

THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

HEALTH and a HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Our healthcare system fails to meet the needs of millions of Americans. Care is unaffordable, inaccessible, and unequal. At the same time, as a nation we spend more per person on health care than almost any other country. This money lines the pockets of health care profiteers and investors while leaving nearly 140 million people facing financial hardship as a direct result of their need for health care. It does not need to be this way: we can and must take swift action to secure to everyone the basic human right to health care and a healthy environment.

Growing health care costs mean that tens of millions of people do not get the treatment they need

- 87 million people are either uninsured or underinsured. During the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 16.2 million have likely lost their employer-provided insurance, but still the government has not provided universal health coverage.
- 11 million undocumented immigrants, many of whom were in “essential” jobs, are not eligible for public or employer provided health care.
- Medical debt is the leading cause of personal bankruptcy. A 2019 study found that 33% of Americans reported that they or someone in their family had put off getting medical treatment because of the high costs. In 2016, 43% of adults with private health insurance struggled to afford making their deductible payments.
- As of 2017, the U.S. was spending about \$3.24 trillion on personal health care. This was 17% of total U.S. GDP.

There is deep inequality and discrimination in the health care system, leading to worse care for the poor, people of color, people in rural areas, and LGBTQ+ people

- Failures of our health care system around COVID-19 crisis has made the pandemic worse in poor, black and minority communities, African Americans have died at a rate of 50.3 per 100,000 people, compared with 20.7 for whites, 22.9 for Latinos and 22.7 for Asian Americans. The Navajo Nation has a higher infection rate of any state.
- Infant mortality rates for Black infants are twice as high as for white infants, and Black women are at least three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes as non-Hispanic white women.
- In May 2019, the Trump administration announced a rule that would allow medical service providers and employers to deny health care to transgender people if they have a “religious objection” to equal rights for all.
- Since 2010, 120 rural hospitals have been closed. 12 hospitals have been closed during 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Indigenous and Native Americans have a life expectancy that is 5 ½ years lower than the United States average.

Our health is directly tied to the health of our environment: Pollution, lack of access to water and sanitation, and climate change threaten the health of all Americans

- Federal assistance to local water systems is down 74% from its peak in 1977, leading to the privatization of local water systems across the country. Poor people end up paying a higher share of their income towards water.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, 12 states, the District of Columbia and around 350 local water authorities have banned or announced a halt on consumer water shutoffs and another 19 states have partial moratoriums in effect.
- Nearly one in three Americans is at risk of not being able to afford water in 5 years.
- Of the 20 counties with the highest percentage of households lacking access to complete plumbing, all were rural, and 13 had a majority Native American or Alaskan Native population.
- Fossil fuel, chemical industries, and others were responsible for 9 million premature deaths worldwide in 2015.

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It does not need to be this way.

There is no reason for so many millions of people to be without health care or a healthy environment. We can be healthy without cutting back on other basic necessities or going into debt or bankruptcy.

- Medicare for All could reduce total health care spending in the U.S. by about 9%, to \$2.93 trillion, while covering all Americans.
- Expanding Medicaid in the 14 states that have not yet taken advantage of Affordable Care Act subsidies for Medicaid would cost the federal government \$25 billion in the first year — roughly the amount the Pentagon awards one company, Boeing, in military contracts each year.
- The contracts given to another military contractor, Lockheed Martin, could more than cover \$37.2 billion a year in water infrastructure investment, which would create up to 945,000 jobs while providing safe drinking water to thousands of communities that don't have it.
- The cost of shifting the U.S. power grid to 100% renewable energy over the next ten years is estimated to be \$4.5 trillion or approximately \$450 billion per year. This is still nearly \$2 trillion less than the \$6.4 trillion spent on wars over the past two decades, would create new jobs and make our communities more resilient to adverse climate effects.

As a nation, we must value and affirm all lives by making the human right to health care real and taking all the steps needed to secure the long-term health of our people.

Read more from the Moral Agenda here: poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands

Read more from the Poor People's Moral Budget here: poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/poor-peoples-moral-budget

Sources: *Costs*: Health Insurance Coverage Eight Years After the ACA – commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/feb/health-insurance-coverage-eight-years-after-aca; 16.2 million workers likely lost their employer-provided health insurance in the past four weeks – epi.org/blog/16-2-million-workers-have-likely-lost-employer-provided-health-insurance-since-the-coronavirus-shock-began; Administration Should Reverse Anti-Immigrant Policies That Will Worsen Impacts of Health and Economic Crises - cbpp.org/research/immigration/administration-should-reverse-anti-immigrant-policies-that-will-worsen-impacts; More American Delaying Medical Treatment Due to Cost - news.gallup.com/poll/269138/americans-delaying-medical-treatment-due-cost.aspx; Prevalence and Correlates of Medical Financial Hardship in the USA - link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-019-05002-w; Americans' Challenges with Health Care Costs - kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/data-note-americans-challenges-with-health-care-costs; Key Facts about the Uninsured Population – kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population; Economic Analysis of Medicare for All – peri.umass.edu/publication/item/1127-economic-analysis-of-medicare-for-all; *Inequality and discrimination*: Black Americans dying of Covid-19 at three times the rate of white people - theguardian.com/world/2020/may/20/black-americans-death-rate-covid-19-coronavirus; NYC's poorest neighborhoods have highest death rates from coronavirus – politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2020/05/18/poorest-nyc-neighborhoods-have-highest-death-rates-from-coronavirus-1284519; Key Facts on Health and Health Care by Race and Ethnicity - kff.org/report-sectn/key-facts-on-health-and-health-care-by-race-and-ethnicity-section-3-health-status-and-outcomes; Maternal Mortality - American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; 172 Rural Hospital Closures: January 2005 – Present (130 since 2010)- shepscenter.unc.edu/programs-projects/rural-health/rural-hospital-closures; What Do Native Americans Want From a President? - washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2019/05/13/feature/what-do-native-americans-want-from-a-president/; *Environment and climate*: Water Injustice: Economic And Racial Disparities In Access To Safe And Clean Water In The United States - foodandwaterwatch.org/sites/default/files/ib_1703_water-injustice-web.pdf; External-Local-State Water Shutoff Moratoria Amidst Coronavirus - <https://bit.ly/covid-water-moratoria>; A Burgeoning Crisis? A Nationwide Assessment of the Geography of Water Affordability in the United States - journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0169488; Basics Inequality: Race and Access to Complete Plumbing Facilities in the United States - cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/1F3C7B5E413CBD73BE480E66FABDDDD7C/S1742058X16000242a.pdf/basics_inequality.pdf; The Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health - thelancet.com/commissions/pollution-and-health; Climate Vulnerability Monitor: A Guide to the Cold Calculus of a Hot Planet – daraint.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CVM2-Low.pdf; *Solutions*: Economic Analysis of Medicare for All (see above); Spending by Transaction - usaspending.gov/#/keyword_search/Boeing; Top 100 Defense Contractors 2018 - fi-aeroweb.com/Top-100-Defense-Contractors.html; Green Growth: A U.S. Program for Controlling Climate Change and Expanding Job Opportunities – americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2014/09/18/96404/green-growth; <https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/No-Warming-No-War-Climate-Militarism-Primer.pdf>; <https://www.ecowatch.com/navajo-nation-covid-19-infection-rate-2646033759.html>

