

Thu, Jun 22, 2023

# CALIFORNIA



*Big things are happening in D.C. this week. Read on for reports and photos sent by our members from the Moral Poverty Action Congress. The press is paying attention, too; you'll find links to two articles below. And if the action in the capital isn't rousing enough, L.A. people can rally behind hospitality and tourism workers this very afternoon. Forward together!*



### **Moral Poverty Action Congress is underway, and California is in the house!**

The PPC's Moral Poverty Action Congress kicked off this past Monday. This gathering —the convergence on the nation's capital of PPC groups from dozens of states, ours included—is a crucial opportunity for us to build on our work, raise our voices, strategize for the coming year, and meet with lawmakers, ensuring that the voices of poor and low-wealth individuals are well-represented in the upcoming election and beyond.

Here are just a few highlights:

- On Monday, Bishop Barber helmed a discussion with economists and public health policy practitioners on poverty; you'll find a recap of that event below. The next day, PPC activists visited more than 400 legislative offices. Our state's delegates visited all
- 52 California congresspeople and two senators. Bishop Barber and PPC activists raised their voices in front of the Supreme Court. Several shared personal stories of
- struggles with low wages and lack of health insurance and mourned loved ones lost to poverty.
- Congresspeople Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Barbara Lee (D-CA) participated in a press conference on the [reintroduction of the Third Reconstruction Resolution](#). At least 11 more reps were in attendance, including Ro Khanna, who represents a swath of the South and East Bay.

Meanwhile, a timely [Religion News](#) op-ed by Bishop Barber and Rev. Theoharis lays bare the violence that poverty inflicts on millions. It opens with the tragic story of Bertha Montes from Los Angeles, who died after being denied a request for help at her job at McDonald's and was forced to work while she was sick. The piece outlines the extensive evidence of policy harm and the mission of the Moral Poverty Action Congress.

We've been posting about the Congress on the [CA PPC Facebook page](#), and you can check the [national PPC website](#) for updates and replays.

Finally, let's not forget that the Congress is also a vital step toward our 2024 campaign, which will include actions at statehouses nationwide, our nonpartisan Get Out the Vote effort and the third Mass Poor People's and Low-Wage Workers' Assembly and Moral March on Washington and to the Polls.



*Photos, from top: PPC members march to the Capitol (Jeanne Theoharis); CA PPC theomusicologist Arnae Batson takes the podium; CA PPC leaders prepare for legislative meetings (Irene Montantes)*

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## HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

JUNE 22ND, 2023 @ 4PM ON CENTURY BLVD

JOIN CLUE AND UNITE HERE LOCAL 11 FOR A RALLY AND HISTORIC SIT-IN AS WE FIGHT FOR WORKING ANGELENOS AND OUR RIGHT TO LIVE WHERE WE WORK.



We stand with hospitality workers as they lead the charge for housing affordability and a living wage.

JOIN US! RSVP  
FOR RALLY INFO



### Today! Housing Is a Human Right: Rally & Sit-In Thursday June 22, 4pm Century Blvd. near Aviation

[Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice \(CLUE\)](#) and [UNITE HERE! Local 11](#) invite CA PPC activists to join them at a rally and direct action to support hotel, hospitality and tourism workers as they prepare to go on strike.

These workers—housekeepers, cooks, waiters, janitors, food concession workers and more—are so essential to our tourism- and entertainment-focused economy in Southern California, and they're integral members of their mostly working-class and BIPOC communities. But too often they are unseen—and since they are underpaid while housing is so unaffordable, they are being displaced from their communities. In this unprecedented moment of labor organizing and solidarity, they are fighting not just for themselves and their families, but for the right of all Angelenos to live in dignity and economic security.

More info on the event [here](#).

## Upcoming meeting

### Faith organizing meeting

Wednesday June 28, 6:30pm | [RSVP](#)

Please join us next Wednesday, when we'll be gathering PPC supporters who are people of faith and faith leaders from the beautiful and powerful array of spiritual traditions. We'll meet with people from all over the state with the goal of increasing the involvement of people of faith in our work.

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## Support the California PPC!

*When over 140 million Americans are poor or living with low-wages, it's time for systemic change. We are building a movement led by poor and impacted folks, building across all lines of division, in order to topple the interlocking pillars of racism, poverty, militarism, environmental destruction and this country's distorted moral narrative. Please help us achieve this goal by clicking below and chipping in whatever you can.*

**DONATE**

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## Recap



### **Moral mandate for ending poverty in America: kickoff and roundtable**

C-Span [aired](#) the launch of the Moral Poverty Action Congress, in which Bishop Barber led a roundtable with a variety of perspectives. With a unifying call to “Fight poverty, not the poor!” they began with a prayer of remembrance for Pamela Rush, who died on July 3, 2020 from complications related to COVID-19. Her testimony on living in poverty is one we will not forget.

Powerful words from poor and low-income activists followed, after which Bishop Barber posed questions to the panel on the theme of “abolishing poverty.”

- David Brady, PhD, a professor at UC Riverside School of Public Policy, shared research on poverty and mortality, estimating that the costs of poverty to the US are in the “hundreds of billions of dollars, not to mention the long-term costs of squandered potential.”
- Valerie Wilson, PhD, director of the Program on Race, Ethnicity and the Economy (PREE) at the Economic Policy Institute, spoke of the pandemic public health crisis and policy response, saying “we have a poverty pandemic to address now, at scale.”

- Valerie Eguavoen, an associate director at Yale Divinity School, concluded the panel. "It is this nation's duty to provide for its people," she said. "That is what governments are for. There is a third reason beyond the moral and economic reasons to alleviate poverty: It is because it is our duty as a country."

We encourage you to watch the [roundtable](#).

## PPC in the media

### **"As pandemic-era benefits unwind, Poor People's Campaign wants lawmakers to address poverty"**

[USA Today](#) reported on the Moral Poverty Action Congress, highlighting that PPC leaders from more than 30 states are meeting with lawmakers to demand action as pandemic-era programs are discontinued and states prepare to remove millions of people from Medicaid coverage. The article quotes Bishop Barber, who spoke of the contributing factors of poverty as a singular problem: "We connect all of it together. It's not a separate issue. We're going to call on them to put aside the deflection, the culture wars and the partisanship and to focus on the fact that Americans are dying from poverty in the wealthiest nation."

### **"Coalition Convenes in DC to Fight 'American Death Sentence' of Poverty"**

[Common Dreams](#) also reported on the Congress, highlighting the presentation from Professor David Brady of UC Riverside, who presented findings on the stark toll of poverty. He shared that cumulatively, poverty caused 295,431 deaths in 2019. "We should think of poverty as a huge driver of mortality," he said. "Poverty kills 5 times more than firearms and 2.5 times more than drug overdoses."

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*Thanks for reading. If you have any questions, you are welcome to reply to this newsletter or email [california@poorpeoplescampaign.org](mailto:california@poorpeoplescampaign.org).*