

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

SEPTEMBER 2020, VOL. 47, NO. 6

peopletribune.org

## A bold movement's journey to justice:

The recent March on Washington was a call to action against racism and police killings of African Americans and about the urgency of voting.

Photo /  
T.J. Davis



## Next step —

# OUST TRUMP!

Cancel Rent  
Rally,  
New York City

Photo /  
Erik McGregor



Labor Day, 2020: Organizing  
for Worker Rights

Stop Evictions & Foreclosures

Fighting for Immigrants

Healthcare is a Right

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## Welcome to the People's Tribune Digital Edition

We are doing issues in digital form because of the pandemic crisis, for financial reasons, and to facilitate the digital distribution of the People's Tribune. Please remember that we are supported entirely by donations, and we do still need your continued financial support. And please circulate this digital edition to your email lists and through social media.

As always, we welcome your feedback at [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org) or [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org).

773-486-3551, People's Tribune, P.O. Box 577250, Chicago, IL 60657-7331

Thank you!

## 'This is the revolution'

In this edition of the People's Tribune we continue to highlight voices calling for unity against a dangerous police state, for Black Lives, immigrant rights, defunding police, rent relief, climate, water, health care — for democracy and a just America. As Frank Nitty, organizer of a 750-mile walk from Milwaukee to the March on Washington told the crowd: "We need to get organized together as a nation of activists so we can call on each other whenever we need help. Everyone that came messing with us (on our march) had Trump's signs, Trump 2020. That's the new way they exhibit racism in this country and hide behind it. So we got to vote Trump out. This is the revolution." ■



Wisconsin youth (SKATE4 Black Lives!) ride in memorial to two protesters killed by a right-wing vigilante. One of the fallen heroically tried to use his skateboard to subdue the shooter.

*Photo / Joe Brusky*

## About the People's Tribune

The People's Tribune is devoted to the understanding that an economic system that doesn't feed, clothe, house, or care for its people must be and will be replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of the people. It is a voice of millions of everyday people who are fighting to survive in an America in crisis. It helps build connections among these fighters and the awareness that together, we can create a whole new society and world.

Today, technology is permanently eliminating jobs. Our needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where we the people, not the corporations, own the technology and the abundance it produces. Then, everyone's needs will be provided for.

We welcome articles and artwork from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. We rely on readers and contributors to fund and distribute this paper.

The People's Tribune, formerly published by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, is now an independent newspaper with an editorial board based in Chicago.

Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

*Designed by Mauricio Rivera / Rivera Design & Illustration*

# A bold movement's journey to justice: Next step — Oust Trump!

By the **Editors**

This year has been a time of great sorrow but also of magnificent rebellion. Voters flocked to the polls in the earliest primaries — to cast their ballots for the presidential candidates who supported universal health care. Later, when the pandemic struck, millions demanded safe working conditions for essential workers — and economic security for all. When George Floyd was murdered, massive street protests began against systemic racism and police violence.

This vibrant grassroots movement has confronted political leaders both in the streets and in the electoral arena.

At the Democratic National Convention, more than 1,000 delegates voted against a party platform that rejected Medicare For All. And without the gigantic protests which followed the murder of George Floyd, the historic nomination at that convention of the first black woman to be selected as the vice-presidential candidate of a major party would never have happened.

Today's battle for transformative change has never been about simply getting rid of one man. At the same time, everything that the movement is fighting for could be destroyed soon — depending on what happens on Election Day 2020.

The Republican National Convention provided irrefutable proof that the Trump campaign has become the banner of an open fascist movement — funded by a section of corporate America and the ideological right. The horrific events in Kenosha show that this fascist movement is militarized, racist, and murderous. If Trump has four more years in office, what little that remains of American democracy could be destroyed. *Trump and his allies must be stopped.*

Sincere, militant leaders of the fight for justice — people who are completely independent of the Democratic establishment — have reluctantly concluded that there's only one certain way to defeat Trump: voting for Joe Biden. For millions waging the fight for economic, environmental, and racial justice, that vote won't constitute an endorsement of Biden's personality, past, or program. It will simply be recognizing the indisputable fact that Trump and his vicious fascist movement present a unique danger. As one young leader of the environmental movement told fellow activists on a conference call, a vote for Biden is not "a bet on Biden; it's a bet on our movement."

We need a massive turn-out of voters this autumn. That's the only way to beat Trump decisively, thwart voter suppression, and ensure that the genuine progressives prevail in the down-ballot races. Voting is only one tool in the tool box of social change, but it's one we must use this year. After the election, this new grassroots movement will need to keep pressing its demands for justice.

This is the most important election since 1860. Our country stands at a fork in the road. Sometimes, the best in a people can be summoned only when the danger is the greatest. Our ancestors spilled their blood into Antietam creek and on Normandy beach to stop slaveholders and Nazis. That part of the American character — so often concealed — will show itself again. Donald Trump can and will be defeated — setting the stage for the further unleashing and unity of the movement. ■



Our country stands at a fork in the road.

*Meme from FB*

## AOC highlights need for systemic change at DNC

"Good evening, bienvenidos, and thank you to everyone here today endeavoring towards a better, more just future for our country and our world.

"In fidelity and gratitude to a mass people's movement working to establish 21st century social, economic, and human rights, including guaranteed health care, higher education, living wages, and labor rights for all people in the United States; a movement striving to recognize and repair the wounds of racial injustice, colonization, misogyny, and homophobia, and to propose and build reimagined systems of immigration and foreign policy that turn away from the violence and xenophobia of our past; a movement that realizes the unsustainable brutality of an economy that rewards explosive inequalities of wealth for the few at the expense of long-term stability for the many, and who organized an historic, grassroots campaign to reclaim our democracy.

"In a time when millions of people in the United States are looking for deep systemic solutions to our crises of mass evictions, unemployment, and lack of health care, and espíritu del pueblo, and out of a love for all people, I hereby second the nomination of Senator Bernard Sanders of Vermont for president of the United States of America." ■



Rep. Alexandria  
Ocasio-Cortez

# VOICES of the ELECTIONS

## Women leading the fight for change

New leaders, especially women, are stepping forward to challenge the status quo in this country, using the electoral arena to fight for justice. On this page, we highlight some of those battles, efforts to give a political voice to the previously unrepresented and thwart voter suppression. March. Protest. Strike. Vote. — *The Editors*

**Christina Haswood,**  
*running for Kansas House*

"The 100th anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave women the right to vote but let it be noted, not all women were able to vote. Women of color continued their fight state by state and for decades until the federal voting protection law, Voting Rights Act of 1965, was passed. We celebrate this important step in history that helped bring voting equality. Today, we must continue to fight against voter disenfranchisement so that all our voices are heard in November." (FB)

*Christina is one of four Native candidates in Kansas who won in the primaries.*

**Paula Jean Swearingin,**  
*running for U.S. Senate from West Virginia*

"We face big issues: the most immediately urgent is the pandemic, but we also face a climate crisis, a student debt crisis, a crisis of healthcare, an addiction crisis, a foster care crisis, an unemployment crisis, crumbling infrastructure, authoritarian overreach. . . Yet these pressing issues are not the problems our government-of-the-moneyed sets about solving. . . . Join me. Let's make it our time NOW."



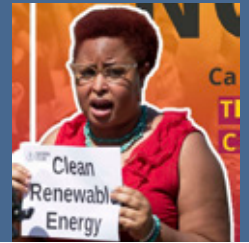
**Cori Bush,**  
*running for Congress from Missouri*

"In this 65th year since Emmett Till was lynched: Jacob Blake is laying paralyzed . . . with seven bullet holes in his back. Breonna Taylor went to bed and never woke up. George Floyd called out for his mother. We all have so much work left to do."(FB)



**Marquita Bradshaw,** *running for U.S. Senate from Tennessee*

"People here know how important it is for an environmental-justice voice to be in the U.S. Senate ... It's about the importance of shaping a just transition away from pollution. People's health and lives are on the line. ... No longer can we ignore the internal threats of pollution in the environment, systemic racism, inequality in education and so much more." (FB)



## Women's Suffrage Celebration: 100 Years Later

'We stand on your shoulders to push humanity forward'

By the **People's Tribune**

Celebrations are taking place today because valiant and courageous women secured women's right to vote via the 19th Amendment, which was ratified August 18, 1920. Here were cadres of women (and supportive men) who suffered imprisonment and police brutality, who were force-fed when they went on Hunger Strikes, and more. How could the suffragists win the passage of this historic amendment when they themselves could not vote—and in the middle of the 1918-1920 flu pandemic, no less. In the early years of the movement many women's groups modeled their activities from the anti-slavery /abolitionist movement. Their victory stands as an inspiration to all who fight to advance the causes of humanity.

Days after the Trump inauguration in 2016, women's groups organized what was hailed as the biggest March on Washington in history. In 1920, shortly before winning the right to vote, women marched on Washington at the inauguration, sending a clear message to the newly elected president, Woodrow Wilson. The 2018 election cycle brought forward historic numbers of women candidates to Congress. Furthermore, that same

election cycle produced the most diverse Congress in history. Just as the 1918 pandemic did not detour the struggle, today's COVID-19 pandemic has if anything emboldened women candidates. The 2020 election cycle has already outpaced 2018; 574 women ran in primaries for Congress, up 20% from 2018! What's key is that a growing number are running on social justice platforms. The coronavirus pandemic has elevated the fight for Single-payer Healthcare. Paula Jean Swearingin, Democratic candidate for US Senate from West Virginia, has made this a centerpiece of her campaign, picking up an endorsement from Bernie Sanders. The George Floyd murder brought national and international outcries to end police brutality and systemic racism. These events no doubt impacted the decision to tap Kamala Harris as Joe Biden's VP pick. It also churned up the momentum for congressional candidates like Cori Bush (D-Missouri)—a Black Lives Matter veteran—and Marquita Bradshaw (D-Tenn), an environmental racism fighter, to win their history-making primaries.

We say to all Women who labored to secure the 19th Amendment, salute!

We stand firmly on your shoulders to push Humanity Forward! ■

Thousands joined the Commitment March on Washington, a call to action against racism and police killings of African Americans. Among the speakers were relatives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Eric Garner, and young visionaries such as those below.

## Martin Luther King's granddaughter: We will fulfil his dream

*Excerpts from a speech by Yolanda Renee King, MLK's 12 year old granddaughter:*

"The worst economic crisis since the great depression, more extreme weather than ever . . . but great challenges produce great leaders. We have mastered the selfie and TikTok. Now, we must master ourselves. Less than a year before he was assassinated, my grandfather predicted this very moment. He said we were moving into a new phase of the struggle. The first phase was the civil rights and the new stage is genuine equality and genuine equality is why we are here today, and why people are coming together all across the world from New Zealand to New Jersey. He said that we must not forget the days of Montgomery. We must not forget the sit in movements, the freedom rides, the Birmingham movement and Selma. Papa King, we won't!

"My generation has already taken to the streets peacefully and with masks and social distancing to protest racism. And I want to ask the young people here to join me and pledge that we

have only just begun to fight. And that we will be the generation that moves from 'me' to 'we'. We are going to be the generation that dismantles systemic racism, once and for all, now and forever. We are going to be the generation that calls a halt to police brutality and gun violence. We have to be the generation that reverses climate change and saves our planet. And we are going to be the generation that ends poverty here in America, the wealthiest nation on earth, once and for all, now and forever. We are the legends of our grandparents, great grandparents and all our ancestors, We stand and march for love and we will fulfill my grandfather's dream. So, show we what democracy look like! This is what democracy looks like! One more time. Ok then. Let's show them!" ■



Yolanda Renee King

## Parkland survivor addresses gun violence and police violence



Aaliyah Eastman

*Excerpts from a speech from Aaliyah Eastman, a survivor of the Parkland school shooting.*

"I am one of the millions of young black women who make up the backbone of the American progressive movement . . . my journey of activism started by a senseless act of gun violence. When a fellow student opened fire in my classroom in Parkland, Florida, as I laid beneath the lifeless body of my classmate Nicholas Torres, to survive, as bullets riddled my classmates. . . . I was then born again with a voice that cannot and will not be muzzled . . . My brush with death by a gun is . . . an experience that is shared by too many of our generation. I am not the first in my family to be affected by gun violence. My Uncle Patrick was gunned down in the streets of Brooklyn at the age of 18, just months after being beaten by New York police who deemed his black body in a white neighborhood a threat . . .

"Law enforcement has failed to prevent the flow of guns into black communities [and] perpetuated violence . . . studies show that persistent gun violence in poor communities of color

directly results from centuries of disadvantages, economic deprivation and policymaking. Gun violence is the last domino to fall at the end of a long line of racism, trauma, and indifference.

"But this is not inevitable. Community-based intervention programs throughout this country have proven that holistic culturally sensitive embedded teams can stop violence before it starts. We demand funding for these programs. . .

"[As] I talk about gun violence, I address police violence . . . there is a need for a national conversation of defunding police departments and refunding our communities. We must reallocate those funds into schools, jobs, and the needs for a comfortable life. We must empower citizens of the community being policed to hold their local forces accountable . . . We demand to live in peace . . . but this dream . . . cannot be realized until we get a federal government with our best interests at heart. For our part, the Brady team is engaged in a campaign is to remove barriers to casting a ballot, making vote by mail available to all, to ensure ballot drop boxes are distributed equitably, restoring voting rights of Americans."

*Aaliyah is executive council member of Brady's youth-led team, ENOUGH.* ■

## Housing relief now — and ongoing!

*By the Editors*

On September 1, in the midst of the pandemic, the limited federal eviction moratorium ended, setting millions of renters and mortgage-payers up for losing their housing. This as unemployment is at an historic high, leaving struggling people at risk of ruin. Millions, including those who have never known poverty, are struggling with hunger and to pay their bills.

Now the President has ordered a moratorium on evictions that will give renters and home owners temporary reprieve from being evicted until December 31. Diane Yentel of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, who praises the order as “unprecedented” and “long overdue,” also says, this is a “half-measure that extends a financial cliff for renters to fall off of when the moratorium expires and back rent is owed.” (Politico). Millions will not be in financial shape to pay at the end of the moratorium. A tsunami of evictions is expected eventually, with many falling into homelessness.

The federal stimulus package (passed in March) gave billions in tax breaks to wealthy real estate developers — and a pittance given to the people. We need guaranteed income for all, as well as canceling the rents during this deadly emergency, and beyond as needed, to keep us in our homes and safe.

The housing crisis is showing the moral and economic bankruptcy of a system run by billionaires and corporations. The fight to cancel the rent, stop evictions, and house the homeless is a fight for a society where everyone is guaranteed a decent life.

Housing relief now, and ongoing!



Cancel Rent, New York City

*Photo / Erik McGregor*

## Organizing collectively to stop Chicago evictions

*The People's Tribune's Bob Lee interviewed Antonio Gutierrez, one of the cofounders of Chicago's Autonomous Tenants Union (ATU) and a tenant organizer with ATU. Below are excerpts. A longer version will appear on the People's Tribune Latest News site. Learn more about the ATU at [www.autonomoustenantsunion.org](http://www.autonomoustenantsunion.org).*



**People's Tribune:** Can you update us on what's happening in Chicago around tenants fighting evictions?

**Antonio Gutierrez:** Governor Pritzker has extended the moratorium on evictions in Illinois to September 22, and then the eviction court will start up again. But we also know that illegal eviction filings [by landlords] are still occurring, at least in Cook County. There's over 950 filings that have occurred based on our research, and as soon as September 22 comes, those 950 or more cases will then be in eviction court. There's concern that tenants won't have the tools to really defend their rights in those courts.

You also see other tactics of harassment, of increasing rents, of just technically giving 30 days notices for no reason to scare tenants away and put them on the street in the middle of the pandemic. And there's unclarity about how many people are being evicted through these methods, or scare tactics like calling immigration, as those things are not being documented. I think we're going to see a huge increase in our homeless population.

ATU is demanding the cancellation of rent during all the Covid-19 months that we had an executive order or closure of the state, and while the moratorium exists and potentially even beyond, until the economy goes back to normal. And that also includes a moratorium on foreclosures as well, or mortgage payments for homeowners. We also demand that these eviction filings that occurred since April 23, when Governor Pritzker declared eviction filings illegal, need to be dismissed, so that those tenants don't face eviction court once the moratorium lifts on September 22. [And we support the] proposed ordinance for Just Cause Eviction, which is in the Chicago City Council Housing Committee right now.

There are demands at the current moment that go beyond housing and public health concerns, and that extend through all the social fabric in our communities. These are not being addressed, in my opinion, in order to protect our economic system, capitalism, to protect the understanding that we have about what private property rights look like... The relief programs are really just breadcrumbs... The only way we will obtain what our communities need is by organizing and demanding it collectively. ■

## Homes not Zones in Hollywood, CA

By **General Dogon**

*Homeless organizer General Dogon comments while leading an action by Services not Sweeps, a Los Angeles city-wide coalition.*

You can't solve a homeless crisis when the city gives 52% to 54% of the general fund to the police. You can't solve a housing crisis when the L.A. Police Department gets 87% of the homeless budget. You damn sure can't solve a homeless problem when you got racist initiatives like the Safer Cities Initiative where they spent over a million dollars annually over the past 10 years just on the police, just on Skid Row.

It started out, 150 tents on Skid Row, now it's 5,000; they are all over the place and it's because the city has been criminalizing homelessness. It doesn't have a damn thing to do with clean-ups. All this shit started as a result of the city trying to wiggle its way out of a lawsuit, *Tony Lavan v. the City of Los Angeles*, (a temporary restraining order barring L.A. from "confiscating personal property of the homeless when not abandoned and destroying it without notice").

The city threw its hands up, they couldn't take people's property, so the city, even the police, said well . . . if we don't have the right to take homeless people's property, we're not going to pick up trash, we're not going to dump trash, we're not going to clean up because we can't tell the difference between what is homeless people's property and what is trash. So they allowed it to pile up, they never did dump shit and then they went around and took pictures and took them to court and said, "Look, this is what happens when you don't allow us to take homeless



Protest in Hollywood to prevent the city from taking people's property at homeless encampments.

people's property, it piles up like this." Then in 2012, the county did their public assessment of Skid Row.

The city in the last 15 years got hit with five serious lawsuits, and instead of adhering to the lawsuit, they try to wiggle out of it. In the name of public health and safety they lock down, they move shit, they take shit, do all kind of stuff, right? Trying to get out of the Tony Lavan lawsuit in 2012, the city appealed all the way to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The 9th Circuit told the City to build more housing. 'We're not going to rule in your favor that restricts property rights to a certain group of people!' ■

## A failing nation piles debt on backs of poor

By **Kari Napoli**

OAKLAND, CA — Across the country more than two-thirds of renters have student debt, Americans owing over \$1.6 trillion. Politicians answer this crisis with long-winded orations, discouraging the pursuit of higher education in exchange for trade schools and a promise of an honest day's dollar. Yet Americans with college degrees continue to make approximately \$30,000 more per year than those with only high school diplomas. The cost of that education steadily climbs, but loan forgiveness programs remain stagnant.

And while a college degree may increase one's fortunes, the debt impedes home financing opportunities. Income Contingent Repayments (ICRs) are meant to ease the burden, but ICRs factor in only income and not cost of living. Considering most job opportunities remain in high-cost cities, ICRs do not provide the necessary relief required for a renter to save a down payment on a home, not to mention the exorbitant interest paid on these plans.

As California courts prepare to open their doors to mass evictions, legislators like Assemblyman David Chiu ask for temporary solutions such as AB 1436, a bill that would halt evictions throughout California during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as provide mortgage forbearance to property owners such as struggling landlords.

No one besides Congresswoman Ilhan Omar has tackled the elephant in the room: debt. The final outcome still ends with renters carrying the debt of unpaid rent added to their existing debts, which already prevented home ownership.

Each generation of Americans watches their debts rise and their ownership decline. They are suffocated by school debts, medical debts, credit cards debts, rising costs, and the race for notable resumes that might stand out in the black hole of internet submissions. Millions lost their jobs in the pandemic, and instead of forgiving their debts, our country proposes piling on more. ■

## Freedom or police state: Unity is key

By the Editors

America is facing a stark choice right now—a choice between light and darkness, between a true democracy and dictatorship. This question is coming to a head as more people are drawn into the fight for their demands in the electoral arena, and also in the streets.

There are many points of view among those of us who are fighting for justice, equality and democracy. We don't all agree on the strategies for moving forward. But we must have a massive, united movement to deal with the immediate crisis, or we could face a sudden lurch into a violent and oppressive dictatorship.

The threats facing us are severe: will we have a dictator in the White House who foments white supremacy and violence, openly suppresses the vote, and cares nothing about pandemic deaths or the growing poverty? Will we allow mass evictions, millions with no health care, millions jobless and homeless? Will the racist assault on black Americans, immigrants and people of color continue? Will we continue to have police and right-wing militias dehumanize, brutalize and kill people at will? Will we allow unidentified armed men to kidnap people off the streets into unmarked cars? Will we get control over the police?

The key to our unity flows from our country's past. Because of this country's history, the treatment of black Americans has always been central to American politics. Every time the powerful have wanted to drive down the people as a whole, they start by attacking black Americans, and every time black

Americans have advanced, our whole society has advanced. It's no accident that today we see the fomenting of racism and a focused assault on blacks, especially the brutality and murders by police. Thus locking arms with black America is at the heart of defending and extending American democracy.

There is a vast movement for justice and democracy that is marching, striking, voting. It's on the right track; a large measure of unity has already developed on many fronts. But we must not fail. We won't agree on everything, but can we agree that America must be a democracy; that white supremacy has to go; that the struggles of all who are under attack—and the fight of black Americans in particular—must be central; and that the government must guarantee that all people's basic needs are met. If those who are fighting can be united around this kind of simple program, then the drive toward dictatorship can be defeated, and the way can be opened to strip the wealthy of their power and turn America into a real democracy.



100+ days of protests in Detroit

[Video Still, Detroit Free Press](#)

## Jacob Blake's sister: 'I want change!'

Jacob Blake was shot 7 times in the back by Kenosha police. His sister, Letetra Widman, spoke to the media in Kenosha on August 25:

"I am my brother's keeper. And when you say the name Jacob Blake, make sure you say father. Make sure you say cousin. Make sure you say son. Make sure you say uncle. But most importantly, make sure you say human.

"Human life. Let it marinate in your mouth, in your minds. A human life. Just like every single one of y'all and everywhere around, so we're human. And his life matters. So many people have reached out to me telling me they're sorry that this happened to my family. Well, don't be sorry. 'Cause this has been happening to my family for a long time, longer than I can account for.

"It happened to Emmett Till. Emmett Till is my *family*. Philando [Castile], Mike Brown, Sandra [Bland]. This has been happening to my family and I've shed tears for every single one of these people that it has happened to.

"This is nothing new. I'm not sad. I'm not sorry. I'm angry. And I'm tired. I haven't cried one time. I stopped crying years ago. I am numb. I have been watching police murder people that look like me for years.

"I'm also a Black History minor. So not only have I been watching it in the 30 years I've been on this planet, but I've been watching it for years before we were even alive.

"I'm not sad. I don't want your pity. I want change!" ■



Letetra Widman

[Video Still / The Guardian](#)



# Tennis champ halts tournament in protest over police shooting

*Editor's note: Professional tennis player Naomi Osaka, who is ranked No. 1 by the Women's Tennis Association and the first Asian player to hold the top ranking in singles, halted tournaments on August 27 in the wake of the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, WI, and following the lead of other sports celebrities and organizations. Below is the statement Osaka made at the time:*

"Hello, I was scheduled to play my semifinals match tomorrow. However, before I am athlete, I am a Black woman. And as a Black woman I feel as though there are much more important matters at hand that need immediate attention, rather than watching me play tennis. I don't expect anything drastic to happen with me not playing, but if I can get a conversation started in a majority white sport, I consider that a step in the right direction. Watching the continued genocide of Black people at the hands of the police is honestly making me sick to my stomach. I'm exhausted of having a new hashtag pop up every few days and I'm extremely tired of having this same conversation over and over again.

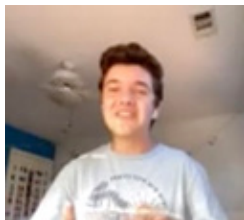
"When will it ever be enough? #JacobBlake, #BreonnaTaylor, #ElijahMcclain, #George Floyd" ■



Naomi Osaka  
Video Still / Daily Motion

## California teens start 'No Cop Money' campaign

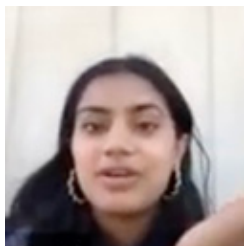
*Editor's note: Excerpts below are about a 'No Cop Money' campaign for politicians to stop taking money from police unions, presented at a South Bay Progressive Alliance webinar in San Jose, CA.*



"I am 18 and I live in southern California. After the initial wave of protests, one of my twitter mutuals in New York started a thread of how much [money] New York lawmakers were taking from police unions. That's how I got the idea for doing this [campaign]

for California. It kind of just snowballed into a group of almost entirely young activists who were compiling this data; it started with just one spreadsheet and a twitter thread, and now it's evolved into a formal website and a social media presence."

— Daniel McGreevy



"I'm 17, and I started a little bit after Daniel did. Our ultimate goals are accessibility for constituents and accountability for politicians. It's really convoluted to access that information; police unions go under names that don't have police or sheriff in them, so it's very difficult for constituents to track. That's why on our website

we have accurate information and updated spending for politicians in California, all manually compiled, which was a large task. On the other hand there's accountability, the other part of our campaign. We talk to politicians and ask them to sign our pledge. Alex (Lee), who's here today, has signed our pledge, and Ash Kalra has donated his police union money back to the community. That's our ultimate goal, to ask politicians to refuse to take police money going forward, and if they have the capacity to donate back to the community."

— Priyanka Joshi

"Right now we have \$36,000 donated back into the community to groups like Black Lives Matter that were originally police-backed contributions to candidates, so that's just one way to measure our success. We're super excited about that. We have two current Los Angeles city council members who have signed the pledge. As you can tell, it's just being run by a handful of teenagers, and so what we need from you is to go to NoCopMoney.com . . . we have links for you to email or tweet your representatives, and you will have prefilled things that will allow you to contact them and demand that they take this pledge as well." — Daniel

*Other South Bay activists include Tiffanie Huang and Helen Deng.* ■



# Chicago school board disses youth, votes to keep cops in schools

By Allen Harris

CHICAGO – The board of the Chicago Public Schools voted on August 26 to renew its district-level contract with the Chicago Police Department to assign officers to schools.

The board's decision means the School Resource Officer (SRO) program will continue only in the 55 schools where the local school council (LSC) had voted to keep SRO. Earlier this summer, 17 other LSCs voted to end it.

Young activist movements in Chicago have been campaigning against SRO under the hashtag #CopsOutCPS after the Minneapolis school district cut its ties to the police following George Floyd's murder.

One of the Chicago groups is GoodKidsMadCity (@GKMC18), which is made up of "Black and Brown young people united in fighting to end violence in our cities" who "call for more resources to underserved communities." One of its organizers, Miracle Boyd, was bloodily assaulted by a Chicago cop during a protest earlier in the summer.

GKMC at once denounced the school board's decision in a tweet, saying: "@ChiPubSchools doesn't GAF about students and our safety! The BOE WHO ISNT ELECTED ONCE AGAIN VOTED TO KEEP COPS IN CPS!!!"

Black Lives Matter Chicago (@BLMChi) tweeted: "This decision perpetuates a system that targets Black, Brown, and disabled students with physical and emotional trauma. Everyone that voted yes should be ashamed."

During the 2019-20 school year CPS paid \$33 million to hire police officers in schools with access to school computers. The 2020-21 school year contract with the police has been reduced to \$12 million.

Activists criticized SRO for officers entering students' names into CPD's notoriously wrong Criminal Enterprise Information System – known as the "gang database" – which in turn serves Chicago's school-to-prison pipeline. Under the Chicago Public Schools' plan for the coming year, CPD computer terminals will be removed from the school and SRO cops will be barred from the gang database.

Meanwhile, there have been several days of protests by Loyola University students demanding that campus police cut its ties to CPD. (A Loyola official wrote that campus police are legally required to work with CPD and that "calls to sever all ties are not practical." The official did not specify what law links the university to CPD.)

GoodKidsMadCity, Black Lives Matter Chicago, Chi Nations, BYP100, the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and 11 other local groups rallied hundreds of people on August 22 at Whitney Young High School to #BreakThePiggybankChicago.



Rally at Whitney Young High School to demand that Chicago City Council defund the police by 75 percent and invest in the community.

Among the rally's demands is that the Chicago City Council defund the Chicago Police by 75 percent and invest instead in non-jail services and community programs. Another is the enactment of CPAC, an elected citywide civilian board overseeing the police, as well as closing of Homan Square and all other Chicago Police illegal secret detention warehouses called "black sites." ■

## The Breathe Act: A Modern Day Civil Rights Act

The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), composed of more than 50 Black-led organizations, including the Black Lives Matter Global Network, held its national convention in late August.

The M4BL 2020 platform urges the passage of the Breathe Act, federal legislation that would abolish all federal prisons and Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities, defund police departments, using those funds for housing, Medicaid, UBI, child care, and programs for the formerly incarcerated; land reparations for Indigenous communities and Black farmers, electoral justice via the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, and protection of trans people.

The Breathe Act is seen as a modern Civil Rights Act, not only addressing the murders of Black men and women by police, but also our broken social-welfare systems.

(Information from [theAtlantic.com](#) and [The Cut](#))

# LABOR DAY, 2020: ESSENTIAL WORKERS IN A FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES IN THE ERA OF CORONAVIRUS



Amazon workers  
Photo / Instagram



Farmworkers  
Photo / Dave Getzman



Nurses  
Photo / National Nurses United (NNU)

In the current crisis, workers who have been deemed “essential” are being abused by their employers and left unprotected by their government. Many of these workers have organized, marched, and gone on strike in recent months.

In California, farmworkers have been facing fires, heat waves and the pandemic all at once, and many have been forced to keep working to make a living, often without proper protective equipment.

The federal government, along with some state and local governments, has tried to force teachers and other education employees back into in-person learning with no guarantees of safety for students or employees.

Nurses say they are still working in short-staffed hospitals, forced to work when they have tested positive for Covid-19, and not being given the proper protective equipment to protect themselves and their patients.

On this page we highlight a story of a group of essential workers organizing to defend themselves from corporate negligence and government inaction, as are others. Workers have a right to expect that their government will protect everyone’s life during this pandemic. Maximum pressure must be put on government at every level to force it to act on behalf of the people, not the corporations.

– The Editors

## Fired Amazon worker organizes workers during pandemic

By **Leo Ramirez**

*Editor’s note: Chris Smalls (pictured above left) speaks with the People’s Tribune.*

In May, Amazon ended an unlimited unpaid time-off policy — a policy that gave workers job security and the opportunity to not be exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ending of the policy was among a set of actions by Amazon’s CEO, Jeff Bezos, who earlier in the year had encouraged Amazon employees to “donate” their paid time off in support of fellow co-workers in need of extra paid sick-time. The largest online retail company not only cut necessary services, leaving many vulnerable, but also increased sales, which translated to huge profits for Bezos. Bezos then enjoyed a huge government bailout reward of \$24 billion, while benefiting from having access to healthcare and isolation in his lavish mansions. This polarized reality struck close

to Smalls, as he describes in the interview below.

“I’m just trying to utilize the best of my ability to make sure workers [understand] they deserve more than what we’ve been getting...all workers, we’re all, essential workers, and we’re the lifeline of this country and we’re not being treated right. The legislative laws are not right for workers as well. There’s a lot of laws that need to be changed...dating back to the Civil Rights Movement...[the] one to three percenters, they’re not taking care of us.

“No, we’re underpaid. We’re not making a decent living wage. We’re not getting free health care. We’re not getting free childcare. We’re not getting things we need to survive, and COVID-19 does expose a lot about that...I have solidarity with workers in the UK, with London, Canada, Germany, Australia...”

Smalls was with the company since 2015 and opened three

*This article continues on the next page . . .*

major buildings for them. Smalls had serious concerns about the working conditions: "When COVID-19 came into play, for those still coming to work every day, I started noticing people getting sick around me, with symptoms and fatigue. Someone even [vomited] at the workstation ... a lot of my colleagues were calling out of work. It was very [alarming]."

Smalls' words serve as examples of the obscene working conditions that occur across companies, like Amazon. "Workers [are] overworked...not allowed to use restrooms...[work] long hours [and] on [their] feet all day." And Amazon has a tendency to not "bend for anybody...it is run completely off of numbers and metrics," shared Smalls.

Smalls expressed the urgent need to address the issues he witnessed, especially amidst the pandemic: "[I] was very alarmed...I took my concerns up to HR, following the proper channels, [and] I realized that this company just wasn't prepared and they didn't have any real solution for us. It was like, 'hey, just come to work. Don't worry about it.' Very nonchalant and

that just wasn't sitting right with me at all. So...I had to take the action."

Smalls organized a protest, losing his job the very same day. "They claimed I violated social distancing policies that didn't exist ... there weren't [any] rules. No PPE provided. There weren't [any] true safety guidelines or social distance policy in place. And that was the reason I was out there."

Smalls formed an organization called the Congress of Essential Workers with the vision of "[having] enough workforce where we control our own destiny." For Smalls, the formation of the organization is beyond him, whatever the results, it is about all the workers and their benefit. Smalls has continued organizing alongside fellow workers. In August, the Congress of Essential Workers marched outside of Bezos' property in Manhattan with a lot of workers and organizations showing support.

As another Labor Day anniversary passes us, let's follow Smalls' words and "continue to fight together." ■

## The fight for clean and affordable water

*The People's Tribune hosts ongoing discussions with many of our communities, urban, rural and Native, across the country facing water crises. In bringing together water activists from diverse areas, north to south, east to west, we have come to see our struggles have a common denominator: refusal of public officials to act on toxic water, and a drive toward private ownership of water for profit, often aided by our governing bodies.*

The following are statements from speakers on a recent call:

"[Our water source] is the Mississippi River and there are about 300 chemical companies between Baton Rouge and New Orleans which put an awful amount of poison into the water and also into the air and land. We're talking about large chemical companies like Exxon. . . We've had researchers come into the community taking people's health history. And they've shown that the closer you live to the worst [plants], [people have] the worst conditions. Fifty percent of the greenhouse gases emitted in this space and the whole state of Louisiana come from this area between Baton Rouge and New Orleans." — *Pat Bryant, Cancer Alley, a.k.a Death Alley*

"I'm calling in from California. I serve on a public water board. It services 24 cities in L.A. County. And I have an opportunity to follow issues across the state of California as a critique of water, public water agencies, and also private water companies. And one of the things that really concerns me is this effort across the state to privatize these public water agencies that have received a massive infusion of public funding. Our particular water agency has been fighting to actually do that. But . . . oftentimes the legislation doesn't say they're going to privatize . . . the members of the legislature, unfortunately, who are also representing their communities, step in and say, 'Oh, well, you know, this water agency is problematic. It's financially unstable.



Toxic water is delivered to many homes across the country.

Its governance structure is not effective. So we're going to put the public water agency involved into receivership for a couple of years.<sup>1</sup> Many of you may have heard about the brown water that was being delivered to communities and local assemblymen introduced a bill that put it into receivership. The state water resources board, responsible for appointing the County of L.A. as the interim receivership, gave the county the authority to decide its governance structure. And two years later, this waterboard governance was totally dissolved. And the assets of that public water agency were given to a private water company. So now it's a private water company that has already notified the residents that their water bills will increase exponentially in two years. That is a community in the district that I represent."

— Leticia Vasquez Wilson

Email [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org) for more information. ■

## Medicare for All: Its time has come

By the **People's Tribune**

"Each of us must be a hero for our communities, for our country. And then, with a compassionate, and intelligent president, we must act together and put on his desk a bill that guarantees us all the healthcare we deserve."

— *Ady Barkan, ALS patient, Democratic National Convention*

The COVID-19 pandemic has lifted the veil and exposed the failures of our current healthcare system.

In the first half of 2020, more than two in five working-age U.S. adults do not have stable health insurance, while more than one-third struggle with medical bills. Since the pandemic, an estimated 12 million Americans lost their health insurance that was tied to their employment.

Even those who are lucky enough to still have insurance, if hospitalized with a serious case of COVID-19, are being hit with hospitals bills in the tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. Michael Flor, 70, of Seattle, had a bill of \$1.1 million.

The median cost of a coronavirus hospitalization is \$14,366, which doesn't include long-term healthcare costs for patients with severe illness who suffer significant lung damage, for example. Other estimates have pushed COVID-19 hospitalization costs closer to \$20,000.

A majority of Americans are in favor of a federally funded government-run healthcare system that provides insurance to all Americans at minimal cost, according to a new Gallup poll.

However, the giants of the for-profit healthcare industry have spent millions — \$143 million for lobbyists in 2018 alone — to insure that Medicare for All cannot become law. At stake for them is the nation's \$3.6 trillion in annual health spending.

Under an expanded and improved "everybody in, nobody out" Medicare for All system, those trillions will go to provide quality health care for all, saving all of us time and money. For doctors, nurses and providers, it will mean more time giving high-quality



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care. And for patients and our families, it will mean freedom from worry about what is covered and in network, allowing us to get the healthcare we need.

The federal government already is the primary insurer for all Americans over the age of 65 and for households with incomes low enough to qualify for Medicaid. The advantages of large public insurance systems are important in ensuring consistent access to medical providers and in containing the rapid growth of health care costs.

COVID-19 has exposed just how incomplete and threadbare the U.S. healthcare and social insurance system is. United we can build a better healthcare system that takes care out of the hands of private corporations and provides security to all.

The fight for quality affordable healthcare — expressed vividly at the Democratic National Convention when hundreds of delegates voted against the party platform because corporate led officials refused to include Medicare for all — is not going away. This fight must continue through the election and beyond until we all have access to the fully funded public system that is possible today with the technology and abundance of resources available. Healthcare for all over profits for the few! ■

## California is burning

California is seeing the largest fires in its history and it isn't even peak fire season. Two million acres have burned. The sky is dark orange in places. The air quality and extreme heat wave is especially dangerous to people forced to live or work outside. "This isn't climate change, climate has changed," says climate writer Steve Horn.

The fires result from a mix of prolonged drought from climate change and the resulting tinder like conditions, where a tossed cigarette butt can spark a fire. The main contributor to climate change is fossil fuels. If the most intensive fossil fuel use is maintained, some say it will produce a global temperature rise

of around 8 degrees F by 2100. Sunrise youth movement is demanding that Biden/Harris enact the Green New Deal.

"We are fast-tracking toward ecological collapse and the ability to maintain an organized civilization. Either we start building for a different future or a different future will be built for us," says Horn.

*Information is from FB and "Stir Crazy" interview.*



*Photo: StratosBril / Shutterstock*

## IMMIGRATION / MIGRATION

## The Making of Trump Trauma

By **Dr. Belinda Hernandez Arriaga**

The humanitarian crisis at the US-Mexico border has demanded immediate action to stop the suffering that asylum seekers are enduring under the cruel policies enacted over the past year by the US government. Specifically, the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) forces asylum seekers to wait indefinitely on the Mexican side of the border, while their court dates continue to get pushed further and further into the future. Families awaiting their day in court have reported that due to COVID their September appointment dates have now been pushed into January of 2021. As of this month many have lived a full year in what has come to be known as “El Campamento” or “The Camp”.

To fully understand the challenges and suffering of asylum seekers you have to understand the conditions of “The Camp.” Children and their families are living in tents in an open field in one of Mexico’s most dangerous regions, known for aggressive cartel violence and kidnappings. Conditions are deplorable. There are rats, snakes, infestations of mosquitos.

In August, flooding from a hurricane threatened the well-being of the camp, many losing their homemade kitchens and their few belongings. Parents reported that their children are losing their appetite, illness is escalating, while mental health among asylum seekers is declining. Hope is turning into despair with each passing day. Recently, several drownings have been reported at the border. One mother shared her fears saying, “el Rio Bravo es el ladrón de mis sueños” (the Rio Grande is stealing my dreams).

COVID has added another layer to the already-limited resources. The border has been shut to volunteers and the number of U.S. organizations that asylum seekers have come to depend on for safety and support has been reduced.

The separation of families has continued. Families are now being forced to decide whether to send their children to live with family members, to spare them from battling the grueling physical and emotional conditions.

As night falls, hunger sets in and fear takes over, families ask why would the United States put us through this? They are fleeing danger, violence, and do not have the choice to turn back. They are living in a dangerous limbo, fearful of returning home and terrified of their current life in Matamoros as they endure the wait imposed by the US legal asylum request process. The majority do not have access to legal representation, or the resources to understand their court process. The reality is that MPP has been established to deter and destroy the asylum process that the United States put into place decades ago.



The Migrant Protection Protocols forces asylum seekers to wait indefinitely on the Mexican side of the border in camps.

*Photo / Baldemar Velásquez, Presidente, Comité Organizador del Trabajo Agrícola*

One of the implications of MPP being enacted on the Mexican side of the border is that there are few media reports on the realities of what families are experiencing. Our Bay Area Border Relief team has been working hard to be present at the camp, providing the asylum seekers with supplies and resources, as well as mental health support every three months. Now our team receives daily calls from the camps, during which people express their stress, helplessness, and fear, asking about their court date, wondering how they will endure the long wait.

Our call to action is NOW! We must vote, we must write letters to our representatives demanding change, we must demand an end to MPP. We must stand UNIDOS in this struggle for every asylum seeker at our borders. This humanitarian crisis demands that we call for an end to the inhumanity, and the destruction of asylum, and that the United States recognizes the irreparable harm of what I have defined as “Trump Trauma” that is being embedded in every child and family waiting for asylum under MPP.

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*Visit*

*[www.bayareaborderrelief.org](http://www.bayareaborderrelief.org) ■*

certain hungry ones  
have the gift of  
turning crumbs  
into meals  
and sharing them

\*

my bet is  
on them  
— Sarah Menefee

## A fight for immigrant rights in Chicago

The People's Tribune's Bob Lee recently interviewed Antonio Gutierrez, a cofounder of the Chicago-based Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) collective. Below are excerpts. A longer version will appear on the People's Tribune Latest News site. Learn more about OCAD at [www.organizedcommunities.org](http://www.organizedcommunities.org).

**People's Tribune:** Can you give some background on OCAD, and talk about the situation in Chicago?

**Antonio Gutierrez:** OCAD comes from the Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), which was an undocumented youth-led collective organizing civil disobedience, direct action and storytelling that gave the undocumented movement a face. We were organizing around the Dream Act, access to higher education, educating college counselors about the realities of undocumented students. After DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), the undocumented community continued to experience an increase in deportations by former President Obama. As a result, in 2013, IYJL shifted priorities and formed a network of different students' groups at universities to create Undocumented IL. Within that OCAD was founded in the groundings of wanting to shift the rhetoric of criminalization of the undocumented community. We believe that those directly impacted, undocumented individuals, should be leading this movement and strategizing on their campaigns,

[In 2013] our anti-deportation campaigns highlighted how ICE terrorizes undocumented communities, violating immigrant rights, and not following its own internal policies and memos. They were pursuing individuals with no criminal record in some cases, or if the individual had a criminal record, many times from years ago, then it was being used to place them into the deportation machine.

Now in the midst of COVID-19, OCAD is leading the campaign here in Illinois at the state level of #FreeThemAll, a national campaign demanding the release of all undocumented detainees in detention centers. There are continuing COVID-19 outbreaks inside CBP and ICE detention centers.

We continue to do our anti-deportation campaigns with individuals. We've been able to get three individuals released from detention. Currently our most high-profile campaign is the one of Beto. Beto was arrested last year, and [detained by ICE] for over eight months. We got him released in February 2020, [but then in June ICE detained him again and deported him to Mexico]. We are in the process of filing litigation against ICE on the basis of retaliation and how ICE processed Beto differently than any other person we know of. We believe that it was based on his activism and how outspoken he was about his treatment in the detention center, and also just how public the campaign was. And we now know that ICE is surveilling OCAD's social media platform, and members are being



Chicago immigrant rights protest in 2019 demands an end to children in cages and to detentions, deportations, and ICE.

Photo / Sarah-Ji of [Loveandstrugglephotos.com](http://Loveandstrugglephotos.com)

surveilled as well. And so we're using all of these bases for the litigation we're filing against ICE.

ICE is getting a lot of the information they use to carry on their operations, such as raids, from databases like the Chicago Police gang database. OCAD highlighted the gang database for the first time to the public in 2017 and 18. We filed litigation against the Chicago Police Department and the City of Chicago for having this database. We are demanding the elimination of the gang database as it is now.

We continue to highlight the human rights violations of ICE operations, and how local law enforcement continues to work with ICE, regardless of Chicago's title of a sanctuary city. There are still ICE raids occurring, regardless of our sanctuary status.

We also created a mutual aid fund that has distributed over \$65,000 to undocumented families in the Chicagoland area. And many of these individuals also are experiencing some type of deportation process.

We are also the leading organization for all of the different rapid response neighborhood networks that were created in the Chicago area after the election of 2016.

OCAD is doing a webinar series called F\*ck ICE 101, exposing how ICE operates. There's also plans to do a People's Academy, led by the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights, here in Chicago. ■

## Zooming to the border for human rights

*A delegation of activists, researchers and independent journalists, sponsored by the People's Tribune and our sister bilingual publication, El Tribuno del Pueblo, are presenting a series of panel discussions via Zoom about how US immigration policies affect migrants, refugees and communities on both sides of the southern border. The first panel was Aug. 13, the second Sept. 3, and the next one is Sept. 17. Below are excerpts from two speakers at the Aug. 13 panel, which focused on the impact of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) that force migrants and asylum-seekers to remain in Mexico while their pleas to enter the US are considered. Recordings of the panels will be posted later on the PT and TP websites.*



One of the residents of a camp of asylum seekers in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

*Photo /  
Charlene BuildbackBetter Frank*

**Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley:** “The stories of abuses and violations at the camp [in Matamoros, Mexico] are so many...They just want it to stop. They don't want to go back home because they know it's a sure death... they only want to be able to enter the United States where they believe they will be safe...The United States is solely responsible for such atrocities that are happening to thousands of families at the border. We have failed humanity because we have failed to stop policies that are breaking the human soul. Let us stop the inhumanity and the policies that destroy life. Let us stop MPP.”

**Jennifer Harbury, attorney, human rights activist and advocate for farmworker families:** “Almost anyone that comes up from Central America or Africa or whatever has been told that if they talk [to US asylum officials] about what the cartels and gangs did to them or their family, that the next day someone will go after them or whoever got left behind....One young man fled after he was told they would kill his baby if he didn't start working with them that night in Honduras. So he fled that afternoon with his wife and his baby. And when he got to Northern Mexico, he called home for his mom and little brother and sister, and they'd all been bludgeoned to death. So in Reynosa [Mexico], after four or five interviews with people, I found that half to 80% [of refugees] are being kidnapped [and held for ransom or sold]. It's a very shocking level of violence, but it's what's really happening.”

## Ronnie Goodman's Short Life

He died age 60  
August 7 2020  
on the hard bricks  
at Capp and 16th  
in a homemade home  
of paper, plastic and pylons  
What were Goodman's chances  
in this capitalist nation?  
Born Black in the United States  
heir to racism, poverty, addiction  
In prison, he became literate  
a runner, he led the San Quentin Marathon  
around a quarter mile track in the yard  
an artist, he gave his emotions expression  
Goodman survived  
true to his heart  
a person of integrity  
he lived for his art

—Lisbit Bailey

## Help get the voice of the movement out

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PT Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/peopletrib/>

PT Twitter

<https://twitter.com/peopletribune>

This artwork was created by Elizabeth Perez from approximately 1000 names, including many imprisoned people, who have been lost to COVID-19.



A large-scale digital vigil is planned for when the US reaches the terrible milestone of 200,000 deaths. To participate, contact Kelly Hayes at the [Volunteer Signup Page](#).