

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 Tennessee:

Poverty:

- 38% of people in Tennessee are [poor or low-income](#)—a total of 2.5 million residents. This includes 52% of children (769 thousand), 44% of women (1.5 million), 58% of Black people (631 thousand), 66% of Latinx people (263 thousand), and 37% of White people (1.8 million).
- From 1979 to 2012, [income](#) for the top 1% grew by 145%, while income for the bottom 99% only grew 9%.

Systemic racism:

- 54% of the eligible voting-age population in Tennessee turned out to vote in 2016, out of 4.8 million [eligible voters](#). That includes 50% of 800 thousand eligible Black voters, 22% of 125 thousand eligible Latinx voters, and 56% of 3.8 million eligible White voters.
- More than 421 thousand residents cannot vote due to [felony disenfranchisement](#), including over 173 thousand Black people (21% of the Black population in Tennessee).
- Of the over 28 thousand people [imprisoned](#) in Tennessee as of 2017, about 44% are people of color.
- Black residents of Tennessee are [incarcerated](#) at almost 4 times the rate of White residents.

Militarism and the war economy:

- From 2008 to 2014, TN law enforcement received at least \$112 million in [federal military equipment](#).
- Tennessee taxpayers contributed \$10.92 billion [to the military](#) in 2018.
- Over 135 thousand veterans have incomes [below \\$35,000](#)—this is 28% of the TN veteran population as of 2015.
- Tennessee has 19 [ICE detention centers](#) as of 2019. Over 24 thousand immigration removal cases are currently [pending](#). Meanwhile, 130 thousand residents of the state are [undocumented](#), and 5% of K-12 students have undocumented parents.

Ecology and health:

- 670 thousand people in Tennessee are [uninsured](#) as of 2018.
- 34% of census tracts in Tennessee are at-risk for being [unable to afford water](#).

Family, community, and education:

- Tennessee currently ranks 35th of all states in quality of [child education](#). 67% 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 \$39 less in funding per student than white districts.
- 1.1 million people benefit from the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) monthly as of 2016.
- As of 2015, 315 thousand children live in [food-insecure households](#), 21% of all children in Tennessee.
- 31% of children in Tennessee have [parents without secure jobs](#) as of 2016 – that's 334 thousand children.

Everybody's got a right to live:

- Over 7 thousand people in Tennessee are [homeless](#) as of 2018.
- Working at the 2018 state minimum wage, it takes 94 hours of [work per week](#) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.
- 1.3 million make [under \\$15 an hour](#)—51% of TN's workforce as of 2018, the 8th highest of all states.
- The minimum wage in Tennessee is \$7.25 in 2019. A [living wage](#) in the state in 2019 would be \$23.28 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 Tennessee residents are expected to receive 29% of the GOP tax law's benefits coming to the state. Tennessee's richest 1% can expect an average tax cut in 2020 of \$48,980, while the poorest 20% in the state can expect an average tax cut of just \$50.
- Tennessee's contribution to [the country's endless wars](#) in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond totals \$98 billion since 2001, and could instead have created over 68 thousand new jobs in clean energy, or placed every TN child in Head Start early childhood education programs, or covered Medicaid for over 774 thousand adults for the past 18 years.
- Tennessee has spent at least \$937 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!

