There are more than 598,554 poor and low-income voters in Utah 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!

The pandemic fostered in these fissures, taking root in systemic racism, poverty, the denial of health care, ecological devastation, wealth inequality and rampant military spending. During the first two years, governments at all levels responded to the crisis by expanding access to health care, housing, water, food and utilities. These overdue changes proved that in the world’s richest country, we can ensure a dignified life for all. But these pandemic programs were temporary. When they ended abruptly, poverty and related interlocking injustices began to rise once again.

While millions of people remain without work, living wages, housing, clean water, food or health care, corporations and the wealthy are doing exceedingly well. Between 2020-2022, billionaire wealth grew by $1.5 trillion - more than $2 billion a day.

Religious and moral texts are clear that making policy that does not protect the rights of the poor and puts the cause of the wealthy first is evil and wrong. Isaiah 10 says, "Woe to those who legislate evil, who make unjust laws to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed." Jeremiah 22 reminds us, "Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor those who have been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the immigrant, the orphan, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place." Matthew 25 tells us, "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."

Indeed, the first governing principle of the US Constitution is to establish justice.

If we do not want to enable this wrongdoing, we must speak out and stand up against it. This is why the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is organizing across the nation: to reveal these injustices, change the narrative, and build our power.

Fight Poverty, not the Poor!
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 Utah:
- Between 2018-2020, there were 1,005,800 poor and low-income people, accounting for 31.3% of the population.**
- To meet their basic needs, a household with two adults and two children needs to earn over $25/hour. However, the current minimum wage is just $7.25/hour. At this wage, an individual must work 122 hours/week to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.
- There are 572,989 people, or 34% of the workforce, earning less than $15/hour. This includes 474,073 adults and 33.6% of Asian and Native voters, 52% of Black voters, 53.3% of Hispanic voters, 70% of white voters, 45.2% of working women, and 62.9% of working women of color.
- Average household debt rose, 10% in 2022 to an average of $79,720.
- Average student loan debt held by households was $4,220 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 Utah:
- In 2021, 851,000 children in 423,000 households received the expanded Child Tax Credit and 138,000 low-wage workers without children received the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit. The expansions contributed to a dramatic decline in poverty, but ended in 2022.
- In 2022, 156,300 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 $66/day. At least 77,322 people will be impacted by these cuts.
- At the beginning of 2023, more than one year after eviction protections were ended, 93,546 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 Utah:
- During the most intense period of the pandemic, 299,700 people were uninsured.
- Approximately 1.4 million workers, or 80% of the workforce in Utah do not have access to paid leave.
- With the ending of continuous eligibility for Medicaid, 84,300 people are estimated to lose access to health care.
- Between 2019 and 2020, Utah experienced a 1.1 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 Utah:
- Over the past century, the state warmed 1.4 degrees Celsius, which is 0.3 degrees greater than the global average. As this trend continues, food production, spread of diseases, and health will all be adversely impacted.
- 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 5 times greater than what an average income household spends on energy.

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:
- There were 6 voter restrictive bills introduced between 2020 and 2023, and 4 anti-LGBTQ+ law introduced in 2023. One voter restrictive bill and all four anti-LGBTQ+ bills were enacted.
- In 2022, abortion was banned at 18 weeks.
- In Utah, there are 598,554 poor and low-income eligible voters, including 331,948 white voters, 41,719 Latino voters, 2,870 Asian voters, 765 Black voters and 930 Indigenous voters. Together, they account for 30.26% of the electorate.

Militaryism: 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 Utah:
- In 2023, taxpayers will contribute $4.78 billion to Pentagon spending, $164.41 million to immigration enforcement and $198.17 million to nuclear weapons.
- Over the past 30 years, $14 million in military equipment (tanks, drones, combat rifles and ammunition) has been transferred from the Pentagon to state and local law enforcement.
- Between 2001-2020, 1,179 veterans committed suicide.
- In 2021, 450 people were killed by gun violence.
- There are 13,202 people incarcerated. As of April 2023, 8 immigrants are in detention.
- From Oct 2002-June 2022, over 882 people were deported from Utah.

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. Utah has 6 billionaires with combined wealth of $11.6 billion. The state has a flat income tax and a top corporate tax of just 4.85%, meaning the wealthy and big corporations are not paying their fair share.
- In Utah, state taxpayer dollars are being siphoned towards militarism: state taxpayer dollars for deportations and border control could instead subsidize more than 38,813 public housing units. Taxpayer dollars going to nuclear weapons could provide health insurance for 68,761 children. Taxpayer dollars going to the biggest weapons contractor, Lockheed Martin, could hire more than 3,031 elementary school teachers.
- More than $54.48 billion from Utah taxpayers that is going to federal prisons could instead power more than 180,132 households with solar energy.
- Utah has only spent $557 million of the $1.38 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.