

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS
ACTION FUND

APRIL 2021



WHEN WE ORGANIZE, WE WIN

PROGRESSIVE WINS IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS

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THANK YOU

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100 DAYS CLOSER TO JUSTICE

This is a moment of real opportunity to build a better future for all of us.

In just the first one hundred days of the new Congress and Administration, people-led movements have proven that we are ready to meet this moment. Our collective power has brought us one hundred days closer to justice.

Across the nation, organizers—especially Black, brown and Indigenous organizers—have put their shoulders to the wheel, calling for policies to defeat the pandemic and allow each and every one of us to thrive.

This is the story of community leaders in Kansas City, San Antonio, Chicago, Orlando, and beyond who've been working toward this moment, often for decades. It's the story of the progress they've achieved in the first one hundred days and how these wins are changing all of our lives for the better.

A YEAR OF CRISIS

As the COVID-19 pandemic tore through our communities, millions of people lost their jobs, their homes,

and their loved ones. Across race and place, this has been a year marked by excruciating pain and loss. The pandemic was made so much deadlier by the previous administration's failure to take even the most basic steps to keep us safe. Our friends and family risked—and too often lost—their lives doing essential work, from preparing food and stocking grocery shelves to caring for hospital patients and delivering prescriptions.

In the face of incredible hardship, we've been resilient and resourceful. We pulled through these hard times by pulling together. We protected each other by wearing masks and social distancing. We helped out our neighbors. We cared for our loved ones.

COVID-19 brought into focus problems—systemic racism, environmental injustice, and poverty—that were crises long before the pandemic. Black, Indigenous, and Latinx members of our communities died from COVID-19 at [twice the rate](#) of white people. Four in ten Latinx households and three in ten Black households experienced [job loss](#) during the pandemic compared to only two in ten white households.

Last summer, we came together to reaffirm that Black Lives Matter and demand justice after the police killings of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and too many others. The struggle for police reform and a new approach to community safety continues as we mourn the recent police killings of Daunte Wright and Adam Toledo.

In the fall, thanks to years of work by Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and AAPI organizers, voters turned out in record numbers. From Philadelphia to Atlanta—from pueblos in the Southwest to Midwestern suburbs—Americans voted by mail or stood in line at the polls, making our voices heard despite disease and voter suppression.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE

In the first one hundred days of the Biden Administration and the new Congress, people-led movements fought for and won historic relief in the American Rescue Plan and executive actions to improve the lives of working families.

As we pass the milestone of the first one hundred days, we celebrate the people all across the country that made these wins possible! When we join together—Black, white, brown, Indigenous, and Asian—to demand a government that works for all of us, we're unstoppable. And we're just getting started.



VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"The COVID crisis has meant job loss and unemployment for millions. The key worker power achievement of the first hundred days of the Biden-Harris administration was the passage of a sweeping \$1.9 trillion relief and recovery package that is providing crucial support to millions of working families. It will also reduce the race, gender, and income inequalities that have been exacerbated by the crisis and create the conditions for a truly robust recovery once the virus is under control and people are able to resume normal activity."

Heidi Shierholz is Senior Economist and Director of Policy at the [Economic Policy Institute](#) and former chief economist at the U.S. Department of Labor

"For the first time in decades, and after years of pushing from the Poor People's Campaign, poverty is on the national agenda. We are finally seeing policies that prioritize poor and low-income people without shaming them for their poverty.

This is the direction we must continue to pursue, until these policies become permanent, inclusive and are accompanied by living wages, guarantees to adequate housing, food, water and other basic needs, to fully address the poverty and economic insecurity facing 140 million people in this country."

Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis co-chair the [Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival](#)

"I don't want to go back to where it was. I want to go back to better—not normal. I want to get better in our communities—because at the end of the day we know that Black and brown people are the ones who are suffering the most."

Sofia Sepulveda is an organizer from San Antonio, Texas, fighting for healthcare justice and Medicare for All at the [Texas Organizing Project](#)

#1: DEFEATING THE PANDEMIC

THE FIGHT

COVID-19 has devastated our communities. Nearly 600,000 people in the U.S. have died from the virus. Twenty-four million workers are still suffering economically from the pandemic. But even in the midst of tremendous hardship and devastating losses, people-led movements never stopped fighting.

Organizers led and won fights for healthcare coverage and equitable access to lifesaving vaccines. The National Essential Workers Campaign fought to ensure that essential workers were prioritized in the vaccine rollout. National Nurses United, Service Employees International Union, and other unions used their collective voice to push for personal protective equipment and vaccines. Medicare for All advocates highlighted the injustice of those suffering job loss during the pandemic also losing their employer-based health coverage. Families Marked by COVID channeled their grief into activism.

THE WINS

The U.S. has made tremendous progress since January. Daily cases and deaths have fallen from their winter peak. **All adults in every state are now eligible for free vaccination.** Healthcare workers have administered more than 230 million vaccine doses, and the majority of adults have received at least one shot. While it's too early to declare victory, the end of this national trauma finally seems possible.

The American Rescue Plan provided critical funding for vaccination, ramping up distribution to reach communities of color, rural areas, essential workers, and other underserved populations. After a year of grassroots demands to use the Defense Production Act, Congress provided \$10 billion under the American Rescue Plan to speed up production of vaccines and critical medical supplies.



DEFEATING THE PANDEMIC

The American Rescue Plan expanded healthcare to nearly seven million Americans through:

- 100% subsidy to continue employer-based coverage through COBRA for workers who have recently lost their jobs.
- Increased subsidies to purchase individual plans through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace.
- Incentives for the remaining twelve states that have yet to expand Medicaid under the ACA to finally provide affordable care to additional families.

THE NEXT STAGE

The worst public health crisis in a century exposed the inadequacy of our current employer-based, profit-driven healthcare system. People are sick of a system where losing your job also means losing lifesaving health coverage and where corporate profits get in the way of life-saving treatments.

Consumer and public health advocates continue pushing to **make sure everyone gets vaccinated**, both in the U.S. and around the world.

As the momentum for Medicare for All builds with record support from the public and in Congress, grassroots groups and patient advocates are pushing for immediate action in the upcoming Build Back Better package to extend increased ACA subsidies, expand Medicaid and Medicare coverage, and bring down prescription drug prices. From Texas to New Hampshire, grassroots organizations are declaring that guaranteed healthcare isn't a far-off fantasy but an absolute necessity.



VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

DEFEATING THE PANDEMIC: SOFIA'S STORY



"I think that so far the work of organizers has been super visible in how the current Administration is legislating."

Sofia Sepulveda is an organizer from San Antonio, Texas fighting for healthcare justice and Medicare for All at the [Texas Organizing Project](#)

"When our union sent an email out saying that the local FEMA sites would vaccinate all school employees regardless of age, it was like we had won the lottery. Teachers were running into the hallways saying, "Did you hear we can get the vaccine?"

Erika Houvouras is a teacher from Apopka, Florida, and member of the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association ([AFT Local 7448](#))

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"Grassroots advocacy won billions of dollars to deliver hundreds of millions of vaccine doses all across the country in a matter of months. But the global COVID-19 pandemic will not end in the United States until it ends everywhere around the world.

President Biden can and must continue to marshal the technological prowess and resources of the United States to help vaccinate everyone, through transferring technology, building production capacity, manufacturing billions of vaccine doses, and helping to increase production worldwide by supporting a WTO waiver of patent and other monopolies on COVID-19 technologies. Doing so could accelerate the end of the pandemic by a year or more, saving hundreds of thousands of lives and trillions of dollars, and preventing the emergence of more dangerous viral variants that could once again bring our country and the world to a halt."

Robert Weissman is President of Public Citizen, a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization with 500,000 members and supporters nationwide

#2: PUTTING MONEY IN PEOPLE'S POCKETS

THE FIGHT

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated families already struggling to make ends meet. Eight million more people in the U.S. were pushed into poverty due to the pandemic, and Black, brown, and Indigenous communities have been hit the hardest.

Long before the crisis began, millions of our families were struggling under the burden of medical debt, student debt, or other debts. Forty percent of families entered the pandemic without enough savings to weather a \$400 emergency. White families entered with eight times the wealth of the typical Black family and five times the wealth of the typical Hispanic family. Lack of wealth crushed Black, brown and low-income families as businesses closed and paychecks disappeared.

Grassroots organizations spent more than a year mobilizing for pandemic relief. Members of groups like Indivisible and MomsRising made tens of thousands of calls to their elected representatives and sent letters demanding survival checks and an increase to the Child Tax Credit. Workers who lost their jobs gathered on Facebook to support each other and advocate for expanded unemployment insurance.

THE WINS

Congress and the Administration heard these demands and included the following provisions in the American Rescue Plan:

- **Survival checks:** Congress provided \$1,400 survival checks to 157 million Americans, with expanded eligibility for adult dependents and mixed-status families.
- **Child Tax Credit (CTC):** Congress finally increased the Child Tax Credit from \$2,000 to \$3,000 with a \$3,600 credit for children under the age of six. This one-year expansion will reduce child poverty in the United States by almost half, and is now fully refundable so low-income families will receive the full amount of the credit.

PUTTING MONEY IN PEOPLE'S POCKETS

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC):** For individuals without children, Congress expanded the EITC, which will help 17 million low-income workers, especially retail workers, cashiers, and janitors.
- **Unemployment Insurance (UI):** Congress extended enhanced UI benefits through September 6, 2021, ensuring that workers laid off due to the pandemic can still support their families. It also made the first \$10,200 of UI benefits tax-exempt to workers with incomes below \$150,000.

Combined, these provisions are a game changer for families working to make ends meet.

THE NEXT STAGE

The American Rescue Plan provided temporary relief. We need permanent changes to realize the ultimate goal of ending poverty that is being championed by the Poor People's Campaign and the broader economic justice movement.

Children's Defense Fund and 120+ organizations called for making the **expansions of the Child Tax Credit permanent**—a transformative reduction in poverty across the United States that would lift ten million children above or nearer the poverty line.

Without the emergency supplement under the American Rescue Plan, the average unemployment insurance payment would drop back to a meager \$382 dollars per week. And states rely on decades-old systems that too often keep families waiting for a critical economic lifeline. The workers in Unemployed Action have transitioned their campaign for immediate relief to a push for **long-term reform of a broken, outdated unemployment insurance system**.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

PUTTING MONEY IN PEOPLE'S POCKETS: VERONICA'S STORY



"The morning that I received my stimulus—I kind of knew when I was going to get it—I was so thankful. That was one day that I didn't have to worry that I could provide dinner for my family. And that just meant a lot. Not worrying if I'm going to have my mortgage to pay—if I'm going to come up short to take care of anything. It's a blessing for our family."

Veronica Hall is a bakery manager at Kroger in Alpharetta, Georgia, mom of three, and a member of [UFCW Local 1996](#).

"The tax credit means just having a little bit of wiggle room. Not being afraid that you're not going to be able to provide basic necessities for your kids and your family. Not being afraid of how we're going to make our mortgage payment this month. For our family, at least, that's what it is. It's not one thing. It's a million little things."

Ashley Williams is a licensed clinical social worker in Helena, Montana who had to shut down her practice to take care of her three kids during the pandemic. She is a member of [MomsRising](#).

"[That check] was a lifeline when we were drowning. Now we need to keep fighting for fair wages and good jobs and healthcare so it never gets this bad again."

Anita lives with her two children near Reno, Nevada. After she lost her restaurant job, her family lost their housing and relied on friends and hotels to stay off the streets. With the survival check from the American Rescue Plan, Anita secured stable housing. She's hoping to use the Child Tax Credit to cover basic expenses and ensure that her kids have a working computer for schoolwork.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"After working six months for an online volunteer advocacy community of COVID-unemployed Georgians, I joined Unemployed Action last fall to fight for immediate relief for financially suffering families on a national level. Since then, I organized lobby visits and protests, and trained other unemployed Georgians to share their stories.

In 2021, President Biden and Congress passed the American Rescue Plan—extending unemployment benefits before the March 14th expiration date—so people wouldn't face an interruption in unemployment benefits like millions did in December. Now we're laser-focused on a new goal: fixing the broken UI system so benefits are automatically extended during recessions and to ensure they're accessible to everyone who needs them."

Sharon Shelton Corpening is a Georgia member of [Unemployed Action](#), a movement by and for unemployed workers and their families

"The expansions of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in the American Rescue Plan are a downpayment on a guaranteed income for children and families.

Over the years, we've seen communities and young people across this nation demand equity and support to rewrite our nation's cash and income support policies. With successful implementation on the ground, these expansions can reduce child poverty and racial disparities dramatically.

Now, we must build on this momentum and movement to ensure every child has access to this cash benefit. Right now, President Biden and Congress have the opportunity to make the expanded CTC permanent with critical improvements to provide real relief, advance racial equity, and build a generous, inclusive, and universal child allowance for every child in this country. It is past time for a guaranteed income for all children, starting with the expanded CTC."

Emma Mehrabi is Director of Poverty Policy at the [Children's Defense Fund](#), a nonprofit child advocacy organization

#3: PROTECTING WORKERS' LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS



THE FIGHT

Inadequate health and safety standards combined with corporate greed have led to unnecessary illness and deaths among working people, especially women and people of color. Before the pandemic started, the Trump Administration put profits over people when it pushed through rules to weaken worker protections. Instead of changing course during the pandemic, it pushed to make corporations immune from lawsuits when they put workers and consumers at risk.

Workers fought back. They were fed up with employers' race to the bottom that meant low wages, worker misclassification, safety risks, and outsourcing for working people.

On behalf of their members, unions filed lawsuit after lawsuit against the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for failing to write a workplace safety standard to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Health care workers went on strike to demand full access to PPE. The Fight for \$15 campaign pushed for a living wage, and restaurant workers demanded One Fair Wage. Public sector workers pushed to Fund the Frontlines, keeping vital services in our communities, from transit to emergency services, operational.

PROTECTING WORKERS' LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

THE WINS

In the first one hundred days, the Biden Administration **stopped or paused harmful Trump-era rules while moving forward with new worker protections**. These efforts included:

- Requiring federal contractors to provide a \$15 minimum wage and emergency paid leave to their workers.
- Blocking a Trump-era rule that made it easier for employers (particularly gig companies) to designate employees as independent contractors, denying them the rights and benefits they deserve.
- Issuing an Executive Order that strengthens “Buy American” provisions so that federal dollars go towards American-made goods.
- Allowing unemployed workers to stay eligible for unemployment benefits if they refuse to return to workplaces not in compliance with COVID-19 safety restrictions.
- Forming a new White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment
- Directing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue temporary worksite standards to reduce the spread of infectious disease and keep workers safe.

The American Rescue Plan provided more than **\$360 billion to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments** in addition to specific funds for public health, transit, and education. Those funds keep public sector workers employed, providing vital services to their communities.

THE NEXT STAGE

Following President Biden’s executive actions, working people are pushing for action from Congress.

They are fighting for the **Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act**, a critical bill expanding workers’ fundamental right to collectively bargain and reining in union-busting like Amazon directed at its employees in Bessemer, Alabama. The House already passed the PRO Act, and it now awaits action in the Senate.

PROTECTING WORKERS' LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

The Fight for \$15 and One Fair Wage campaigns continue the fight for the **Raise the Wage Act**, which would increase pay for 32 million workers and end the racist and discriminatory subminimum wages for tipped workers and workers with disabilities.

Employers have subjected undocumented workers to especially low-pay and hazardous working conditions. Undocumented immigrants are our neighbors, friends, coworkers, and family. Groups including the We Are Home coalition are working to secure a **roadmap to citizenship** for undocumented essential workers and all immigrants who call this country home.

As President Biden lays out his American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan, workers are ready to fight for high-quality jobs through **investments in our public infrastructure** with strong labor, racial equity, and environmental standards.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

PROTECTING WORKERS' LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS: BILL'S STORY



Bill Finnegan works at the Campbell's Soup Supply Company in Napoleon, OH and is a member of UFCW Local 75.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"I came to the United States so I can better support my daughter. As a janitor, the work we do is essential. But I was really struggling to get by on what we were paid. I felt a huge wave of relief when President Biden signed an executive action to put federal contractors on a path to \$15 an hour. This is something that SEIU members like me, the Fight for \$15 and a Union, and other working people have been demanding for years.

It's a breath of fresh air to have a President who stands shoulder-to-shoulder with working people. This changes everything."

Tila Garcia-Ramsey is a federally contracted janitor in Kansas City, Missouri and member of [SEIU Local 1](#)

"We had so many riders and transit workers talk about why transit was essential to them—including a nurse who was a frontline worker down in New Orleans who called into a congressional Zoom forum we held from the bus on the way to work with her mask on and testified about how, in the words of Chuy Garcia, 'Transit is not an option. It's a lifeline.'

We won \$30 billion in additional resources for public transit that was needed to keep bus drivers employed, to make sure routes were not cut, and that people were able to continue to move."

Libero Della Piana is Senior Strategist at [Alliance for a Just Society](#) and Communications Director with the [National Campaign for Transit Justice](#)

#4: TAKING CARE OF CAREGIVERS

THE FIGHT

Before COVID-19 closed schools and child care facilities, working people were already struggling to balance jobs and family in our broken care economy. But the pandemic made a very bad situation a whole lot worse. Caregivers, whether paid providers or unpaid family members, have shouldered a heavy load supporting children, adult dependents, and the elderly, without the support they need and deserve.

Working parents and child care workers led a year-long campaign to keep child care centers operational and make child care more affordable. A coalition of state and national organizations have pushed for [Paid Leave for All](#) at the national, state, and local levels.

From a [full-page ad](#) in the *New York Times* to letter-writing campaigns, hundreds of organizations declared that caregiving is a vital part of the economy. MomsRising members alone contacted Members of Congress more than [230,000 times](#).

THE WINS

Following that advocacy, Congress provided emergency support in the American Rescue Plan:

- **Child care grants:** These grants will direct \$39 billion nationwide to help providers stay open.
- **Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit:** This expanded tax credit will help working families pay for child care. Households can now receive a total of up to \$4,000 for one child or \$8,000 for two or more children. And it's now fully refundable so low-income families can receive its full value.

For working parents who have had to juggle work and caregiving during the pandemic, the American Rescue Plan extended and expanded **emergency paid leave programs**, including:

- Extending and expanding federal support for employers to provide paid leave to workers for COVID-19-related reasons through September 30.
- Creating an emergency paid leave fund for federal government workers who contract or have been exposed to COVID-19.

TAKING CARE OF CAREGIVERS

THE NEXT STAGE

While the American Rescue Plan provided emergency support, the U.S. care economy needs a reboot. Every family needs access to care, and every care worker deserves a safe, family-sustaining job.

The [Care Can't Wait](#) campaign is calling for universal child care, paid leave for all, and care funding for aging adults and people with disabilities to ensure that everyone—not just a wealthy few—has access to the care we need to thrive.

President Biden has already proposed \$400 billion to improve home- and community-based services in the American Jobs Plan and is proposing improvements to child care and paid leave in the American Families Plan.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

TAKING CARE OF THE CAREGIVERS: ASHLEY'S STORY



Ashley Williams is a licensed clinical social worker in Helena, Montana who had to shut down her practice to take care of her three kids during the pandemic. She is a member of [MomsRising](#).

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"The American Rescue Plan is a critical poverty-reducing package that will reach millions of struggling families. It's also a reflection of the power of the progressive movement and the Black and brown women leading the way on the fight for childcare.

The monumental effort makes good on the promise to provide life-saving relief for low-income families who have been hardest hit by the pandemic. With the \$40 billion allocated for child care in the American Rescue Plan, we can expand families' access to high-quality affordable early childhood education and provide critical support for child care workers. The relief package also puts needed cash in people's pockets through the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.

But the fight for a just recovery isn't over yet, and Congress now has to take the next steps for an inclusive and long-term economic recovery and guarantee an equitable and fully funded child care system so all families can thrive."

Wendoly Marte is Director of Economic Justice at [Community Change Action](#), an organization building the power of low-income people and communities of color

"I've been fighting for paid leave for a decade, so that what happened to me over and over—no time to heal, no time to grieve, lost jobs and income if I did take that time—wouldn't happen to others.

I became an activist with 9 to 5 Colorado and part of a movement to build the power that finally won statewide paid leave through a ballot initiative. Family Values @ Work helped bring 9 to 5 Colorado together with other groups to build the Paid Leave for All campaign and created a Voices of Workers group there that I'm proud to be part of. We will keep fighting until there is paid leave in every state."

Kris Garcia is an activist with [9 to 5 Colorado](#), part of the [Family Values @ Work](#) network and [Paid Leave for All](#) campaign

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"Women were hanging by a thread before the pandemic due to decades of neglect and insufficient investment in our care infrastructure, and now that thread is unraveling altogether and women and moms of color are experiencing compounded health and economic harms due to structural racism.

MomsRising members are now rising for change. We have more than a million members, including members in every state, who are highly engaged in moving change. And our advocacy continues every day.

We are determined to ensure that lawmakers at all levels know how badly we need paid leave for everyone, quality and affordable child care for all, a raise in the minimum wage, a path to citizenship for immigrants, to heed calls to reimagine what safety looks like by investing in communities in ways that don't continue criminalization, bold investments to expand access to home- and community-based services and to make home care jobs good jobs. These policies are both job-sustaining and job-creating, boosting families and our economy alike. It's time to build our care infrastructure."

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner is Executive Director, CEO, and Co-Founder of [MomsRising](#), an organization taking on the most critical issues facing women, mothers, and families

#5: EDUCATING STUDENTS

THE FIGHT

During a year that fundamentally uprooted daily routines, teachers continued to educate their students, shifting to online classes or continuing in-person instruction at risk to their own health. Unequal access to broadband meant unequal access to education for many students. Meanwhile, student loan borrowers faced daunting debt burdens as the economy plummeted.

Through it all, teachers, parents, and students fought for badly needed resources to help reopen schools safely, improve access to remote learning in the meantime, and fix the student debt crisis, making hundreds of thousands of phone calls and messages urging Congress to pass the American Rescue Plan.

THE WINS

The American Rescue Plan made the single largest investment in K-12 schools in U.S. history, providing **\$123 billion to help reopen schools and address learning loss** during the pandemic. That funding will allow schools to reduce class sizes, improve air circulation in their buildings, and adapt spaces to comply with public health guidelines. It will purchase technology for students learning remotely. And it will allow schools to hire more support staff—nurses, counselors, janitors, and bus drivers—to better meet the needs of students.

The American Rescue Plan provides **\$40 billion for higher education**, with half of the funds directed to emergency financial aid for current students.

Importantly, the American Rescue Plan targets funds at the students with the greatest needs and those most affected by the coronavirus, including Black and brown students, students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English language learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and students in foster care.

The American Rescue Plan also marked an important move toward student debt cancellation by making student debt cancellation tax-free through the end of 2025. In addition to **extending the moratorium on student loan payments** during the pandemic, the Biden Administration has already cancelled around **\$1 billion** of

EDUCATING STUDENTS

student debt for 72,000 students who attended schools that engaged in deceptive or illegal practices.

THE NEXT STAGE

The pandemic highlighted the unacceptable conditions in too many schools that teachers and parents have spoken out about for years: classrooms without air conditioning and ventilation, large class sizes, lead in schools' water pipes, and students without broadband access at home.

In line with demands from teachers, students, and their families, the American Jobs Plan proposes another **\$100 billion to improve school infrastructure**, along with **\$12 billion for community colleges** and the expansion of **broadband to all households**.

Beyond improving the facilities, students and their families must also be able to access quality, affordable education. With tax forgiveness already in place, [Student Action](#), [Freedom to Prosper](#), and other advocates are calling on Congress and the Administration to **cancel all student debt**. For the next generation of college students, champions for education equity are calling on Congress to make debt-free college a reality.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

EDUCATING STUDENTS: ERIKA'S STORY



Erika Houvouras is a teacher from Apopka, Florida and member of the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association (AFT Local 7448)

Over the last decade students and young people across the country have joined together with people of all ages to demand the people we've elected cancel student debt, full stop. Now, we have more momentum than ever.

While the Biden Administration's extension of the moratorium on student debt collection was a vital move for millions, we need a permanent solution. We have an opportunity to cancel student debt as key COVID relief that will provide real recovery for millions of students, families and communities across the country. It's past time to cancel all student debt, no exceptions."

Adiel Pollydore is Program Director of Student Action, a branch of People's Action

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"The American Rescue Plan provides students, educators, families and hard-working Americans with desperately needed relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis. Since the beginning of the pandemic, NEA members have worked to support students and their families by staying in constant contact with them—witnessing firsthand their desperation, fear and anxiety. At the same time, NEA members have never stopped advocating for what is needed to close the gaps exacerbated by this pandemic or the generations of underfunding schools in communities of color.

Through the National Education Association, educators, parents, caregivers, students, and community members wrote hundreds of thousands of messages and placed thousands of calls to senators and representatives over the past year, sharing personal stories about what America's students are facing and what they need to reopen school buildings and college campuses safely and equitably. We've been thankful to see the Biden Administration fighting for students and educators throughout the pandemic."

President Becky Pringle leads the National Education Association, the nation's largest labor union

"The removal of the additional tax burden of student loan cancellation serves as a springboard for full and total student debt cancellation. This first step builds on Freedom to Prosper's organizing and policy advocacy in 38 states to build a movement to cancel all student debt. Student debt cancellation will boost our economy, reduce the racial wealth gap, and give 46 million Americans and their families the freedom to prosper."

Freedom to Prosper is an organization working to end the student loan trap and cancel all student debt now

#6: KEEPING FAMILIES IN THEIR HOMES

THE FIGHT

The COVID-19 pandemic hit amidst an already dire housing crisis. The U.S. currently has a shortage of almost seven million affordable units for renters whose incomes are at or below the poverty level. One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, one in six renters are behind on rent and over 10 million homeowners are behind on their mortgages. For many, the onset of the pandemic was just the latest challenge making it difficult to keep a roof over their heads.

Local housing organizers, from Chicago to the Bay Area, fought for local, state, and federal moratoria on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shutoffs. They staged protests, held rent strikes, disrupted eviction hearings by blocking the entrances to eviction courts, organized petitions to governors, and advocated to their Members of Congress.

THE WINS

After the National Low Income Housing Coalition organized a letter with more than 2,000 cosigning organizations, the Biden Administration extended the federal eviction moratorium until June 30, 2021. The Administration also extended the foreclosure moratorium for homeowners. These policies help ensure that millions of individuals and families are not forced out of their homes during the pandemic, keeping families safe.

The American Rescue Plan provided vital **assistance for renters and homeowners**, including:

- \$21.5 billion in emergency rental assistance so millions of families can keep up on their rent.
- \$10 billion to help homeowners behind on their mortgage and utility payments.
- \$5 billion to support individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

KEEPING FAMILIES IN THEIR HOMES

THE NEXT STAGE

As renters and homeowners across the country organize around a [People's Housing Agenda](#), a massive investment in housing is already taking shape.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan proposes to **build, preserve, or retrofit two million homes**. That includes \$40 billion to improve public housing. It also calls for ending discriminatory zoning laws that worsen the housing shortage.

Local housing organizations are bringing renters and homeowners together to demand that everyone—no matter where they live or how much money is in their bank account—is guaranteed a safe, stable, and sustainable place to call home.



VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

KEEPING FAMILIES IN THEIR HOMES: MARSHA'S STORY



Marsha Cole is a leader in the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, a multiracial, grassroots organization of more than 500 seniors in the Chicago area, and a member of the Homes Guarantee Campaign

"Through direct action, rent strikes, and tens of thousands of calls to Congress, tenants, advocates and organizers demanded and won a federal moratorium on evictions and billions in rent relief. While these emergency measures are keeping many people in their homes right now, we know we need so much more to finally realize the human right to housing in this country."

Liz Ryan Murray is Project Director at the Alliance for Housing Justice, a coalition including Public Advocates, PolicyLink, the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the Right to the City Alliance

#7: TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

THE FIGHT

The world faces a climate crisis, but the U.S. has failed to advance the bold policy solutions necessary to prevent catastrophe. U.S. policy backslid as former President Trump prioritized corporate profits over our air, water, and health. His Administration denied climate science, weakened auto emissions standards, rolled back protections from toxic chemicals in our air and water, and withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement.

Young people and environmental justice organizers brought renewed urgency to the climate crisis. More than one million people gathered on Earth Day 2017 for the March for Science. Students participated in the Global Climate Strike. The Sunrise Movement hosted teach-ins on the Green New Deal. Climate activists gathered on the Capitol steps for Fire Drill Fridays. Local environmental justice groups took on the corporations polluting their air and water. Conservation groups fought to protect federal lands. Native Americans pushed back when the Trump Administration advanced oil and gas projects without proper tribal consultation.

Climate advocates approached the governing moment of the first one hundred days with a bold agenda that reflected the interconnectedness of environmental protection, public health, racial justice, and worker power.

THE WINS

Following activists' call for **bold climate goals**, President Biden pledged to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, achieve zero-emission electricity by 2035, and reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The Biden Administration also committed to directing 40 percent of federal climate investments to disadvantaged communities.

On his first day in office, President Biden announced that the United States would **rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement**. He further engaged with other nations on climate change in a Leaders Summit on Climate on Earth Day.

TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Beyond broad goals, the Biden Administration announced specific actions to reduce address climate change, including:

- Federal purchasing of emission-free electricity and vehicles while following strong labor standards.
- Rolling back fossil fuel subsidies and prioritizing clean energy technologies and infrastructure.
- Pausing new oil and natural gas leases on public lands and in offshore waters as well as reviewing existing leases and permits, including stopping drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Launching the Civilian Climate Corps to conserve and restore public lands, increase reforestation, increase carbon sequestration, and address the changing climate.
- Strengthening protections for scientific integrity and evidence-based policymaking.
- Ensuring tribal consultation across federal agencies.

The American Rescue Plan included \$30 billion in vital funding to keep public transit systems alive and running, helping reduce carbon pollution while getting essential workers to their jobs. It also funded environmental justice grants for air quality monitoring and addressing risks to vulnerable populations.

THE NEXT STAGE

The challenge for the Biden Administration and Congress is to deliver legislation that will achieve ambitious climate goals.



TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate advocates recognize the upcoming **Build Back Better** package as a critical opportunity to build 21st century infrastructure, invest in clean energy, improve the resilience of our communities, and create millions of quality union jobs in the process. President Biden's American Jobs Plan proposed about \$300 billion per year in infrastructure spending—far less than the \$1 trillion per year proposed in the **THRIVE Act** supported by unions, racial justice, climate, and other grassroots groups.

Trump-era rules weakening environmental protections remain on the books. Federal agencies are working to restore and strengthen protections for our air, water, and land, and Congress is planning to overturn a rule weakening methane emission limits.

The House already passed the **Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act** to designate 1.5 million acres of public lands as wilderness; prevent oil, gas, and mineral extraction on 1.2 million acres of public land; and add 1,000 miles of river to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Senate has not yet considered the bill.



VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS: JOHN PAUL'S STORY



John Paul Mejia, a climate activist from Miami, Florida, is a national spokesperson for the [Sunrise Movement](#), a youth movement to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process

"We've seen firsthand that determined advocacy wins victories to reduce pollution, protect public health, and ensure a livable future for all. The 2015 adoption of the Paris Agreement was, in many ways, a culmination of the dedicated work of Sierra Club leaders and those from across the climate movement.

When Biden delivered on his promise to rejoin the Paris Agreement, it was a signal that we are not in this alone. We'll keep working with the administration to ensure that the U.S. makes ambitious commitments that are translated into action quickly enough to protect our homes, families, and communities from climate catastrophe."

Cherelle Blazer is Senior Director of the International Climate and Policy Campaign at the [Sierra Club](#), a grassroots environmental organization of more than 3.8 million members

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"At Data for Progress, we advocate for an ambitious and equitable approach to mitigating climate change. Our proposals include a roadmap for how to achieve a 100% Clean Electricity Standard, a National Investment Authority, a Green New Deal for Public Housing, and more.

As we reflect on the first hundred days of the Biden Administration, we consider President Biden rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement to be a first step in what will hopefully be a presidency defined by a robust, progressive climate agenda."

Data for Progress is a multidisciplinary group of experts using data science to support progressive causes

"Our movement has shown throughout past years and even in the past few months that we can turn out at a huge, huge scale. And because of that we've won everything from a Civilian Climate Corps, to Deb Haaland's nomination, to a reentry to the Paris Climate Accords, to so much more that's on the horizon."

John Paul Mejia, a climate activist from Miami, FL, is a national spokesperson for the Sunrise Movement, a youth movement to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process

"Transportation is the number one contributor to carbon emissions in the United States and only a massive investment in buses and rail is going to get us on a different path."

Libero Della Piana is Senior Strategist at Alliance for a Just Society and Communications Director with the National Campaign for Transit Justice

#8: ADVANCING GENDER AND LGBTQ EQUALITY

THE FIGHT

From using stay-at-home orders to close abortion clinics to banning transgender people from schools and the military, the Trump Administration attacked the dignity, freedom, and safety of women and LGBTQ+ people. Even after the Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is discrimination on the basis of sex, the Trump Administration failed to enforce LGBTQ+ rights under federal civil rights laws.

Millions joined the Women's March, led by women of color, to protest attacks on all of our fundamental rights. The LGBTQ+ community and allies spoke out when the Trump Administration banned transgender people from serving in the military and denied proper care to LGBTQ+ refugees fleeing persecution. Now advocates for LGBTQ+ and gender equality are raising our voices to undo these harms and secure strong protections from discrimination in every aspect of our lives.

THE WINS

President Biden issued an executive order on his first day to **fully enforce LGBTQ+ individuals' rights under the *Bostock* decision**. During his first week in office, President Biden **rescinded the military's discriminatory ban on transgender individuals**. The Department of Defense subsequently released new policies that protect transgender soldiers from discharge and establish a process for gender affirmation surgery.

After years of assault on reproductive freedoms, the Biden Administration **rolled back the global gag rule**, a Trump-era policy that withheld global health funding from organizations that provide or offer information on abortions. It moved to **undo the domestic gag rule** that blocked Title X funding to any healthcare providers who offered or referred for abortion care. And it **restored funding to the United Nations Population Fund**, which will prevent 1.4 million unintended pregnancies within a year as well as 32,000 unsafe abortions. These changes are crucial to restoring and expanding reproductive healthcare and justice.

ADVANCING GENDER AND LGBTQ EQUALITY

In addition, President Biden established a new Gender Policy Council at the White House to advance gender equity and equality across all areas of federal policy.

THE NEXT STAGE

Recent federal progress on gender and LGBTQ+ rights is the result of years of organizing by groups across the country, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color led organizations, that have expanded our nation's definition of equality. From the Transgender Law Center to URGE—from NARAL Pro-Choice America to All* Above All—advocates are calling on Congress to back up executive action with legislation.

The House has passed **H.R. 5, the Equality Act**, a comprehensive civil rights bill to prohibit discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It's now waiting in the Senate. This bill is especially critical as just in the past year, bills attacking transgender children have been introduced in 28 states and violence against transgender women of color has spiked.

The House has also passed the **Paycheck Fairness Act**, **Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act**, and **removal of the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment**. The Senate has not considered these pieces of legislation yet.

As state legislatures continue to attack reproductive rights, women of color are leading a decades-long fight to repeal unjust federal restrictions on abortion access. We are fighting to enact the Global HER Act to permanently end the global gag rule and the EACH Act to provide equal access to abortion coverage. When it comes to the most important decisions in life, such as whether to become a parent, each of us must be afforded a full and fair range of options, no matter our income, Zip Code, or insurance status.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

ADVANCING GENDER AND LGBTQ EQUALITY: SHARITA'S STORY



Sharita Gruberg is Vice President of the LGBTQ Research and Communications Project at the Center for American Progress, an independent nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans

"The transgender military ban was employment discrimination, pure and simple. NCTE is proud to have worked alongside coalition partners for years to make this victory possible. With this executive order, President Biden righted a wrong and opened this critical opportunity to all willing and able to serve."

Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen is Deputy Executive Director at the National Center for Transgender Equality, which advocates to increase understanding and acceptance of transgender people

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"During his initial days in office, President Biden ended the global gag rule, removing a dangerous barrier to health care access for people across the globe. For four years, global communities had suffered after access to a wide range of lifesaving health services was cut off—both providers and advocates were silenced because of this neocolonialist policy.

Planned Parenthood Global, the international arm of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, has been fighting the global gag rule since it was first imposed by the Reagan administration in 1985, and we won't quit until the policy is gone for good. Rescinding the global gag rule was critical, but it is just the first step. Congress must now pass the Global HER Act to end this harmful policy for good.

And in a move to restore access to essential sexual and reproductive health care in the U.S., the Biden-Harris administration has proposed a rule to end the similarly harmful Title X gag rule. This action is yet another example of the administration's commitment to protect and advance health care access.

We're proud to stand with a diverse coalition — in the U.S. and around the world — fighting to expand access to sexual and reproductive health care. We aim to restore comprehensive programs and partnerships and make sure the global gag rule is permanently repealed."

Jacqueline Ayers is Vice President of Government Relations and Public Policy at Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Planned Parenthood delivers vital reproductive health care, sexual education, and information to millions worldwide

"The last year has inflamed and accelerated the racial and gender inequities our country has ignored for far too long. But with so much work left to be done, we're committed to fighting for an economy and a democracy as resilient as the women both depend on. These first hundred days have proven that putting the needs of women of color first can raise the entire country above even the most devastating of crises."

Fatima Goss Graves is President and CEO of the National Women's Law Center, which fights for gender justice in the courts, public policy, and society

#9: CONFRONTING WHITE SUPREMACY

THE FIGHT

Faced with repeated and increasingly violent attacks, our communities organized and gathered in solidarity with one another. We rushed to airports with handmade signs to denounce former President Trump's hateful Muslim and African Ban. We protested children locked in cages. We organized against the desecration of sacred tribal lands. We took to the streets to reaffirm that Black Lives Matter after police murdered Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, and too many others. And we came together to Stop AAPI Hate as anti-Asian hate crimes spiked during the pandemic.

In a time of great tragedy, movements for racial justice grew stronger. From the Movement for Black Lives to the No Muslim Ban Ever campaign—from immigrant rights to Indigenous rights—BIPOC-led movements put confronting white supremacy on the national agenda. And we demanded immediate action from the new Administration.

THE WINS

Responding to calls to undo the harms of the Trump Administration, the Biden Administration quickly rolled back several Trump-era anti-immigrant policies:

- **Muslim and African Ban:** This change allows families separated for years by the discriminatory travel ban to reunite.
- **Remain in Mexico Policy:** The Administration reversed a policy that forced asylum seekers to wait outside of the U.S. to have their case heard, and resulted in more than 1,500 cases of the kidnapping, rape, assault, torture, and murder of asylum seekers.
- **Public Charge Rule:** Immigrants and mixed-status households can now have less fear that accessing public services will result in denial of green cards or visa applications.



CONFRONTING WHITE SUPREMACY

The Biden Administration is responding to movement demands to address white supremacist violence:

- Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first-ever Native American cabinet official, created a new unit to pursue justice for missing and murdered American Indians and Native Alaskans.
- The Justice Department restored use of **consent decrees to address systemic misconduct at police departments**. The Civil Rights Division already launched investigations into the **Minneapolis and Louisville Police Departments** examining excessive force by their officers, including force against protestors following the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.
- The Justice Department established an **agency-wide initiative to respond to anti-Asian violence**, including reconvening the Hate Crimes Enforcement and Prevention Initiative and improving reporting of anti-Asian hate crimes.

THE NEXT STAGE

While executive actions are a start, racial justice organizers are demanding transformative legislation to dismantle systemic racism in our country.

FIRM Action's Roadmap to Unity and Freedom provided the basis for the Roadmap to Freedom Resolution in Congress, which reimagines our immigration system to promote citizenship, prioritize family unity, preserve diversity, focus on dignity, and recognize the humanity of immigrants and their families.

Four immigration-related bills await action in the Senate after immigration advocates pushed for House passage within the first one hundred days:

- **H.R. 6, the Dream and Promise Act**, would provide a pathway to citizenship for 2.5 million Dreamers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients currently in the U.S.
- The **Farm Workforce Modernization Act** provides legal status and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented farm workers and their family members.

CONFRONTING WHITE SUPREMACY



- The **NO BAN Act** would permanently prevent travel bans based on religion and limit executive authority for travel bans more generally.
- The **Access to Counsel Act** ensures travelers subjected to prolonged inspection at a port of entry can call a lawyer.

In response to community demands amidst the spike in anti-Asian violence, the Senate passed the **COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act**, which would require a federal review of hate crimes, provide federal guidance around hate crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and fix long-standing problems in hate crimes reporting. Similar legislation is moving through the House.

Following the guilty verdict for Derek Chauvin, we recognize that individual trials do not break systems of oppression. As grassroots movements push lawmakers to rethink systems that kill and cage Black people, the House has passed the **George Floyd Justice in Policing Act** as an initial effort at police reform. The bill, now awaiting action in the Senate, prohibits racial profiling, bans chokeholds and no-knock warrants, stops transferring military weapons to police (**Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act**), and increases police accountability and transparency. Many grassroots groups are pushing to further increase police accountability through the **End Qualified Immunity Act**.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

JUNG WOO KIM'S STORY



"Asian American undocumented young people have led organizing and advocacy for the Dream Act since its inception in 2001. The bill was inspired by an undocumented young Korean American in Illinois who was a talented musician but could not go to college because of her immigration status. Almost two million Asian Americans are undocumented, including a significant number of young people.

After I graduated from high school, like the Korean American in Illinois who inspired the bill, I was rejected by a college in Orange County, CA, because of my immigration status. This propelled my involvement in efforts to pass the Dream Act.

Through NAKASEC, we have brought our Korean and Asian culture into the immigrant justice movement. From 2001 to 2012, in addition to constantly meeting with our legislators, we fasted, conducted civil disobedience, organized press conferences, lobby days, marches and rallies in our home states and in Washington DC, sent DREAM pillows made by undocumented young people to Congress, held Dream-a-thons—everything and anything to educate and activate our community, in coalition with Latinx and Black immigrant communities, to win legalization for undocumented youth. And while we were unable to secure the Dream Act, all of this led to the establishment of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program in 2012.

But DACA is not enough. It is not permanent, and it also left out over a million young people. And once Trump came into office, it became clear how fragile DACA is. Once DACA was threatened, the NAKASEC network organized a 22-day, round-the-clock vigil in front of the White House and conducted weeks of Congressional office takeovers toward a clean Dream Act. We also rode bicycles from border to border and marched from the Statue of Liberty in New York to the steps of the Supreme Court in DC.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

During this time, the young people in our organization decided that securing just our own citizenship is not enough, and that all 11 million undocumented immigrants should have citizenship, including our parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, friends, and community members. We launched our [#Citizenship4All campaign](#) which now is centered on legalization of the 11 million and ending detention and deportations. I, along with other impacted young people and allies from the NAKASEC network, have been in DC since January 20th, Biden's inauguration day, for a hundred day campaign towards these goals.

Young people have been a critical part of social movements such as the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and around the world. We are now 20 years from when the Dream Act was first introduced, and I myself have organized for the Dream Act and legalization for over a decade and remain undocumented.

It can be very disheartening and demoralizing. But what keeps me going is that young undocumented leaders in the NAKASEC network and other organizations believe in people, carry the torch for Citizenship4All, and have a vision of a world where everyone can live without fear of family separation and deportation—a world where we can not only survive but thrive. We urge our Members of Congress to share in this vision and act now for legalization of the 11 million and an end to detention and deportation."

Jung Woo Kim is a DACA recipient from Southern California and the Organizing Director at the [National Korean American Service & Education Consortium \(NAKASEC\)](#), which organizes Korean and Asian Americans to achieve social, economic, and racial justice



VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

CONFRONTING WHITE SUPREMACY: JUDITH'S STORY



Judith Le Blanc is a citizen of the Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma and Director of the Native Organizers Alliance, a national Native training and organizing network

"You cannot govern, you cannot address the crisis in this country without Native peoples. Without our representation at all levels of government because we are the only people with a collectively owned land base that has been self-governed since the beginning of time. We have experience in governance. We have experience in democracy. It's our medicine and we can share it."

Judith Le Blanc is a citizen of the Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma and Director of the Native Organizers Alliance, a national Native training and organizing network

It has been a long four years and the NO BAN Act is a testament to the hard work and commitment of Muslim activists, Muslim-led organizations, and our allies in the No Muslim Ban Ever coalition. It's not enough to rescind the Muslim and African Ban. We must ensure that no future president can ever do this again, and that is why we pressure Congress to pass legislation and ensure that this administration does everything to ensure families are reunited."

Linda Sarsour is Executive Director of MPower Change, a mass movement of diverse U.S. Muslims and allies

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"Immigrant organizers weathered the constant attacks of the previous administration while building genuine people power. The Biden Administration rescinding the Muslim/African Ban on day one is proof of the strength of our movement. Organizers stopped the Public Charge Rule and won extended protections for Liberian immigrants all in the first hundred days.

But we still have so much work left to do for Black immigrants. We have to continue to hold the Biden Administration to account for the continued mass deportation of Black immigrants, and ensure a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented people so that every household is treated with dignity."

The UndocuBlack Network is a multigenerational network of currently and formerly undocumented Black people

"President Biden's early and numerous executive actions on immigration on day one are evidence that people power is transforming this country to one where everyone is welcomed.

From fighting back attacks on DACA and TPS to winning access to drivers licenses; from dissolution of 287(g) agreements to accessing pandemic recovery funds, the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) Action and our partners, including 47 groups in 35 states, fight daily for our communities. We will continue this fight beyond the first hundred days of this new administration to win citizenship for as many people as possible."

FIRM Action brings together organizations advocating for comprehensive immigration reform and the civil rights of immigrants in America

#10: ENDING VIOLENCE AT HOME AND ABROAD

THE FIGHT

The U.S. has more guns domestically and exports more guns internationally than any other country. More than half of the federal government's annual discretionary budget goes to the military. Gun corporations and defense contractors have pocketed billions of dollars as politicians use fear and racist rhetoric to justify endless wars abroad and military-style weapons in our own communities.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost trillions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of lives. The U.S. has also supported the Saudi and Emirati-led war in Yemen that has gone on for more than six years and claimed the lives of nearly 250,000 people. Domestically, the U.S. averages more than one mass shooting and 100 gun deaths every day.

From major rallies to meetings with lawmakers, grassroots movements worked to shift the narrative. Just weeks after the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, students organized the March for Our Lives—calling out the gun lobby's lies. Yemeni Americans, working in coalition with peace advocates, called for an end to U.S. support in Yemen. And after years of efforts, the progressive foreign policy community has expanded opposition to the war in Afghanistan from Rep. Barbara Lee's lone vote against the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) to a majority position.

THE WINS

President Biden has made initial moves to bring U.S. involvement in foreign conflicts to an end.

He announced an end to the sale of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), pulling back U.S. support for the war in Yemen. He also reversed former President Trump's designation of Houthis in Yemen as terrorists.

After \$2 trillion spent and 240,000 lives lost, President Biden announced the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021—almost two decades after Congress first authorized military force.

ENDING VIOLENCE AT HOME AND ABROAD

President Biden also issued an executive order to address gun violence within the U.S. The Justice Department is now preparing rules to **stop the sale of untraceable “ghost guns” and accessories to turn pistols into short-barreled rifles.**

THE NEXT STAGE

Decades-old congressional authorizations used for wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries remain in effect without any expiration date. Advocates for people-first foreign policy are urging Congress to reassert its constitutional role and repeal or revise existing authorizations for use of military force. The House Foreign Affairs Committee already advanced a bill to **repeal the 2002 authorization for the Iraq War.**

As the U.S. brings troops home, the FY2022 Budget is also an opportunity to put People Over Pentagon by **cutting the military budget** and ending spending on wasteful weapons systems and military equipment. This will be the first year in a decade that statutory budget caps do not set annual increases to military spending equal or greater than increases to domestic spending.

While presidential actions are a start, ultimately Congress must act to reduce gun violence in our communities. **H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act**, would expand background checks to all gun sales. The **Enhanced Background Checks Act** would close the Charleston Loophole, which allows gun sales to be approved before background checks are complete. Both bills have passed the House and are awaiting action in the Senate.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

ENDING VIOLENCE AT HOME AND ABROAD: SHIREEN'S STORY



Grassroots organizations building connections with people who
Shireen Al-Adeimi

Dr. Shireen Al-Adeimi is a Yemeni American activist and Assistant Professor of Language and Literacy at Michigan State University

"For twenty long years, the United States has waged endless, fruitless, and destructive war in Afghanistan. With the decision to finally fully withdraw U.S. troops, President Biden recognizes what the people of the United States and Afghanistan have long known: we simply cannot bomb our way to peace.

We commend the Biden Administration for their reported decision, but we also recognize that this did not come from the top alone. This is the result of decades of grassroots pressure fighting to end endless war and put peace first. This decision must just be the beginning, not the end, of a total rethinking of the U.S. approach to conflict. The tides are shifting. Now, we must seize on this momentum to end the era of endless war for good.

Stephen Miles is Executive Director of Win Without War, a diverse network of activists and organizations working for a more peaceful, progressive U.S. foreign policy

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

"This is a pivotal moment. Young people turned out in record numbers in 2018 and 2020 to elect a new president and a new congress believing that we could change the status quo and finally address the epidemic of gun violence. We've faced one of the deadliest years on record—with COVID-19, systemic racism, and a record 41,000 deaths caused by guns—and now is the time for urgent action. The president has started to take steps towards addressing the public health crisis of gun violence with public health solutions, and we won't stop until we pass life-saving bills like H.R. 8, get critical investments in violence intervention programs, and a national, unified plan to address the epidemic of gun violence. This time will be different because it has to be. Too much is at stake not to get this important work over the finish line."

Max Markham is Policy Director at [March For Our Lives Action Fund](#), which organizes young people to fight for sensible gun violence prevention policies that save lives

"President Biden promised to take action on gun violence in his first one hundred days in office, and he delivered. These executive actions help address a crisis that devastates communities across the country on a daily basis. The fears surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and societal unrest only underscore the urgent need to reform our gun laws, prevent gun violence, and make families safer and more secure.

The Giffords organization and Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords have spent more than seven years painstakingly dismantling the stranglehold that the NRA once had over Congress and statehouses across the country. We live in a country where gun violence is unacceptably common but nonetheless accepted by too many politicians. It's the responsibility of our leaders to protect us, and we will keep fighting for the common sense gun safety laws that we know save lives."

[Giffords](#) fights to end the gun violence epidemic in the United States by taking on the gun lobby directly

FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

We have a lot to celebrate in the first one hundred days of the Biden Administration and the new Congress. Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, we have vaccines in our arms, money in our pockets, and roofs over our heads. Working parents are breathing a sigh of relief as schools and child care facilities safely reopen. Executive actions by President Biden are protecting workers, fighting climate change, advancing equality, addressing systemic racism, and reducing violence.

We are one hundred days closer to justice because decades of organizing by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and low-income communities has begun to shift the balance of power in our country. We the people hold the power to demand real change.

After years of resisting attack after attack on our communities, we are embracing the chance to make real progress. We know that undoing the damage of the last four years isn't enough—people were hurting long before the previous Administration. The compounding crises of COVID-19, climate change, white supremacy, and rampant poverty demand bold and courageous action.

THE OBSTACLES WE FACE

While the big wins of the first one hundred days are historic, all of them were either in the American Rescue Plan or part of executive actions that could be reversed in a future presidential administration.

We face major structural obstacles to progress. While our democracy survived the stress test of the last four years, it is on life support. In the first three months of 2021, state legislators introduced 361 bills to restrict voting. Partisan gerrymandering, the composition of the Senate, and the Electoral College dilute the political power of communities of color. Arcane procedural rules in Congress block progressive legislation—even if it has majority support in both chambers of Congress.



FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

Some of the Legislation Stalled in the Senate after House Passage in the First One Hundred Days

| BILL | PASSED THE HOUSE | HOUSE VOTES | |
|--|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | FOR | AGAINST |
| <u>H.R. 5, Equality Act</u> | February 25 | D: 221, R: 3 | D: 0, R: 206 |
| <u>H.R. 803, Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act</u> | February 26 | D: 219, R: 8 | D: 1, R: 199 |
| <u>H.R. 1, For the People Act</u> | March 3 | D: 220, R: 0 | D: 1, R: 209 |
| <u>H.R. 1280, George Floyd Justice in Policing Act</u> | March 3 | D: 219, R: 1 | D: 2, R: 210 |
| <u>H.R. 842, Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act</u> | March 9 | D: 220, R: 5 | D: 1, R: 205 |
| <u>H.R. 8, Bipartisan Background Checks Act</u> | March 11 | D: 219, R: 8 | D: 1, R: 202 |
| <u>H.R. 1446, Enhanced Background Checks Act</u> | March 11 | D: 217, R: 2 | D: 2, R: 208 |
| <u>H.J.Res. 17, Removing the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment</u> | March 17 | D: 218, R: 4 | D: 0, R: 204 |
| <u>H.R. 1620, Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act</u> | March 17 | D: 215, R: 29 | D: 0, R: 172 |
| <u>H.R. 6, Dream and Promise Act</u> | March 18 | D: 219, R: 9 | D: 0, R: 197 |
| <u>H.R. 1603, Farm Workforce Modernization Act</u> | March 18 | D: 217, R: 30 | D: 1, R: 173 |
| <u>H.R. 7, Paycheck Fairness Act</u> | April 15 | D: 216, R: 1 | D: 0, R: 210 |
| <u>H.R. 1573, Access to Counsel Act</u> | April 21 | D: 217, R: 0 | D: 0, R: 207 |
| <u>H.R. 1333, NO BAN Act</u> | April 21 | D: 217, R: 1 | D: 0, R: 208 |
| <u>H.R. 51, Washington, D.C. Admission Act</u> | April 22 | D: 216, R: 0 | D: 0, R: 208 |

FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

To win bold legislation, we have to unrig the rules of our democracy. The Jim Crow filibuster is a clear example. This Senate relic, created by historical accident, allows 41 Senators to block any legislation. Senators representing a small minority of the people can grind the legislative process to a halt. This anti-democratic tactic was used to block civil rights legislation in the 1960s. Now, the Jim Crow filibuster stands in the way of every bill that builds power for our communities. Fifteen major bills passed the House in the first one hundred days but still await action in the Senate, largely due to the Jim Crow filibuster.

It doesn't have to be this way. Congress writes the rules, and Congress can change the rules. We are tired of accepting empty excuses for inaction. The Senate can **reform or repeal the Jim Crow filibuster with a majority vote**, just as it reformed the filibuster for nominations by simple majority votes in 2013 and 2017.

Changing the Jim Crow filibuster paves the way for other pro-democracy reforms. **H.R. 1, the For the People Act**, would ensure clean and fair elections, take big money out of politics, and clean up corruption. **H.R. 51, the Washington, D.C. Admission Act**, would finally give the 700,000 residents of our nation's capital, the majority of whom are people of color, the full representation in Congress that everyone deserves.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

We believe that—no matter the color of your skin, the person you love, where you were born, or where you now live—everyone in this country deserves the chance to thrive. And we will keep fighting for the policies to achieve that vision.

The wins of the first one hundred days not only deliver real results for our communities but also create momentum for future victories. The expansion of health care coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic provides momentum for Medicare for All. Emergency relief like survival checks, expanded tax credits, enhanced unemployment insurance, and housing assistance moves us closer to ending poverty. Recent improvements to child care and paid leave could lay the foundation for redesigning the care economy. Executive actions to protect workers,

FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

tackle climate change, advance equality, confront white supremacy, reduce gun deaths, and end wars set the stage for congressional legislation.

Now the work continues. When we come together across race and place like we've done in the past, we can build a future where all of us can truly thrive. The last one hundred days proved what we already knew: When we organize, we win.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE: ISAAC'S STORY



Isaac Grimm is the Organizing Director of [Rights & Democracy New Hampshire](#), part of the [Center for Popular Democracy](#) and [People's Action](#) networks

"The achievements of the first one hundred days of the Biden administration are encouraging, but we must continue to build momentum to realize the transformative change this moment demands. We risk falling far short of that unless we address the deep, systemic flaws in our democracy. In this pursuit, we must not let procedural excuses like the Senate filibuster, which allow a powerful minority to overrule the will of the people, stand in our way."

Leah Greenberg is co-founder and Co-Executive Director of [Indivisible](#), a progressive grassroots movement of millions of activists across every state

"Our civil rights are under attack and we need the federal government to step up. When we discuss how to build a more representative democracy, and the barriers to full participation in public life, we cannot ignore the procedural weapon of choice: the filibuster. We cannot allow this tool to continue to be used to thwart our country's progress. To truly protect our democracy, we must put an end to voter suppression and do everything in our power to see legislation like HR1 and HR4 become law— and that includes abolishing the filibuster."

Nse Ufot, CEO of [New Georgia Project](#) & [New Georgia Project Action Fund](#)



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