

CALIFORNIA



Good morning! In this issue...

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News



We pledge our power, our voices, our votes, our protest!

Not deterred by the heat, humidity and approaching thunderstorms, tens of thousands of people from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C. for the The Mass Poor People's and Low Wage Workers' Assembly and Moral March to declare "We are the swing vote!" The crowd included low-wage and no-wage workers as well as religious, labor, and social justice organizations.

"Bottom-up struggles are the only force that can deliver what we need," said national PPC co-chair Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis. "We say: Poverty no more, we demand justice for the poor! Because everybody has got the right to live!" Bishop Barber explained: "We came here today to represent America's largest potential swing vote: poor and low-wage people who make this country work," noting that in every state where the margin of victory in 2020 was within 3%, poor and low-wage voters make up over 43% of the electorate.



"We know how much is at stake in this election," said SEIU Secretary-Treasurer Rocio Saenz, one of the many speakers from the podium. "This election is about our democracy, our economy, our future. We won't be distracted and we won't be divided. When we organize, we win."



Pictured: the California PPC delegation in Washington, D.C.

The Supreme Court's decision on *Grants Pass v. Johnson* allowing cities to arrest people who are unhoused and sleeping outside was weighing on people's minds. Rev. Theoharis declared, "It is wrong for the highest court in the land to criminalize homelessness, to rule that you cannot breathe in public — on a bench, in your car or in a park — if you do not have a home." California delegate Michelle Tonn added, "The Supreme Court ruling could have devastating effects on our unhoused neighbors. We need to get out the vote, especially among people experiencing homelessness."



California quad-chair Rose Gudiel Escobar, who attended with her ten-year old daughter Melany, reflected on her experience, "This trip gives me a sense of responsibility to be the voice of the future generations. Those in office have a responsibility to invest in them prior to investing in militarism. The time is now to go out and vote because we are and always will be the swing vote - if we exercise our right TO VOTE!"



On the home front in California, PPC supporters Gloria Meneses-Sandoval and Luis Bautista organized a watch party in Merced. Gloria described the day: “We had about 35 in attendance with many passionate people expressing themselves in English and Spanish. We showed parts of the Washington, D.C. event on screen and read the 17 points out loud. There was a lot of excitement and it made the Poor People's Campaign real in Merced! Voter registration, education and voting will be followed up soon. We were all jazzed up!”

Our national goal is to mobilize 15 million poor and low-wage infrequent voters ahead of this year’s pivotal elections. We’ll need everyone to get there! Let us know you’re all in by signing this [pledge](#).

Read on for media coverage, and watch the June 29th video replay in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

TAKE THE PLEDGE



Images above courtesy of California PPC

Upcoming meetings

Los Angeles regional meeting Sunday July 7, 3pm | [RSVP](#)

Join us to hear from our delegates who were in D.C. in person, and impressions from folks watching at home. And we're planning for our campaign to the polls! We'll talk about local and state ballot measures and share ideas on reaching voters in our communities. Invite your neighbors, families and friends—all are welcome. [RSVP](#) to let us know you're coming.

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

PPC in the media



The June 29th Mass Assembly on Washington, D.C. generated significant interest and was covered widely in the press, by local and national news, and diverse communities of faith in attendance at the Mass Assembly, including [WUSA9](#), [United Church of Christ](#), [Baptist Standard](#), and [National Council of Jewish Women and the American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council](#), among many more: read the highlights below.

“Poor people are the new swing vote”

An opinion piece by Bishop Barber was featured in the [Washington Informer](#), [Florida Courier](#) and the [Indianapolis Recorder](#), highlighting the significance of the moral fusion movement and mass mobilization of voters underway. In his piece, he writes, “Both Democrats and Republicans have ignored low-income voters for decades precisely because they are unlikely voters. But when the nonpartisan Poor People’s Campaign, which I serve as a co-chair, surveyed poor people to ask why they don’t vote, the number one reason they gave was, “No one speaks to us.”

He continued, “This is why our campaign has committed to holding a Mass Poor People’s and Low-Wage Workers Assembly in Washington, D.C., on June 29. We are bringing the everyday people who’ve demanded better wages from their bosses to Washington and insist that Republicans, Democrats and Independents make clear what they will do to address the needs of 135 million Americans who are living on the edge in the richest nation in the history of the world. And we are committing to go home to our communities and reach 15 million of the unlikely low-income voters with the message that they have power in 2024.”

Thousands of faith leaders, union members, activists rally for poor

[Religion News](#) shared reflections on the importance of the Mass Assembly from a variety of perspectives from faith leaders in attendance, as well as on the presidential debate and the Supreme Court decision.

Bishop Barber highlighted the importance of turning out the vote of poor and low-wealth voters, saying, “Like the Prophet Moses, honored by Jews, Muslims and Christians, led the people out of bondage of Egypt, it’s time to rise.” He continued, “Like the dry bones in the valley of Ezekiel’s vision, we’ve got to rise. Like the ancient vision of the prophet, when the stones that the builders rejected became the chief cornerstone of a new reality, we have got to rise.”

Poor People’s Campaign: “We are the swing votes in this election”

[People’s World](#) highlighted labor union anchor partners in attendance at the Mass Assembly. CPUSA co-chair Joe Sims echoed other partners when he said, “It’s always important for poor and working-class people to come together to address these pressing issues.” He added, emphasizing, “They have a very important statement here, ‘We are the swing vote,’ and that’s really true. The people who are dismissed, disowned, and demeaned are forced out of the political process. They have come together to express their values, and that will make a difference. And we walk the walk for them.”



‘We are a Resurrection’: Poor People’s Campaign Rallies for Low-Wage Voters [Common Dreams](#) provided clear-eyed coverage of the Mass Assembly on Saturday, sharing the aim of the moral fusion movement to “break the silence of poverty” leading up to the November election, and bring the needs of the poor and low-wealth into the political conversation.

Bishop Barber said the movement would appeal to the political conventions that, "If you want these votes, then you have to talk to us, not about what you've done, but what you're going to do in the days to come, because our votes must rise."

He continued, "There will be no democracy worth saving if it doesn't lift the lives of poor and low-wage people all over this world. This is not a moment, this is a movement that must rise until we lift this nation from the bottom so that everybody rises."

“A message for Washington: poor people vote”

The [St. Louis American](#) featured a piece with an interview of Bishop Barber, who shared, “we plan to address the needs of all of America, poor and low wage people, by building a moral fusion movement.” He then elaborated, saying, “We will have white women from West Virginia and Black women from the Delta standing together to demand a moral public policy agenda that makes it so that poverty is no longer the fourth-leading cause of death in the United States.”

Forward Together, Not One Step Back!

Thanks for reading. If you have any questions, you are welcome to reply to this newsletter or email california@poorpeoplescampaign.org.