



June 18, 2018

Matt Bevin  
Governor of Kentucky

On behalf of the "Kentucky Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival," thank you for responding to us through the voice mail you left for our colleague Pam Mc Michael. We appreciate your assurance that you read the scroll with statistics about Kentuckians, and communities and families across the country.

We live in a world, however, Governor, where there are real concrete social facts and consequences. The language of "the American dream" cannot replace the concrete experience of the American nightmare experienced by so many people across the country, many of them here in Kentucky, where 2 million Kentuckians are poor or low-income. It does not have to be that way.

One of the primary functions of this first season of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is to replace the false narrative about poverty - that blames the poor instead of policies and systems that create poverty, systems that have been constructed by people with power and wealth (like yourself) - with the correct narrative as experienced by the people who live it.

It is true that we don't see eye to eye. There is a reason for that. We have a fundamental difference in values, and the reason we know that is to hear your words and see the kinds of policies that get passed under your leadership that continue to hurt people already suffering. It's hard for us to see evidence of any caring on your part about the everyday working class Kentuckian.

You say that disagreement is part of the greatness of America. But if someone has a foot on our throat and we can't breathe, the location of the foot and the breathing problem are not simple disagreements.

You say that "we are comprised of many people with many ideas of things." We take it that you mean "ideas about things." At the end of the day, ideas are not neutral, and we all have to admit that some ideas and actions are wrong and harmful. You are leading Kentucky in harmful ideas.

Perhaps most insulting are these words from your message, "I certainly appreciate that there are many others who aspire for the very same thing, and again that's the most wonderful thing about our country that everybody has that opportunity."

Everybody does not have that opportunity, Governor. In fact, our brutal economic system is dependent on creating people who lose out in the economy, and to us at the Poor People's Campaign, this is sinful – to create a rigged game where by design not everyone can win and then blame people for losing.

Since you have continued not to let us in the Capitol, our house, except the 2 in x 2 out rule instituted solely for our group, Governor Bevin, we invite you to come to us.

Come to a Poor People's Campaign hearing and listen. Simply listen to the stories of the people, from youth in Louisville to coalminers in Pike County, from high school students in Bowling Green to teachers in Barbourville, listen to single mothers on AFDC, immigrants fearing for their families and people living with disabilities. Come listen.

We ask that you schedule this Poor People's Hearing with us within 90 days.

That is your job. You work for the people and we are bringing our grievances to you.

Sincerely,

The Kentucky Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival