

# 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 West Virginia:

#### **Poverty:**

- 40% of people in West Virginia are [poor or low-income](#)—a total of 710 thousand residents. This includes 50% of children (187 thousand), 44% of women (402 thousand), 51% of Black people (30 thousand), 55% of Latinx people (13 thousand), and 42% of White people (689 thousand).
- From 1979 to 2012, [income](#) for the top 1% grew by 61%, while income for the bottom 99% actually fell 0.4%.

#### **Systemic racism:**

- 51% of the voting-eligible population in West Virginia turned out to vote in 2016, out of 1.4 million [eligible voters](#).
- More than 14 thousand residents cannot vote due to [felony disenfranchisement](#).
- Of the over 7 thousand people [imprisoned](#) in West Virginia as of 2017, about 14% are people of color.
- Black residents of West Virginia are [incarcerated](#) at almost 4 times the rate of White residents.

#### **Militarism and the war economy:**

- From 2008 to 2014, WV law enforcement received at least \$14.8 million in [federal military equipment](#).
- West Virginia taxpayers contributed \$2.44 billion [to the military](#) in 2018.
- Over 53 thousand veterans have incomes [below \\$35,000](#)—this is 33% of the WV veteran population as of 2015.
- West Virginia has 7 [ICE detention centers](#) as of 2019. Meanwhile, 1% of K-12 students have undocumented parents.

#### **Ecology and health:**

- 108 thousand people in West Virginia are [uninsured](#) as of 2018.
- 47% of census tracts in West Virginia are at-risk for being [unable to afford water](#).

#### **Family, community, and education:**

- West Virginia currently ranks 39th of all states in quality of [child education](#). 68% of fourth graders are [not proficient in reading](#), and 76% of eighth-graders are [not proficient in math](#) as of 2017.
- 357 thousand people benefit from the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) monthly as of 2016.
- As of 2015, 79 thousand children live in [food-insecure households](#), 21% of all children in West Virginia.
- 36% of children in West Virginia have [parents without secure jobs](#) as of 2016 – that's 137 thousand children.

#### **Everybody's got a right to live:**

- Over 1 thousand people in West Virginia are [homeless](#) as of 2018.
- Working at the 2018 state minimum wage, it takes 65 hours of [work per week](#) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.
- 351 thousand make [under \\$15 an hour](#)—50% of WV's workforce as of 2018, the 9th highest of all states.
- The minimum wage in West Virginia is \$8.75 in 2019. A [living wage](#) in the state in 2019 would be \$23.20 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](http://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 West Virginia residents are expected to receive 22% of the GOP tax law's benefits coming to the state. West Virginia's richest 1% can expect an average tax cut in 2020 of \$26,540, while the poorest 20% in the state can expect an average tax cut of just \$40.
- West Virginia's contribution to [the country's endless wars](#) in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond totals \$21.8 billion since 2001, and could instead have created over 15 thousand new jobs in clean energy, or placed every WV child in Head Start early childhood education programs, or covered Medicaid for over 294 thousand adults for the past 18 years.

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](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/budget)

Everybody has the right to live!

