

# A New and Unsettling Force: Confronting the Distorted Moral Narrative

*Woe unto those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the homeless child*  
-Isaiah 10



## A New and Unsettling Force

Fifty years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and others called for a “revolution of values” in the US. They invited people who had been divided to stand together against the “triplets of evil” (militarism, racism, and economic injustice) to insist that people need not die from poverty in the richest nation to ever exist. He joined with people across the country like Myles Horton of the Highlander Center, Loretta Two Crow of National Welfare Rights, Cesar Chávez of United Farm Workers, Al McSurely of the Appalachian Walker of the United Indian Scholarship Fund, and John Lewis of the Southern Regional Council. Together with poor people in communities across the United States—black, white, brown, and Native—they responded by building a Poor People’s Campaign. We draw on the history, vision and unfinished work of the 1968 Poor People’s Campaign. We take as our task reigniting that campaign to unite the poor, disenfranchised, and marginalized to take action together and become what Dr. King called “a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life.”

The call for a *Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival* has emerged from more than a decade of work by grassroots community and religious leaders, organizations and movements fighting to end systemic racism, poverty, militarism, environmental destruction, and related injustices and to build a just, sustainable, and participatory society. The Campaign aims to build a broad and deep national moral movement—rooted in the leadership of poor people and reflecting the great moral teachings—to unite our country from the bottom.

*The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival* will necessarily be a multi-year undertaking. During this key election year, we will engage in highly publicized civil disobedience and direct action over a 6-week period in at least 30 states and the District of Columbia. During this key election year, the Campaign will force a serious national examination of four enmeshed evils: **systemic racism, poverty that stems from extreme materialism, militarism, and environmental devastation.**

# National Arrest Rates

Every Monday, individuals that participate in the act of civil disobedience risk arrest to call national attention to the Poor People's Campaign.

- **Week One:**  
approximately  
1,000  
individuals
- **Week Two:**  
approximately  
350 individuals
- **Week Three:**
- **Week Four:**
- **Week Five:**



## The Poor People's Campaign is Getting National News Coverage

Major news outlets such as NPR, New York Magazine, Washington Post, and the LA Times have all reported on the 40 Days of Moral Action

Over the past two years, the *Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival* has reached out to communities in more than 30 states across this nation. We have met with tens of thousands of people, witnessing their moral courage in trying times. We have gathered testimonies from hundreds of poor people and chronicled their demands for a better society.

*The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America* report reveals how the enmeshed evils of systemic racism, extreme materialism and poverty, ecological devastation, and the war economy are persistent, pervasive, and perpetuated by a distorted moral narrative that must be challenged. We must acknowledge the human and economic costs of inequality. When confronted with the undeniable truth of unconscionable cruelty toward our fellow human beings, we must join the ranks of those who are determined not to rest until justice and equality are a reality for all.



# Our Demands

This list was delivered to Ohio Gubernatorial Candidates Anita Ríos, Richard Cordray, and Mike DeWine the first week of the campaign.

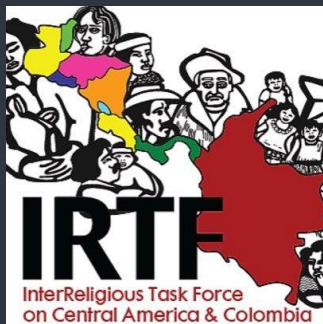
- Health care for all; protect and expand Medicare and Medicaid which many older and disabled Ohioans depend upon for healthcare
- End voter suppression; make Election Day a national holiday
- Ban assault weapons
- End militarism and the war economy; don't give military weapons from the Pentagon to city police departments, resulting in police violence against poor communities
- \$15 minimum wage
- Keep SNAP, HEAP and other programs
- Increase funding for public education
- End hunger and food deserts
- Decrease foreclosures
- Access to clean water for all
- Access to plumbing for all
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Ban fracking and injection wells

Source: Poor People's Campaign

## Overview of 40 Days of Moral Action Campaign

By engaging in highly publicized, nonviolent 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 national examination of the enmeshed evils of systemic racism, systemic poverty, ecological devastation and the war economy during a key election year, while strengthening committed grassroots leadership in every state, increasing their power to continue this fight. 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
- Center on Budget Policy Priorities
- National Center for Family and Demographic Research at Bowling Green State University
- US Department of Agriculture
- Center for American Progress

## 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
- **June 23<sup>rd</sup>:** 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

