

Poor People's Campaign

A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

NATIONAL FACT SHEET • 2024

The Poor are a Powerful Force in This Country

- 1/3 of the electorate (85 million people) are poor or low-income.
- In 2020, 58 million people in this group cast ballots, making up 34-46% of voters in 9 battleground states and more than 20% in all but 5 states.
- If just 20% of poor and low-income voters who didn't vote in 2020 went to the polls in 2024, they would have the power to sway elections 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.
- Since 2020, state lawmakers have introduced over 1,000 voter suppression bills, from racial gerrymandering to ending same-day and early voting to unfair ID requirements. At least 80 have been enacted.

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.
- None of the 15 presidential debates in 2020 devoted even 30 minutes to poverty, **the 4th-leading cause of death**. Long-term poverty claims 295,000 U.S. lives every year, more than homicide, gun violence, diabetes, or obesity.

Select Data on Interconnected Injustices Harming Poor and Low-Income People

Poverty

- Child Tax Credit expansion and other pandemic programs cut the number of poor and low-income people from 140 million in 2019 to 112 million in 2021.
- After these programs expired, this number shot back up to 135 million, or 40% of the U.S. total. They include: 61% of Latino, 59% of Native American/Indigenous, 55% of Black, 36% of Asian, and 32% of white people.

Low Wages, Inequality, and Rising Costs

- To meet basic needs, two adults with two children need to earn over \$25/hour. But nearly a third of the workforce, or 52 million people, earn less than \$15/hour.
- 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.
- 7 million families were behind in rent or housing payments in December 2023.
- 100 million Americans have medical debt burdens.

Health

- Despite lessons from the pandemic, policy failures led to 25.6 million people lacking health insurance in 2022, with more than half of working age adults having difficulty affording health care costs.
- 15-18 million people are expected to lose Medicaid by March 2024 due to the end of pandemic protections.
- 105 million people do not have paid family and medical leave.
- 46 million people don't have access to safe drinking water.

Climate Crisis Impact on the Poor

- 1 in 5 families couldn't afford to pay at least one energy bill in 2022.
- Poor and low-income people are bearing the brunt of deaths and injuries due to extreme heat, storms, and drought. Between 2009 and 2017, heat wave increases caused an average of 1,373 additional U.S. deaths a year.

Militarism

- In 2023, the federal government spent \$1.1 trillion on war and weapons, law enforcement, mass incarceration, deportations, and detention.
- The U.S. spends more on military than the next 10 countries combined.
- A 10% reduction in the military budget could pay for 9.6 million public housing units or health care for 18.6 million adults.

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/>