There are more than 148,000 poor and low-income voters in Washington, D.C. and 85 million across the nation. Together, we account for one-third of the electorate. Together, we can ensure that the days of poverty and low-wages - and the unnecessary cruelty of abandonment amidst abundance - are numbered. Together, we can revive the heart and soul of this democracy to ensure dignity and justice for all. Forward together, not one step back!

Poverty and Low Wages
- Living Wage Calculator: https://livingwages.mit.edu/
- Hours of Work to Afford Housing: https://mitr.umn.edu
- Workers Earning Less than $15/hour: https://www.minimumwage.org
- Household and student debt: https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/economics/facts.html

Rolling Back on Basic Needs
- SNAP Cuts: https://frac.org/research/resource/food-stamps-snap-state-fact-sheets/
- Tracking Evictions: https://nationalevictionproject.org/tracking/

Health Care and the Pandemic
- Medicaid Eligibility Rollback: https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/the-souls-of-poor-folk-audit/

Health Care: Medicaid
- Medicaid Coverage Gap: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/overview/medicaid-coverage-gap-comparison-data

Health Care: Uninsured
- Impact of the EITC and CTC: https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/publication/costs-of-cutting-tanf

Health Care: Catastrophic Bills
- Military Equipment Transfers: https://translegislation.com/
- The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America: https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/the-souls-of-poor-folk-audit/
- Poor People's Moral Agenda and Demands: https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/poor-peoples-moral-budget/
**IN WASHINGTON, D.C:**

**Poverty and Low-Wages:** Poverty is a policy choice, reflecting both low wages and high costs of living. These two conditions make it hard to meet basic needs and easy to fall into debt. In Washington, D.C.:
- Between 2018-2020, there were 280,000 poor and low-income people, accounting for 39.6% of the population.**
- To meet their basic needs, a household with two adults and two children needs to earn over $29/hour. However, the current minimum wage is just $17/hour. At this wage, an individual must work 83 hours/week to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment/hour/week to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.
- There are 35,247 people, or 8.5% of the workforce, earning less than $15/hour. This includes 29,005 adults and 7.2% of Asian and Native workers, 13.4% of Black workers, 14.6% of Hispanic workers, 3.1% of white workers, 11.6% of working women and 16.6% of working women of color.
- Average household debt rose 7% in 2022 to an average of $105,800.
- Average student loan debt held by households was $12,770 at the end of 2022.

**Rolling Back on Basic Needs:** Pandemic relief policies temporarily lifted the load of poverty, but ended too soon, resulting in higher rates of economic, food and housing insecurity. In Washington, D.C.:
- In 2021, 99,000 children in 65,000 households received the expanded Child Tax Credit; and 33,000 low-wage workers without children received the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit. The expansions contributed to a dramatic decline in poverty, ending in 2021.
- In 2022, 145,800 people relied on expanded SNAP (food stamps) benefits to feed themselves and their families. However, in 2023, SNAP benefits were reduced by $90-$250/month, cutting them down to $6/day. At least 60,492 people will be impacted by these cuts.
- At the beginning of 2023, more than one year after eviction protections were ended, 35,939 households reported being behind on their rent or housing payments.

**Health Care and the Pandemic:** Across the country, approximately 1,000 people are still dying from Covid every week and millions of people lack access to health care. In Washington, D.C.:
- During the most intense period of the pandemic, 23,300 people were uninsured.
- With the ending of continuous eligibility for Medicaid, 57,300 people are estimated to lose access to health care.
- Between 2019 and 2020, Washington, D.C. experienced a 2.7 year decline in average life expectancy.

**Climate Crisis and Ecological Devastation:** Extreme heat, storms and drought are becoming more common, with poor and low-income communities at greatest risk. In Washington, D.C.:
- Precipitation patterns have also changed; with increased risks of flooding, drought and water scarcity.
- The percentage of poor and low-income household income that goes towards energy costs is 18 times greater than what an average income household spends on energy.

**Militarism:** Government spending that prioritizes war, mass incarceration, excessive policing, and anti-immigrant forces is leading to greater violence, fear and criminalization of the poor. In Washington, D.C.:
- In 2023, taxpayers will contribute $349.72 million to Pentagon spending, $99.44 million to immigration enforcement and $119.86 million to nuclear weapons.
- 155 people are killed by gun violence every year on average.
- There are 1,820 people incarcerated.
- From Oct 2002-June 2022, over 25,498 people were deported from Washington, D.C.

**Democracy:** Across the nation, a surge of attacks on voting rights and on the rights of women and LGBTQ+ people are denying basic rights to millions of people and constraining our ability to participate in democracy. Poor and low-income people can change this direction. In Washington, D.C.:
- Statehood is still not recognized. Over 700,000 American citizens living in DC, the majority of which are people of color, do not receive federal funding nor political representation in Congress.
- In Washington, D.C., there are 148,000 poor and low-income eligible voters, including 20,000 white voters, 3,119 Latino voters, 480 Asian voters and 119,000 Black voters. Together, they account for 21.5% of the electorate.

There is an abundance of wealth and resources to meet our basic needs and ensure we all survive and thrive.

- A proposed federal tax on the annual increase in billionaires’ wealth would generate an estimated $557 billion over 10 years, 16 billionaires live in the Greater Washington area, with combined wealth of about $220 billion.
- In Washington, D.C., state taxpayer dollars are being siphoned towards militarism: state taxpayer dollars for deportations and border control could instead subsidize more than 7,472 public housing units. Taxpayer dollars going to nuclear weapons could provide health insurance for 29,875 children. Taxpayer dollars going to the biggest weapons contractor, Lockheed Martin, could hire more than 1,380 elementary school teachers.
- More than $32.95 million from Washington, D.C. taxpayers that is going to federal prisons could instead power more than 119,048 households with solar energy.
- Washington, D.C. has only spent $666 million of the $2.3 billion it was allocated under the American Rescue Plan, which could be used for housing, health care and other pressing needs. If the state and local governments do not allocate these resources by December 2024, the remaining funds will be lost.

**Moving these resources, and investing more, to fully meet all of our needs will save lives and revitalize our national economy.**

- During the pandemic, eviction moratoria and moratoria on utility disconnections saved lives. If enacted earlier, they could have reduced Covid deaths by 40% and 15%, respectively, across the nation. Universal health care could have saved 330,000 lives.
- Enacting Medicare for All will save $450 billion in health care costs and 68,000 lives every year.
- Ending mass incarceration could raise average US life expectancy by five years.
- Providing permanent safe housing delivers lifelong benefits to children and families at an national average cost of $12,800 per person per year, far less than the cost of crisis services for those suffering chronic homelessness.
- Paid Family and Medical Leave improves employment, especially among women, increases child well-being and protects against poverty when health challenges arise.
- Increasing resources for the poor stimulates the economy much more than making the rich even richer, because the poor need to spend nearly everything they earn. Every dollar going to a low-wage worker adds $1.20 to the economy overall. Every dollar spent on food stamps generates $1.50-$1.80 in economic activity.
- Expanded unemployment insurance during the pandemic protected 5.1 million jobs by boosting economic activity. The expanded Child Tax Credit was estimated to have a greater impact on the economy than military spending, without negative impacts on employment.
- Overtax improvements to TANF could triple its reach and improve the lives of at least 2.38 million families nationwide.
- Every dollar invested in providing families clean water and proper sanitation yields 5 times as many returns to the US economy.
- Freedom from debt would allow more people to start small businesses and move around the country to take better jobs, strengthening our economy and workforce.