary to common myths, our country — the richest in the world — has abundant resources to protect the environment and ensure dignified lives for all people.

- [This year](#), the richest 1% of Rhode Island residents are expected to receive 22% of the GOP tax law's benefits coming to the state. Rhode Island's richest 1% can expect an average tax cut in 2020 of \$34,870, while the poorest 20% in the state can expect an average tax cut of just \$60.
- Rhode Island's contribution to [the country's endless wars](#) in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond totals \$20.2 billion since 2001, and could instead have created over 14 thousand new jobs in clean energy, or placed every RI child in Head Start early childhood education programs, or covered Medicaid for over 285 thousand adults for the past 18 years.
- Rhode Island has spent at least \$111 million in [public subsidies for corporations](#) over the past five years that could have instead gone to our communities and our needs.

As revealed in the [Poor People's Moral Budget: Everybody Has the Right to Live!](#), it is possible to invest society's resources to establish justice, domestic tranquility, security, & the general welfare for all.

- It would take \$750 million dollars over five years to implement automatic voter registration and make our democracy more secure. This is 1/1000 of the \$750 billion that are being committed to the Pentagon in 2018.
- If we cut \$350 billion in annual military spending, we would make our nation and the world more secure.
- We could raise \$886 billion in estimated annual revenue from fair taxes on the wealthy, corporations, & Wall Street to meet our urgent social & ecological needs.
- For every \$1 invested in early childhood education, society would gain \$7.30 due to reduced poverty, lower incarceration rates, & better health outcomes.
- Inaction on climate change could cost \$3.3 trillion per year for the U.S. economy – the equivalent of five Great Recessions every year. A \$200 billion per year investment in clean energy transition would begin to address climate change and create 2.7 million new jobs.

Read more from the Poor People's Moral Budget here: www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/budget

Everybody has the right to live!

