

# The Right to Health and a Healthy Planet: Ecological Devastation and Health Care

## Quotes about Ecological Devastation

- “We must make it clear that we are concerned about the survival of the world.”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967

- “When these corporations are in control of water, then no one is going to be able to have access to it. They take it over in poor communities first, because they feel there will be less resistance and the poor don’t have as much of a voice. But ultimately, what they are talking about is sinister and it’s going to impact everybody.”

Catherine Flowers, Alabama Center for Rural Enterprise, 2018

Source: “The Souls of Poor Folk” report



## Poor People’s Campaign

### A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

## Ecological Devastation

**Did you know 13.8 million U.S. households cannot afford water?**

- People and communities who are experiencing racism, poverty, and a militarized society have borne the brunt of the pollution that is the inevitable consequence of the elevation of profit over people and planet.
- The political power of the fossil fuel industry and the consequent governmental inaction on climate change are a vivid illustration of how racial, economic, and other forms of inequality are structural and institutionalized in the U.S. political system.
- The poorest 20% of U.S. households on average spend 2.8% of their income on water bills, up from 2.5% in 1984. The wealthiest 20% spend approximately 0.4% of their income on water bills, which has remained essentially unchanged since 1984.
- Between 1964 and 2015, there were 2,441 spills from offshore oil drilling operations in U.S. territorial waters, discharging almost 5.2 million barrels (218 million gallons) of oil.

**The truth is that our policies have not fundamentally valued human life or the ecological systems in which we live. Instead, it has prioritized private, corporate and financial interests over our precious natural resources.**

**We have a fundamental right to clean water, air and a healthy environment and public resources to monitor, penalize and reverse the polluting impacts of fossil fuel industries.**

- Total U.S. natural gas production grew only 3.7% between 1970 and 2007, but then grew 34.5% from 2007 to 2017. Fracking uses large quantities of water—up to 13 million gallons per well in the Eagle Ford region of Texas—a major concern in regions where freshwater is scarce and likely to become even more scarce due to climate change. Fracking also contaminates both groundwater and surface water and releases large quantities of methane, a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

Source: Poor People’s Campaign and “The Souls of Poor Folk” report

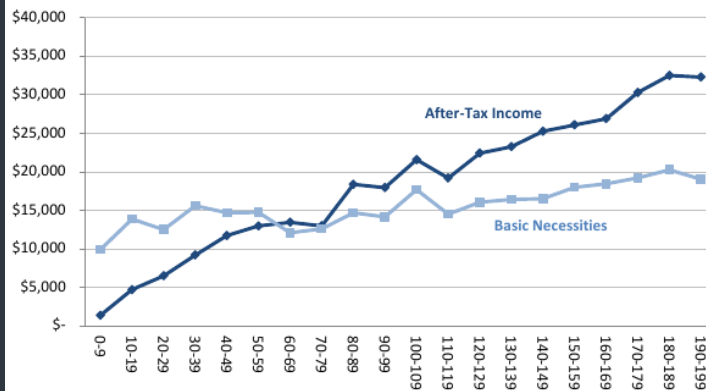
## The U.S. Military's Impact on Climate Change

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) was responsible for emitting greenhouse gases equivalent to 66.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, which was 72 percent of the U.S. government's total emissions of 91.7 million metric tons

- DoD is allowed to exempt its emissions from its overseas operations from the U.S. government's emissions reduction goals. In 2016, these exempted emissions accounted for the majority of DoD emissions (37.3 million metric tons, or 56 percent).

Source: "The Souls of Poor Folk" report

After-Tax Incomes and Expenditures on Basic Necessities (Food, Clothing, Housing, and Utilities) for Non-Elderly Families by Poverty Status



In 2015, the Department of Health and Human Services created a brief which outlined the poverty in the United States. Its findings include:

- Low-income individuals are especially sensitive to even nominal increases in medical out-of-pocket costs, and modest copayments can have the **effect of reducing access to necessary medical care.**
- Medical fees, premiums, and copayments could contribute to the financial **burden on poor adults who need to visit medical providers.**
- The problem is even more pronounced for families living in the deepest levels of poverty, who effectively have **no money available to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses** including copays for medical visits.

Source: ASPE

## Health Care in the U.S.

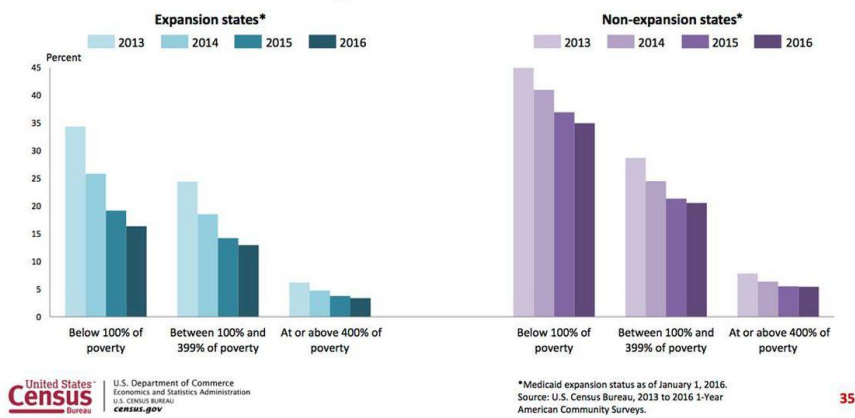
Lawmakers in Congress and in Ohio's General Assembly are moving to dismantle policies of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which provided health coverage to low- and moderate-income people.

- There are **32 million people** who lack health insurance. Further, an estimated **40% of Americans** have taken on debt because of medical issues, making medical debt the number one cause of personal bankruptcy filings.
- **The bottom 90 percent of Americans** hold more than **70 percent of debt** in the country.



Source: Poor People's Campaign

## Uninsured Rate by Poverty Status and Medicaid Expansion of State for Adults Aged 19 to 64 Years: 2013 to 2016



## Our Demands

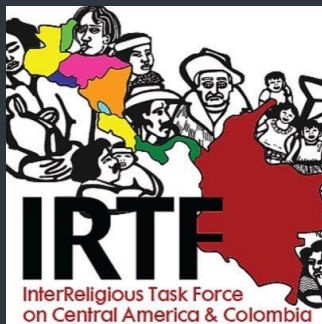
The entire list of demands for the Poor People's Campaign can be found at [www.PoorPeoplesCampaign.org](http://www.PoorPeoplesCampaign.org).

- We demand 100 percent clean, renewable energy and a public jobs program to transition to a green economy that will put millions of people in sustainable living wage jobs.
- We demand a fully funded public water and sanitation infrastructure that keeps these utilities and services under public control and that prioritize poor, rural and Native communities that have been harmed by polluting and extractive industries.
- We demand a ban on fracking, mountaintop removal coal mining, coal ash ponds, and offshore drilling. We demand a ban on all new pipelines, refineries, and coal, oil, and gas export terminals.
- We demand the protection of public lands and the immediate cessation of opening up public lands for polluting and extractive industries.
- We demand the expansion of Medicaid in every state and the protection of Medicare and single-payer universal health care for all.
- We demand the repeal of the 2017 federal tax law and the reinvestment of those funds into public programs for housing, health care, education, jobs, infrastructure and welfare for the poor.

## Overview of 40 Days of Moral Action Campaign

By engaging in highly publicized, non-violent moral fusion direct action, over a 6-week period in at least 30 states and the District of Columbia between May 13 and June 23, the Campaign will force serious nation examination of the enmeshed evils of systemic racism, systemic poverty, ecological devastation and the war economy during a key election year while strengthening connection informed and committed grassroots leadership in every state, increasing their power to continue this fight long after June 2018. During these 40 days of Moral Action, the Campaign will push forward a concrete moral agenda, and draw on art, music, popular education and religious traditions to challenge the nation's distorted moral narrative.

Source:  
Poor People's Campaign



## Sources

- Poor People's Campaign
- Policy Matters Ohio
- Department of Health and Human Services, ASPE (Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation)
- The United States Census

## 40 Days Campaign Information

- **Week One (May 13-19):** Somebody's Hurting Our People: Child poverty, Women, and People with Disabilities
- **Week Two (May 20-26):** Linking Systemic Racism and Poverty: Voting Rights and Immigration
- **Week Three (May 27-June 2):** The War Economy, Veterans, Proliferation of Gun Violence, Education and Our National Priorities
- **Week Four (June 3-9):** Ecological Devastation and Health
- **Week Five (June 10-16):** Everybody's Got the Right to Live: Jobs, Income and Housing
- **Week Six (June 17-22):** A New and Unsettling Force
- **Saturday, June 23:** Mass rally in Washington D.C. and Global Day of Solidarity

Each Monday (we will gather on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, the week of Memorial Day), people will gather at Trinity Episcopal Church in Columbus, Ohio to participate in training. We will then move to the Statehouse for a rally.

- 11:00 AM-12:00 PM: Pre-rally training and coordination meeting for Direct Action Participants, Peace Team and Marshalls at Trinity Episcopal Church
- 2:00 PM- 3:00 PM: Poor People's Campaign Action: Somebody's Hurting Our People at the Ohio Statehouse

## Social Media

### National:

- **Poor People's Campaign:**
  - Website: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>
  - Email: [info@poorpeoplescampaign.org](mailto:info@poorpeoplescampaign.org)
  - Press Request: [press@poorpeoplescampaign.org](mailto:press@poorpeoplescampaign.org)
  - Twitter: @UniteThe Poor
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aneppc/>

### Ohio

- **Ohio Poor People's Campaign**
  - Twitter: @OhioPPC
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OhioPPC/>

### Cleveland

- **IRTF Cleveland**
  - Website: <https://www.irtfcleveland.org/>
  - Email: [IRTF@irtfcleveland.org](mailto:IRTF@irtfcleveland.org)
  - Twitter: @IRTFcleveland
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IRTF1981/>
  - Instagram: @IRTFcleveland
  - Snapchat: @IRTFcleveland

