

## **Why I March**

Scottie Smith

As an organizer and participant in the March 4 Education, A 70-mile march from San Pablo, California to the state's capitol in Sacramento April 9-16, I find it easy to fly six hours to continue advocating on behalf of the many children that are left behind.

I support the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) because the time should have long passed when men, women and children suffer in the streets and rundown shacks of America. They are suffering from a lack of education, jobs, housing, healthcare and food, The so-called "leadership" is leaving behind many thousands of children that are hungry, homeless and hopeless. In rural and urban areas across this nation, children are coming from the streets, homeless shelters and substandard housing to schools that are poorly maintained and poorly funded. They are subjected to rounds of standardized tests like rats in a laboratory. The so-called leaders have failed and are continuing to fail because of their lack of concern and recognition of natural and civil rights as outlined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We support the PPEHRC because it recognizes men, women, and children in a holistic manner. The PPEHRC supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A declaration that promotes a holistic approach for human improvement that encompasses social and economic rights.

As an educational advocate, I believe the leadership must clean its own backyard before it can clean others; that rights begin at home and spreads abroad. I ask, where are the rights for the millions of mis-educated children that are left behind in poor, insect and rat-infested homes and schools? Where are the rights for children that must go to bed and get up hungry? Where are the rights for a sick child that must go to school or stay home alone because its mother or father and sometimes both, must go to a low wage job that does not provide adequate healthcare? Where is the charity for children that go to school ready to be taught, but have no textbook or teacher?

I am here to support the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign and to advocate for a holistic approach to education which includes social and economic rights.