

Recall is No Joke for Working Californians

By: Ethel Long-Scott

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This coming Tuesday much of the world will roll its eyes at California. For poor and working Californians, our eyes will be on our checkbooks. Working families across this state know that what may seem like a “circus,” is all too real for those of us facing a bleak future.

This recall is no joke. It is no circus. It is fueled by our collective discontent over the fact that 90,000 students couldn't enroll in community college last Spring because of tuition increases and PTA's are now fundraising to keep teachers in our schools. Because 300,000 jobs have disappeared in California in three years. Because over ten million people will go without healthcare at some point this year.

All of this is occurring despite the fact that corporate profits recently increased at the highest rate since 2000. Corporations are giddy from the largest federal tax break in history for the rich and they are intent on getting even more money by installing folks like Schwarzenegger or Simon who won't pass new taxes or new spending. This election is an attempt to guarantee that lawmakers follow the austere path of Mississippi and Third World countries worldwide, a path that leads to two tiers: the rich and those with no jobs, no safety net, no healthcare and no education to tell the difference.

The Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP) and the California Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) have been struggling to unite poor and working class people for years. We teach about the Just Health Care Campaign that would provide comprehensive healthcare for every US citizen from birth to death. *And it would pay for itself.* We already spend twice the amount per capita on healthcare than any other industrialized nation, yet we are the only industrialized country that doesn't provide universal coverage. It is time to unite behind platforms such as the Just Health Care Campaign and efforts like Sheila Kuehl's SB 921, which would provide health insurance for every citizen of California *and* save millions of our tax dollars.

We must demand what's ours and avoid fighting for pieces of a shrinking pie. We know that the profits that the rich are reaping is food off our table, education for our children, healthcare for our sick, houses over our heads and living wages to provide for our families. These things are our rights. Dr. King envisioned going to Congress and demanding these rights in a new Bill of Economic Rights, but he was assassinated. We must carry on his vision because we know we have a right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. We also must be clear that the US government drafted and signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that guaranteed us all our economic human rights to food, housing, healthcare, a living wage and education.

Whichever way we vote this coming Tuesday, we must remain clear that lawmakers in this state will never act on our interests until we speak and act with a united voice. Help us build the Just Health Care Campaign and the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign in California so that we can envision a day where poverty in this wealthy state of this wealthy country will finally be eliminated.

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For more information visit www.weap.org or www.justhealthcare.org .*