

Thu, Mar 14, 2024

CALIFORNIA



While we roll out the next phase of our march toward the general election, we're spotlighting two ways to fight for just housing in California: You can educate yourself with an eye-opening study summarized below, and Angelenos can gather signatures for a ballot measure aimed at abolishing poverty and homelessness. Also in this newsletter, an Oak Flat update and a piece by Rev. Liz on the "great unraveling" of healthcare.

Announcements



The next steps toward Election Day

Between now and November 5, we'll be educating, registering and mobilizing our communities to vote. In California, there are 7,280,000 poor and low-income eligible voters, accounting for 25 percent of the electorate, and when we vote we can change election outcomes.

We'll be rolling out plans soon (expect more great actions like the March 2 Mass Assembly in Sacramento, pictured above); in the meantime, Los Angeles County folks can join in to get more housing resources into our communities. Read on...

Help needed to get housing solutions on the November ballot

A coalition of labor unions, homeless service providers and housing justice advocates across L.A. County have joined forces to reduce and prevent homelessness and make housing more affordable. **The Affordable Housing, Homelessness Solutions and Prevention Now Initiative** is a citizens-initiated ballot measure campaign that would invest in producing more affordable housing, preserving the affordable housing we have and protecting low-income renters at risk of homelessness. One of our organizational partners, SEIU Local 721, is a key supporter of this measure.

But to get it on the ballot, we need to collect enough signatures over the next month. Sign up to help collect signatures in [Los Angeles](#) and [Long Beach](#), and find out more about the ballot measure [here](#).

Meetings

Statewide organizing meetings

Wednesdays, 6:30pm | [RSVP](#)

In the coming weeks we'll be organizing our annual events for April 4: the anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, and the day in 1967 when he delivered his seminal speech on the devastating impact of the Vietnam War on both America's and Vietnam's poor. His words speak to us with the same urgency and relevance today.

At our Wednesday meetings, you'll meet activists from around the state and take part in educating, registering and mobilizing our communities for these historic actions and the November election. It's a place to lend a hand and to learn from one another.

News

“Death rate among America’s unhoused population akin to ‘natural disaster or war,’ new study finds”

[KQED](#) reported on a recent study that reveals the increasing harm of living homeless: The death rate tripled between 2011 and 2020 in unhoused communities throughout the country, and California's unhoused population increased significantly.

The study's co-author, Matthew Fowler at the University of Pennsylvania, said that the mortality increase is “unlike any other mortality trend that we really see in demography.”

The study's California research offers two theories on the surge: Crackdowns on encampments can result in isolation; if an unhoused person overdoses without others around to help out, that person is more likely to face the worst possible outcome. Meanwhile, a demographic shift is underway: “The number of Californians 55 and older who sought homelessness services soared 84 percent between 2017 and 2021.” Check out the [full study](#) and its forceful conclusion: “Strong policy responses that focus on expanding access to affordable housing and health care are essential to halting the near-unrelenting increase in premature and preventable mortality among people experiencing homelessness.”

New ruling could “obliterate” Oak Flat, land sacred to Apaches

As covered by [AP News](#) and the law firm [Becket](#), an 11-judge federal court ruled that the federal government can turn over the sacred Apache land of Oak Flat in Arizona to the mining company Resolution Copper, upholding the lower court's ruling. The five dissenting judges wrote that the majority “tragically erred” in allowing the government to “obliterate Oak Flat,” which would destroy a religious ceremonial site listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Apache Stronghold, which represents the interests of members of the San Carlos Apache tribe, has been fighting to protect its sacred site.

“Oak Flat is like Mount Sinai to us—our most sacred site where we connect with our Creator, our faith, our families and our land,” said Dr. Wendsler Nosie of Apache Stronghold. “Today's ruling targets the spiritual lifeblood of my people, but it will not stop our struggle to save Oak Flat. We vow to appeal to the Supreme Court.”

poor and low-wealth people need is basic healthcare and other essential human rights such as living-wage jobs, paid sick leave and affordable, nutritious food as a start.

She closes with the words of PPC activist Becca Forsyth: “We must stop this raging storm of policy violence that is killing our friends and neighbors. It doesn’t have to be this way! We can wield our votes as powerful demands. The time for sitting on the sidelines is over. We have to move forward together like our lives depend on it...the lives of our children! Because they do!”

Bishop Barber on the “unnecessary reality” of poverty

Bishop Barber shared a conversation he had on the February 29 episode of [The New Abnormal](#) (his segment begins at 17:40) and added this: “When 7 people died from vaping, it became a White House & congressional issue. Yet, when 800 people die per day from poverty and low wealth, we hear nothing about it. Poverty by America is an abolishable, unnecessary reality that exists.”

Thanks for reading. If you have any questions, you are welcome to reply to this newsletter or email california@poorpeoplescampaign.org.