The Poor are a Powerful Force in This Country
- California is home to 7 million poor and low-income eligible voters who make up 25% of the electorate.
- If poor and low-income eligible voters went to the polls at the same rate as higher-income voters, they would have the power to sway election outcomes in every state.

Obstacles to Full Democratic Participation
- The Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act in 2013 and the Senate blocked a bill to restore these rights by a two-vote margin in 2022.
- Between 2020 and 2023, California state lawmakers introduced 2 voter restrictive bills.

Political Debates Ignore Urgent Concerns
- A key factor discouraging poor and low-income people from voting: political campaigns that don’t speak to their issues.
- Not 1 of the 15 presidential debates in 2020 devoted even 30 minutes to poverty, the 4th-leading cause of death in America. Long-term poverty claims 295,000 lives every year, more than homicide, gun violence, diabetes, or obesity.

California Data on Interlocking Injustices Harming Poor and Low-income People

Poverty
- Between 2018-2020, 18.7 million Californians were poor or low-income, accounting for 47.6% of the state’s population.
- In 2021, 7.5 million children received the expanded Child Tax Credit and 1.8 million low-wage workers got the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Since these pandemic programs have expired, poverty has been on the rise — proving that poverty is a policy choice.
Low Wages, Inequality, and Rising Costs

- To meet basic needs, two adults with two children need to earn over $30/hour. But at the state’s minimum wage of $15.50, an individual must work **109 hours/week** to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.
- 1,537,490 households were **behind on rent or housing payments** at the beginning of 2023.
- In 2021, all Republicans and 8 Senate Democrats **blocked** an increase in the federal minimum wage to $15, leaving it at $7.25 ($2.13 for tipped workers).
- Since 2017 Republican tax cuts, the 748 U.S. billionaires are **$2.2 trillion** richer.

Health

- 2,633,500 people are expected to **lose Medicaid** by March 2024 due to the end of pandemic protections.
- California’s **average life expectancy** dropped by 1.9 years between 2019 and 2020.
- During the peak of the pandemic, 2.7 million people were **uninsured**.

Climate Crisis Impact on the Poor

- Poor and low-income California households spend 5 times as much of their income on **energy costs** as the average household.
- Poor and low-income people are **bearing the brunt** of deaths and injuries due to climate change. California has had significant changes in precipitation patterns, with increased risks of flooding, drought, and water scarcity.

Militarism

- In 2023, the federal government spent **$1.1 trillion** on war and weapons, law enforcement, mass incarceration, deportations, and detention.
- In California, state taxpayer dollars for deportations and border control could instead subsidize **471,000 public housing units**. Taxpayer dollars for nuclear weapons could provide health insurance for **1.7 million children**.

These facts underscore the need for a resurrection of justice, love, and truth — **not** an insurrection of injustice, lies, and hate.

Detailed versions of this report and fact sheets for all 50 states available at: https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/learn/