

Voting is Power Unleashed Program Talking Points

Poor People's Campaign Goals

1) Shift the narrative

- Taking on the false and limited definition of poverty that we have been told and revealing the truth about the 140 million (and growing) poor people in the US.
- Talking about the issues that affect the majority of the people the majority of the time but get little attention in our national discourse such as our lack of healthcare, clean water, living wages, voting rights, and more.
- Changing the narrator by insisting those most impacted speak for themselves and are part of the leadership of this Campaign.
- Drawing connections between the five issues of the Campaign (systemic racism, systemic poverty, ecological devastation, militarism and the war economy, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism) and not letting these issues to be separated or those most impacted by them to be isolated.

We need this shift in order to galvanize the 140 million poor people in the United States and have them hear themselves and their condition, to be able to make politicians pass policies that we need and that meet our demands, and to be able to imagine what is possible when we get organized.

Shifting the narrative is not just about being in the media or simply talking and changing the words we use. Instead we put the plight, fight, and insight of those most impacted by injustice into the center of national discourse and politics and make our political and economic system have to address these life and death issues. We will no longer be silent or allow ourselves to be silenced, distracted, or talked at and around.

2) Build power

- Organizing, mobilizing, base-building and outreach.
- Identifying and consolidating emerging leaders and deepening their clarity, commitment, capacity and connectedness to build the Campaign.
- Bringing people together across lines of difference to fight for a common agenda.
- Inspiring communities to stay engaged for the long haul.

Power means unity and organization. This is only a Poor People's Campaign if we actually unite and organize large segments of poor and low-income people across racial and geographic lines in the United States. When looking at history and current politics, we recognize the importance of the South, and uniting across race and geography into a fusion movement.

Power means the ability to make demands and have them met. Our demands grow more possible when we are an organized force; in the words of Frederick Douglass, "power concedes nothing without a demand." Currently those in power benefit from systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, and militarism and the war economy. They are kept in power by a distorted moral narrative of Christian nationalism and they do not want the system to change. Therefore, we must

build up the will and force to transform the system even when the powers and principalities want to stop us.

Registering People for the Movement Who Votes

1. We're specifically saying our votes are not support, but our demands. Our votes are saying we won't be silent any more, and are demanding that the issues of the 140 million poor, low-wealth, and low-wage people and low-wage workers are addressed by those in office. Issues that address the five interlocking injustices.
2. Our voice and our power will be heard! Not just an audible voice, but an action voice: our votes will speak! We are committed to the streets, the community, the political suites of the Congress and State General Assemblies, the courts and the ballot box.
3. We are uniting people around the 3rd Reconstruction Agenda to build long-term power. We do not endorse candidates but call on candidates to endorse our agenda. We know from our work today and from our history that when poor people come together across race, gender, geography, and issue areas uniting around an agenda, we have the power to impact elections and to revive the heart and soul of our democracy and our nation.
4. Mobilize, Organize, Register, and Educate people for a movement that votes in a way that strategically builds our base, develops and consolidates new leaders, strengthens our statewide organizing, and connects us with poor and low-income communities in struggle who, in the midst of these deepening crises, are ready to join a movement.