

THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

WHO IS LEFT OUT OF THE COVID-19 LEGISLATION

Epidemics emerge along the fissures of our society, reflecting not only the biology of the infectious agent, but patterns of marginalization, exclusion and discrimination. The coronavirus pandemic is no exception. COVID-19 has revealed deep social and economic failures and will reinforce existing health inequities. Before COVID-19, nearly 700 people were dying every day from poverty and inequality, yet the legislative response does not account for the 140 million people who are poor or one emergency closer to being poor today.

Health: The legislation provides for free testing, but it does not go far enough.

- 27.5 million uninsured people, and over 10% of insured people who can't afford to see the doctor, have no guarantee to free or affordable treatment, hospital stays or vaccines.
- 16.8 million health care workers on the front lines are inadequately protected.
- Rural critical access hospitals are few and far between and offer fewer services to the 60 million people living in rural America, who need full-service rural hospitals protected and open.

Essential Workers and Direct Payments: 48% of the workforce, including "essential" workers, did not receive paid leave, and there are no guarantees for living wages or adequate incomes for all.

- Many of the country's 60 million low wage workers are excluded from paid family leave and paid sick leave, because they work for a company with over 500 employees.
- The expanded unemployment insurance cannot keep pace with the rise in unemployment. There were 10 million claims in March 2020 and the Federal Reserve estimates the total by summer will be 47 million, bringing the unemployment rate up to an estimated 32%. During the Great Depression, unemployment was at 25%.
- Direct payments will not reach everyone, and will reach some people up to 5 months late, such as those on supplemental security or disability income, and those without bank accounts, including many indigenous people.
- Many of the 19 million college students fall into a coverage gap for direct payments: if claimed as dependents, they are excluded from the \$1200 for adults; if over 16 years old, they are excluded from the \$500 for children.

Social Welfare: The legislation does not provide adequate housing, food, water or childcare.

- Homeless assistance funding is based on a 500,000 count, but there are 8-11 million people who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness. Sweeps and evictions of homeless encampments continue even in this crisis.
- Although 14 million families cannot afford water and hundreds of thousands of rural and indigenous people do not have plumbing, local and state water shut-off moratoriums are only temporary and there is no federal support to guarantee access to water or provide sanitation services.
- 3 million current SNAP recipients did not see increases in their current benefits (\$1.40/meal), despite the need for more support in the months to come, and 700,000 recipients risk losing their existing benefits when work requirements are reinstated.
- The \$3.5 billion allocated for childcare is a fraction of the \$50 billion required to continue childcare, aftercare and early childhood education for poor and low-income children and families.
- 61 million current social security recipients could see lower payments if the Treasury determines there aren't enough resources to replace the decline in the Social Security Trust due to payroll tax deferments.

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Debt Relief: There is no permanent debt relief for medical debt, housing debt, or student debt.

- Before this pandemic, 72 million people already facing medical debt burdens.
- Millions of low-income families, including nearly half of renters who spend more than 1/3 of their income on rent, will have to re-start payments on rent or mortgages in four to six months.
- 44 million families who carry \$1.5 trillion in student debt will need to re-start payments on October 1.

Immigration and Incarceration: Millions of undocumented people and their children are excluded, while millions more who are incarcerated and detained have no safety protections.

- 11 million undocumented immigrants, their 5 million citizen children, and some 4 million immigrant taxpayers who use an ITIN, are all ineligible for the COVID-19 legislation and its emergency provisions to date.
- 2.3 million incarcerated people, and 52,000 people in detention centers, are at increased risk due to crowded and unsanitary conditions and lack of access to medical treatment.

Democracy: This year's elections need \$2 billion for resources to ensure voter participation, but the legislation only provides \$400 million.

- The right to vote for 52 million eligible poor and low-income voters is not protected in the 2020 elections, due to inadequate funds to support voting by mail and extending voting periods.
- Most states are bound by law to balance their budgets. The legislation granted states \$200 billion, but many states relied on federal resources to meet their budgets even before the crisis. States also raised 48% of their revenue from income tax and sales tax, both of which will decline sharply now. Without more support, states will start layoffs, cutting programs, and take other actions that will deepen the economic fallout from the pandemic.

Wealth Inequality and Militarism: Corporations and Wall Street were well provided for and the military received resources it didn't need.

- The legislation provided \$500 billion for corporations, but the oversight requirements may be ignored, allowing investors to profit at the expense of workers and taxpayers.
- Before the legislation was passed, the Federal Reserve released over \$1.5 trillion in low-interest loans to banks and financial institutions.
- Approximately \$10 billion was allocated to the Pentagon and millions of people globally face economic sanctions which make it difficult to receive crucial resources to fight this virus. The sanctions must be lifted immediately.

WE CANNOT RETURN TO NORMAL.

Sign our petition at moveon.org/poverty to demand that the elected leaders of this country support the millions of people who are in dire need of critical attention immediately and address the depths of the crises that have been revealed in this pandemic.

Read more from the Poor People's Moral Budget at poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/poor-peoples-moral-budget

Everybody has the right to live!

