

Miranda Jones:

00:00:13

Do I need to Introduce the video?

00:00:17

Greetings everyone, thank you for joining the People's Report. We have a lot to talk about but just to get you in the mood and to get you warmed up and kind of activated for action we're going to start with a YouTube video. This is the reworking of Public Enemy's Fight the Power which, if you were around then, you know was a major kind of protest song, an anthem, so we want you to get in the mood by watching this quick video. Stay tuned.

00:00:49 -> 00:06:43

(video plays)

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:07:00

Miranda.

Miranda Jones:

00:07:02

Sorry, y'all couldn't hear me! Greetings! Happy New Years! This evening, we have a particular mission, if you watched what happened last Wednesday right here in America (which some would say that's not American, I would argue it's very American, deeply American, profoundly American.) You may have watched and you may have had a myriad of thoughts, feelings, emotions. For some people it was shock, for some people it was humorous, some people wanted to figure out how they could blame it on antifa and Black Lives Matter. For some people it was fear, some asked the question, "What would, you know, what would have happened had those been black people?" and I can safely tell you right now we'd all be dead, right? The majority, I'm going to say 90 to 95 percent of us, would have been dead. I can also safely say

that that kind of action probably would've never entered the consciousness of those engaged in work around liberation, freedom, and justice.

So, our goal this evening in looking at what happened and thinking about how we can create change, how we can create this model for liberation, we are going to ask that our white allies, comrades, accomplices, wherever they find themselves on the spectrum of anti-racist work, we're going to ask that they speak to you all fearlessly, deliberately, and with intention. So this evening, it is the goal of myself and Sister Britt to kind of sit back and let our white folks on the call talk to other white folks because we've seen a lot of posts, we've seen a lot of sharing, we've seen a few debates, but that will not stop what happened last Wednesday. What we saw was white supremacy and white privilege at its apex. So our goal this evening is to help you all get engaged in the work and also, specifically, we want you to look at the video we will provide of how those gates were opened up by law enforcement, how law enforcement seemed to just kind of stand by and let these people stage a coup on the United States, excuse me, States of America. We want you to think about this idea that the law enforcement keeps us safe. We want you to put yourselves in the position of a black person if that coup had actually been successful, right? Because the law enforcement I saw didn't do anything to stop it, right? So these people got all the way up into Capitol Hill, into folk's offices, into the chambers, desecrating what some feel is sacred and hallowed ground with feces and urine, right? Writing notes on Nancy Pelosi's papers on her desk.

So we want to challenge you around this idea that law enforcement keeps us safe. We want you to think more critically about that, we want you to think critically about what we saw happen last summer and what has happened over 400 years in this country but what is just now being caught on video. So that is what we want you to think about. Our allies, our comrades, they're going to get into that, they're going to talk about what you can do and we're going to give you a very surface overview of our demands which we've been working on before the coup, we're going to keep working on after the coup, we're going to keep working as they probably plan another coup or ways to attack black people, unfortunately, in this country. So we will kind of give you an overview of what we mean by reallocation, what we mean by ending cash bail, demilitarization of the police, what we want in terms of more funding for SOAR and YouthBuild and forgivable loans for black businesses (notice I didn't say minority businesses, I said black businesses, we're going to talk about that a little bit, right, because there is a difference, right.) So we're going to talk to you about, a little bit about those things. We're going to let each person kind of jump in and kind of share our research. We will be presenting to the Public Safety Committee on tomorrow, so we ask that you all do tune in. We've been invited to present by Councilmember James Taylor. We've met with May Pro Tem D.D. Adams, you can go to Triad Abolition Project's webpage and watch that video, you can also go to Hate Out's Facebook page, scroll through, and find that video. Unfortunately, some of our other

leaders refused to meet with us because our meetings are open, our meetings are to the public. We don't have any backdoor meetings, that's not how we get down.

So, you know, we'll be there tomorrow, we ask that you all watch the livestream, we'll be sure to kind of link the livestream for you all to be able to see it. We're going to give you some things that you can do; so from the very very low level of, you know, your posts, we're going to tell you who you can call, who you can email, who you can write, and we're definitely going to tell how you can join us and get into this work. But first, what I want to do in deference to this black woman I want to give sister Britt space to kind of speak to what she saw on last Wednesday as a sociologist, criminologist, just a black woman in America. What was your, your thoughts and your responses and your feelings about what happened?

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:12:53

Man, I mean I sat there captivated to watch on screen what has been the legacy of these United States since its inception, right? I was not shocked, surprised, none of that. None of those feelings came through. And then I did talk a little bit about the importance of the language when we think about and talk about and describe what happened at the Capitol, right? A lot of folks are thinking about what happened on the Capitol as an example of white privilege and I definitely know where that is coming from. I need us to use really strong language, right, what happened at the Capitol was white supremacy and I need more white people to be willing to say the words "white supremacy." There's definitely elements of, and our brother Bruce pointed this out to us, there's definitely elements of privilege related to surveillance and differences in the ways that black people and black activists are surveilled in relationship to white people and white insurrectionists because the surveillance prior to what happened at the Capitol is amazing to me, the way that they surveilled Black Lives Matter's every movement and so when Black Lives Matter was on the ground in D.C., wherever Black Lives Matter was the National Guard was, right? Now, they had been posting, tweeting, on every type of social media about what they planned to do at the Capitol on the 6th for weeks and somehow there was no preparation. That's, you know, interesting to me.

It's also interesting to me that the number of white people, and people in general, who described what they saw as un-American or said that they were shocked by what happened. Police kick in black people's doors every single day so if you were horrified by people kicking in the windows at the Capitol... you know? What? How? Because this level of violence, this level of hatred, is demonstrated on black communities, brown communities, on queer people, daily, from citizens and also from state actors meaning the police, meaning the military, right? And so

we have to understand this violence is happening every day. This is a product of colonialism, right? We cannot celebrate our “colonial origins” with our “founding fathers,” right, and tell the story of the people who “found” the United States and not understand that this is exactly what they did. They rode up on a piece of land that did not belong to them and wiped out everything and everyone that existed there and we celebrate that, right? We have holidays around that, right? We teach that in school as if that is something that should be, you know, told in a fairy-tale-way to our kids and that is problematic. And so now to sit in 2021 and say that we’re horrified or shocked, we got to really dig deep about the origins of this country and the ways that we have all been complicit, right, the ways that we have all been complicit in celebrating those things and it has to stop, right, I said this, we cannot go back to normal, the normal that we had prior to the uprisings this summer, prior to the pandemic. That normal I’m horrified of, that normal means that my black body is subject to unchecked state sanctioned violence, unchecked white supremacist violence. I do not want to go back to that.

And so, for people, you know, who say that they stand in solidarity with black lives matter or black people in general, we have to be working to move change, not go back there. There's not a healing that can be done without change. And I'm not actually looking for healing of the country, I'm looking for a total overhaul.

Miranda Jones:

00:17:33

Thank you for that, Britt, and I want to remind the people about our dear ancestor Briana Taylor when we talk about people kicking down doors. I want people to remember that if you were out there in the streets with us. I want you to Google the sister in Chicago who they kicked down her door when she was about to go to bed; professional black woman, social worker, in the nude. I want you to resurrect those stories in your mind and your consciousness. If you don't know about them, I challenge you to Google them right now. I'm gonna segue to one of my comrades.

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:18:03

Can I say- sorry, Miranda, can I interrupt and say one thing, I forgot to say this. When we’re calling on ancestors, we need to call on Miriam Carey as well who's a black woman who was shot in front of the Capitol building for making a U-turn because she hit a barrier that was

who-knows-how-many hundreds of feet from actually putting anyone inside the Capitol in danger while she was having a mental health situation. They shot her tens of times in the back while her baby was in a car seat in the backseat. And she died, right. So this is the level of violence that is happening at the Capitol against black people, but we can have white people running through there free, livestreaming it, and all those people except for the four that lost their lives that day, every single one of those thousands of people that were out there went home, lay down in their bed or in their expensive hotel, or in their, you know, flew back home, right? And that's something that's important because a lot of people like to say this is about economic anxiety among poor white people. That is not true. Okay, that's not true because people that had the money to fly during a pandemic to D.C. from across this country and stay in these high end hotels are not economically anxious. CEOs from Michigan, lawyers, dentists, attorneys, doctors who are out there are not economically anxious. So there should be nothing about Trump's policies of hatred that they feel compelled to follow.

So that level of violence, we've seen that at the Capitol, right, against black people. So we have to keep- I appreciate, Miranda, thank you for raising up those names because the violence is- we can't even, it would take us all night to call up every ancestor that that violence has been enacted against.

Miranda Jones:

00:19:49

I'm going to shift to our white comrades, I want you all to let the people know what your response was, what was the response to other whites around you, particularly on social media and in your circles and kind of give us your thoughts. I'm going to shift first to Aly.

aly jones (she/her):

0:20:06

Well, there was a lot of surprise from people around me, and I think like, at first I had a surprise reaction, but it was more of one of those things where I wasn't surprised, but I wanted, I wanted to be like I needed to be because it's so ridiculously... emblematic of who we are as a nation. And I just, you know, white privilege is being able to deny that that's who we are as a nation, like 100%, and that is where I stood in it. And this was a very good blast in the face that no, sweetheart, this is, this is what it is.

And, you know, Britt talked about if this had been BLM, you know, they follow their every move. They were set up with the National Guard. I don't, you know, all these things slip and weren't in place. I don't think it was a slip. I think it was 100% intentional and I, you know, my mom and I were talking today. She asked me, "Do you think that Donald Trump ordered this?" I don't think Donald Trump needed to order this. You have enough white supremacists who participate in our law enforcement system on a daily basis that you don't need the president to hand down an order saying, "Don't stop them." They're participating on their own. They are opening those gates, they are taking selfies with those people. They are off duty showing up to participate in this as rioters, as infiltrators, so there is no mistake, there is no accident that this happened. This is inside.

And I think, I hope, that for all of our allies who are watching tonight, all of my fellow white women who are watching tonight, that you do take this seriously as your moment to stop being horrified behind your computer. I'm glad that you're posting, I'm glad you're letting people know that this is not acceptable, but now it's time to take it one step further and we're going to give you those opportunities tonight on how to start making that change here in Winston. But it is, it's time to say "Enough." Like full stop. We can't just type anymore. We have to do something because this isn't a surprise, but it's not acceptable either

Miranda Jones

00:22:15

All right, Jillian. Let me introduce one of our comrades, coalition, activist from the DSA - Jillian, will you chime in and kind of let the people know your thoughts, feelings, perceptions from last Wednesday?

Jillian Sechrest:

00:22:30

I mean it's more or less imperialism coming home. So it's a lot of that actualized white supremacy that is pernicious in existence and like Brittany clearly stated, is it the bedrock of what we perceive as our quote unquote "democracy." I mean back in 2018 there was an instance where there were Nazis protesting in Newnan, Georgia, and the response was for the police to actually turn on the counter-protestors and secure the Nazis. And it's time and time again we see this, we see essentially how these systems of policing are so embedded and linked to white supremacy, whether it be just through securing a property, which at one point, you

know, our black comrades, that was what they were perceived as by these systems. So through fugitive slave laws and all of that, all the way to strike breaking - which is, you know, that is the basis of modern policing and it is really frustrating that folks were so surprised by the police response when we have continued to see this.

So I think that it's not a positive, it's not a positive in any way, but to have folks actually come to that collective consciousness and realizing what the systems are are completely based in.

Miranda Jones

00:23:51

Thank you. Julie, do you want to chime in?

Julie Brady:

00:23:54

Yeah, so specifically, speaking to how my white friends have reacted to what happened at the Capitol,

A. I think it's interesting that that was the tipping point for a lot of people like a took a white supremacist fascist mob storming the Capitol building for people to be like, "Well, this is bad." But more than that, I saw people personally (I'm very sorry about the cat.) I saw people posting things like, "You can't condemn the violence on Wednesday at the Capitol without also condemning left wing extremist violence." and that just, like, doesn't make sense because like if we lived in a vacuum, yes, violence is bad, but we live in a society that has like context and history and like everything within that kind of framing. And any left wing violence that even exists in this country is so far from being on the same scale and intensity as right wing violence that you cannot even mention them in the same breath. So I think that there's a lot of white liberal people who don't even realize that that's a white supremacist response.

To be like, "Oh, these, these are white supremacists, who have systemic power backing them up every step of the way, and have had it for at least the past four years." That a white liberal person can look at that and say, "...but antifa!" Like that just blows my mind. So I'm trying to explain to people that, like, fascist violence and trying to stop fascist violence are not equally bad - one of them isn't even bad at all. So it's incredible to see that that's still kind of the mindset that a lot of people are in

(Miranda Jones: All right, Selene-)

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:25:31

The violence is important. The violence on the left has happened in response to murders by police of people. This violence was in response to a reality TV star and crook claiming that someone stole an election from him, the same election where his Republican colleagues won in their states, right, but there was only election fraud on the presidential election, the presidential race. So in Pennsylvania, the Republicans that won in that state, there wasn't fraud for them to win. It was only fraud because Donald Trump lost.

So comparing those, the sources of the violence in addition to everything that Julie just said - come on, y'all, it's not the same.

Julie Brady:

00:26:20

Not to mention that, like, in left wing protests, almost all the violence is started by the police. So again, you just, you cannot compare the two at all.

Mirada Jones:

00:26:30

Selene?

Selene Johnson (she/her):

00:26:32

Thinking about how people around me, things I've seen on social media from friends and so forth, have responded. I think what I saw is that just as white people they seemed to really

need to see George Floyd being murdered in order to believe the things that black people have been saying forever about police brutality, it seems like they needed to see police opening doors for white supremacists to enter the capital to believe that we're at that point, we're at that level.

And so I do think that... I guess I'll say like, I think there's an opportunity, in a way, because people seem to be outraged all over again. I hate to look at this as an opportunity, but I'm hoping beyond hope that people got outraged all over again. I mean, a lot of the activism seemed to fizzle after what we saw with George Floyd this summer and I see people getting hyped up again and I'm just really hoping- I can speak for myself when I say while I wasn't surprised by what happened to George Floyd, I didn't really know what to do about it as a white person. I didn't know how to get involved and I'm really grateful that I found, I mean, I had to look but I'm really grateful that I found the people in this coalition, because I feel like we can do things and we have action items. And so I think that's why I'm hopeful for things like the People's Report so that we can share this kind of information to help other people who are outraged and who are sitting maybe behind their computer screens at their keyboards and they're trying to get the message out but they don't really know what else to do beyond that.

This is an opportunity for you to get involved and really make a difference in dismantling those oppressive systems.

Miranda Jones:

00:28:25

And let me say this. I said I wasn't going to go here, but I'm going here anyways.

To our white comrades, allies, accomplices, whatever you are, your outrage does not save the lives of black people, okay. Your outrage comes after we are dead and I really believe there is this kind of weird morbid fascination with black death, these live executions, and I think if people really dig deep, right, they'll find that there's something about it that seems to kind of fuel them even though it's highly traumatic for black people, okay. So when you just stay mired in your outrage, that doesn't do me any good and I think when we, particularly black women activists and even our brother activists, when we talk about our real experiences, I think, Brittany, and maybe you've seen this too, that people don't believe this.

They think that we have some kind of- we want to be seen, or we need media, or we- Let me tell you something. And I'm going to go here. I recently applied for a different type of job and as a black activist, when the background check came I found out that there's been this ongoing

background check on me multiple times, right? Now, I've never violated any policies. I've never done anything in my career, other than everybody knows (amazing Katie said???) it's not secret, other than stand up for black children, other than preach freedom, justice, and liberation in the ways that I know how in the tradition of my ancestors. Yet there was this ongoing monitoring and I call one of my brothers. I said, "Brother, can you believe this?" and he kind of chuckled. (Shout out to him, because I know he's probably watching.)

He said, "Think about COINTELPRO, Think about the Black Panther Party." He said, "Sister, you should not be surprised," right. And then he gave me some other words that're only for our black ears but he said, "You should not be surprised," right. So when we're talking to you about surveillance, when we're talking to you about death threats, it's real. I wish I had my copy handy of the one I received as an educator

I need for you to understand that your outrage does not save our lives. You cannot stay, you should not stay, you can, but you should not stay mired in outrage. Because when you're responding, "Brianna's Dead," "George is Dead," our other sister Brittany mentioned "Is Dead," right? See, because what happens is you go on about your white life, right, but it is seared in our black consciousness, right? And so from one of our other colleagues who's on here, comrades, Bailey, she gave us 10 strategies for cultivating community accountability and I'm a kind of hit them real quick - team, y'all can chime in if you feel like it.

One of the things she said, number one is, "Shift from 'What Can I Do?' to 'What Can We Do?'" because none of us can do this work alone, right? And the operative word is Do. Okay, that's a verb - Do something. Posting on Facebook, it's not doing something. We all will probably never do enough, right, but we have lives, we're humans, we're multifaceted, you know, and all of that.

"Strengthen Communication Skills." That's what we're doing now. It's a lot of work that goes into what we do every week, right?

"Practice Collective Support." I want to give a shout out to Jen Brown, who is the leader of, founder or fearless, who last week

when that attempted coup happened. Jen, she cashapped me, she said, "Go home now." because she recognized the seriousness of what was going on. She said, "Order takeout, order in, but go home." That was real support right there. In that moment, I felt like I got a comrade right here. And it wasn't about the money, but it was about her recognizing that black lives are at stake right here, okay. So do that, share relationship experiences and resources, we're doing that.

“Build a Shared Vocabulary.” And as you engage in this work, you will commonly hear “accomplice,” “ally,” “comrade,” and you have to figure out at which level do you fit within this vocabulary. Are you just an ally? Are you a comrade, we really need comrades, right? Some people say, “I’m an advocate.” I don’t really like advocates all that much, yeah. To me, advocates are often informants. They’re not really advocates but you know I don’t want to feed people, so I won’t go there.

“Practice Taking Accountability.” So as you engage in this anti-racist work, you know, you’re going to find yourself having to unpack, you’re going to find yourself, as we all do, dealing with this cognitive dissonance. You’re going to have to continue to do that work over and over and over.

“Create Space to Create Concrete Accountability Steps,” “Practice Everyday Interventions,” “Create Collective Analysis and Action on the Roots of Violence.” Britt has told us that what happened is violent, our country is founded upon sheer violence. For my church people, y’all might think it was founded on your Bible, it was not - and I’m saying that as a believer, that’s real cute that you think that, but that’s just not true. It’s just not true. Bailey, did I hit those points the way you wanted them hit or do you want to add in something there?

Bailey Pittenger (she/her):

00:33:51

Absolutely. Thank you, Miranda. Those points are available on TransformingHarm.com, which has a lot of really great resources that are great for reading about how to be accountable as a community member but also how to make steps towards reducing harm of police brutality. So moving into care-centered work which is really what we need to be doing and what we should have been doing for many years, up till now, so I do recommend checking out those resources even further.

Miranda Jones:

00:34:26

All right, thank you. And one of the things you can do is you can sign this petition, we have a petition that we’re going to have uploaded, I think one of my people is working on it now. That’s the first very, very, low level thing you can do because as we talk about how to dismantle this system of white supremacy, how to look at the role of law enforcement in upholding the

system of white supremacy, we're going to go over our local demands, because guess what y'all? We are not asking for an exorbitant amount of money, right, to come out of the 78 million dollars excessive police budget. We're asking probably for anywhere from 10%-ish, somewhere around there, of this budget. So when our leaders tell us there is no money for things, there is money, they just gave it to the police, right. So, we want you to sign saying, "Hey, a portion of this 78 million dollars needs to go to preventative services." Hell, it might save some young white supremacist racist somewhere, right, from trying to overtake the city and country. So real quick, we're going to get into our demands, because time is of the essence. I'm going to punt to Aly real quick on here. Aly, if you want to talk to the people just briefly about the first demand.

aly jones (she/her):

00:35:43

All right. So yeah, we're coming to the city of Winston, and we're asking for five areas of reallocation and as Miranda said, you know, this is violence prevention. This is real violence prevention, Brit has made the point multiple times that the police do not stop crime, the police show up when crime has been committed. And so what we're talking about are funding programs and resources that allow independence, that allow liberation. They give people the resources to not end up committing crime to begin with and some of the more kind of right-off-the-bat ways are increasing the city's minimum wage, giving people a livable wage.

Our minimum wage employee, if you work 40 hours a week in Winston, you're making \$1160 a month. The average rent in Winston is \$928 a month. So right there you have someone who is supposed to be, right, our recommended amount is 30% (I always hear 30% of your income should be going to your rent, which by the way if you're doing that it's still rough,) these people are spending 80% of their income on rent. And it's not "these people," it might be you. And so this is where we have the opportunity to try and make a difference to give everyone in Winston equal footing, to give them a better chance. And so, increasing the minimum wage right off the jump is a quick way to do that.

Miranda Jones:

00:37:14

Can Jillian add to that? Jillian, will you jump in about why minimum wage is important?

(aly jones (she/her): Do you want to?)

Jillian Sechrest:

00:37:19

Oh, absolutely. I mean, if you really think about it, that is what keeps you housed, that's what hits that base of- what I always like to draw to is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, housing is right there. If you aren't ensuring folks are housed, if they don't have the funds to do it and then to make sure that they're able to eat and take care of everything, then, I mean, what are they going to do? You create a cycle in a system of further despair and how can folks feel emboldened or empowered if they literally are existing in a cycle of despair? So all we're seeing is more and more housing that's coming to the city is- it's completely out of reach. It's not anything that is even perceived as like "working class housing," we have that section described. It's all market rate and as the city continues to expand, invest, and gentrify the downtown area, we're seeing that encroach upon area- like, if you look in the census tract, these areas that literally some folks are making about \$16,000 a year. So where are those folks going to go, where even are those homeowners going to go, when they can't even afford the property taxes anymore? This was all a cascade effect, so why aren't we trying to actually speak to those direct material needs by increasing the pool that is available?

Miranda Jones:

00:38:30

Can I ask y'all something? Y'all know more about this than I do, I'm just an educator. Do y'all think, because I've heard a lot of talk about this in activist circles and on Facebook particularly that some of this might be because some of our elected leaders are landlords, maybe slumlords? Is there a real kind of vested interest, I'm just asking, vested interest in some of what we're seeing by way of the issues with housing, by way of folks not making enough money? I'm just asking.

Nobody wants to touch that?

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:39:08

I did, I'll touch it.

Miranda Jones:

00:39:10

Okay, I have not done research, I'm just saying.

aly jones (she/her):

00:39:13

I mean, you saw you saw it this summer with trying to stop the evictions and I'm sorry, I'm blanking on who the judge was that had the opportunity, if anybody else wants to jump in on that, but I know that-

(Brittany Battle (she/her): The clerk, it was the clerk.)

Oh, the county clerk! Sorry, yeah, the county clerk who had the opportunity to jump in, and then it turned out her husband was a landlord and had been evicting people, but he hadn't been evicting people, his property management company had been evicting people, which is, as we all know, very, very different. So right there immediately you had the city playing to personal interests, not to people's interests, not to our interests.

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:39:52

Brittany Battle (she/her): As I tell my students all the time, follow the money. When you follow the money, you're going to get a lot of answers. You're going to get a lot of answers why innovation quarter is happening, happened, right? You're going to get a lot of answers about these "projects for revitalization" in this city and elsewhere, right, not just here. This is not just Winston-Salem or Forsyth County and that's why I said on this Facebook Live if y'all are not from the triad area, please, all of this stuff is applicable to wherever you live. Go check who your politicians, what they, where their sources of income are, who donates to their campaigns,

right? This is not just something that we need to look at on a national level, it's something that we need to look at on the local level as well. Because the people who are charged with making these decisions have vested interests and they like to say that activists have interests, ulterior motives or interests, all the time, which is amazing to me because I don't get no check for none of this, none of it. Miranda, you don't get no checklist, right?

Miranda Jones:

00:41:01

But I do have an agenda, my agenda is freedom, justice, and liberation.

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:41:04

Liberation, thank you. That is the agenda. That's the agenda. Can I walk outside and not have to worry about white supremacists or state violence? That's my agenda, right? But definitely you have to follow that money trail.

00:41:18

(multiple voices for a brief moment)

Miranda Jones:

00:41:19

Go ahead, Jillian. I'm sorry.

Jillian Secgrest:

0:41:21

I'm sorry, I just wanted to put as an addendum really quick so that was former clerk of court with what Aly was speaking about, Renita Thompkins Linville. We now actually have Clerk of

Court Denise Hines. So I just want to delineate so nobody is like, "Oh, well, let me call the clerk's office really quick because-

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:41:36

Right, right.

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00:41:39

Miranda Jones: I voted for her, I voted for Denise so I don't want to hear Denise is a slumlord. Because I'm hearing that from some of our city council reps, I hear that the own lots of properties and even some of the stuff downtown and so I figured, you know, y'all're more research heavy, I figured that y'all would know. But one thing-

Jillian Sechrest:

00:41:54

Gloria Whisenhunt. I'm sorry, just to put that out there, County Commissioner Gloria Whisenhunt.

(Miranda Jones: Oh! Thank you.)

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:42:00

Whole names.

Miranda Jones:

00:42:03

Interesting. Okay. And we can put where people can find that information, that would be great if we have that handy. And one thing that I want to point out, though, is that we're not just talking about increasing minimum wage for those who work for the city. We want that, that's great, but we're talking about everyone, right, because we know that there's been an effort to do that. I think Mayor pro tem D.D. Adams pushed that, and I think it kind of got shot down by all (I hate to use that verbiage, excuse me) but it didn't pass with the city council, but this is for everyone, right? And so we know people and I think, I don't know if it was Jillian that posted about this earlier, one of my comrades posted about how people always say, "Small businesses can't afford it!" They- Jillian, you want to talk about that a little bit, why they always say, "What will happen to small businesses?"

Jillian Sechrest:

00:42:47

I'm sorry to dominate the conversation, I apologize. But no, that's something that's very near and dear to my heart because that's the one thing that I constantly hear. We even had Mayor Joines come out and really try to discuss about how his heart was bleeding for the 75% of restaurants that might be lost. I hear it from the actual restaurant owners and everything about how vested they are in this community. This, that and the third, but they're running on razor thin profit margins and all of this.

A lot of them that have that, you know, quick reply to essentially place the burden on people in poverty. Why they can't afford to live, why they can't afford to pay their rent, why they can't afford to have medical insurance. Yet, they don't have the business acumen, nor the knowledge to sustain their own business model, while ensuring their employees are able to live. The people that are producing the profit for them are not able to have that actual living rate because they essentially decided to open up a third juice shop within, you know, the county. Like it's super frustrating because again, these people are not here essentially to boost your dreams. They're here to feed themselves, they're here to feed their families, they're here to do whatever they have to do. And so it's very frustrating when it keeps reverting back to small business owners when we're not speaking about the material conditions of the workers that are living hand to mouth and are literally missing one paycheck away from being homeless.

00:44:11

(Miranda Jones: Right, and so we-)

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:44:11

Then you need to holler at your government! If you can't sustain your small business while you pay people enough that they don't have to wonder should they buy diapers or groceries, you need to holler at your government. That is not the poor people, the working people, the people that are making hard, impossible decisions every day. That's not on them, that's on y'all and the people that you put into office.

Miranda Jones:

00:44:36

Good point, and sometimes these small businesses don't always treat their workers right. So let me just say that I think that's something that we overlook that we need to make sure that we are cognizant of. So y'all, if nothing else, sign that petition because people need more money. We're in the housing crisis, we see what's going on, sign that petition. Back to the point of which Aly was making, talking about these preventive services, particularly if any educators on the call, I want you to understand why YouthBuild is so important. You know, unfortunately we're going to have young people who are going to drop out, right? Life happens and there are variables that we can't control, sometimes all the wraparound services in the world are just not enough. YouthBuild is an excellent way for young folks to be able to earn a GED. And also, you know, be able to get a trade, so work in construction. And no, we're not promoting dropping out but we recognize it as a reality. Aly, would you jump in because this is your thing. Will you kind of tell people, just give them a general idea of YouthBuild and why we need to make this happen, particularly for our young people.

aly jones (she/her):

00:45:38

Absolutely. And you know, Miranda, YouthBuild's awesome because it also ties into several things that we've spoken about tonight and will continue to speak about and so what YouthBuild does is it operates for young people in the city of Winston and it's for residents of

the city of Winston, it's not for the county, and it takes young folks who were not able to complete high school for whatever reason, helps them connect with Forsyth Tech to get into a program where they can get their GED, get their equivalency, or maybe even get their diploma, depending on where they were when they left school. They then go on to enter trades training and for the majority of young people, this means going into the construction field.

But YouthBuild, the folks that run YouthBuild here in the city of Winston with our department of reintegration and youth development, they do some incredible work. And they recognize not everybody is set for the construction trade and so they also work to set them up with other programs at Forsyth Tech like medical billing and coding. They partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank to do culinary arts. They've done welding. So, they really try to open up the horizons for the participants in that program.

The really great thing about YouthBuild is that students are paid a salary, an hourly wage for being in the program. They make the city's hourly wage while they're in that program for 32 hours a week. And 28 hours of that week is spent in school or at work and the other four hours a week are spent in personal and professional development where they're being given tools like how to write a resume, how to do an interview, how to use mindfulness for self control and for mental health and peace and wellness, how to balance their books, how to be financially responsible.

But a really critical piece that YouthBuild is missing now is that they lost their Department of Labor grant, which is by no fault of theirs. In 2013-14, the city of Winston and Forsyth County Schools had the lowest dropout rate that they'd had in a very long time which was spectacular, it was in the 300 range. Unfortunately, that cost YouthBuild their grant. And over the last five years (or six years now,) that number has continued to rise. That drop out number has increased again, hitting an all time high of 562 students last year. 68% of them are black and brown students and 62% of them are young men, and these are very, very at risk groups. These are the groups that we see constantly being assaulted by the police, ending up in these dangerous positions. And so they're the ones we have to take care of.

And so anyway, what you have happening with YouthBuild is this ability to get mentorship, to get personal growth as well as professional growth and development and then be connected into programs of productivity. Another one of our domains, just to kind of jump, real quick, is we're talking about getting violence interrupters. We understand that people need to feel safe and they deserve to feel safe. And so when we're talking about reallocating money from the police, we are not talking about creating a situation in Winston-Salem that is unsafe for our residents, for our people. We're talking about creating a situation that increases your safety and prevents the need to call the police to begin with. And part of that is instituting a program

of violence interrupters who can help navigate and kind of- I'm blanking on the word right now, but-

Miranda Jones:

00:49:11

While that comes to you, let me just add real quick. In terms of violence interrupters, there are folks who are engaged in work that is very similar to that. Shout out to Brother- shout out to Brother David, I think Sister Nikita McDaniel may be involved in that as well, excuse me if I misquoted your name, Sister Nikita They're already doing some of this work, and this would be an awesome pairing because what City Council continues to tell us is that the old people are complaining that, "They're shooting! They're shooting! They're shooting!" Now some of the city council that live in some of these areas where there's this shooting, but they're saying that. So the idea behind violence interrupters is for there to be somewhere where folks can kind of go to kind of work out some of this conflict, right, so that there isn't this uptick in violence there, isn't this shooting, right? So it's this idea that again we lean into prevention and there are people who are already doing this work.

To Kathy who asked a question, she wants to know who we are on this call. So, Kathy, we are a coalition, we are growing. I always mess up the acronym, Forsyth Coalition of (y'all help me Lord have mercy) Police Accountability and-

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:50:17

Forsyth County Police Accountability and Reallocation Coalition. F C PARC, FCPARC.

Miranda Jones:

00:50:22

Thank you so much. FCPARC. So who you have here, Kathy, is you have people from Triad Abolition if y'all want to wave, Triad Abolition. You have people from Hate Out of Winston, y'all ain't waving, come on Hate Out, come on, don't do it. We have Drum Majors, shout out to

Brother Terrence, he's working with us, I'm glad to have him, he's not on here right now. We have DSA, Jillian you want to wave, DSA is on here. We also have NC-SPAN.

And we're looking to increase our capacity because the mayor keeps saying that basically, it's just a few of y'all, but I have, what did he say y'all, 250,000 people I have to answer to? Is that, you know, I think that was one of the things that he said and, you know, we want you- If y'all can drop the slides. I don't know where we put them- but we want you to challenge the mayor around this notion that it's only us little ragtag radicals who want these demands. We want you all to begin calling, emailing, you can CC us, CC TAP, CC Hate Out, because we want to see their responses. If they respond to all of us. We want you to challenge him around this idea that it's just us. Oh, I also forgot Bail Fund, I don't think they are on here but Bail Fund is-

Brittany Battle:

00:51:38

Julie's on here.

Miranda Jones:

00:51:39

They are? Okay, I'm sorry, Bail Fund- y'all, people are wearing a lot of hats these days. So Bail Fund- So Kathy, that is that is who we are, you can look up any of us on social media. So I just wanted to kind of jump in, Britt - Would you or whomever's supposed talk about the civilian police oversight authority, would you hit that?

Brittany Battle (she/her):

00:51:59

So really quickly, we're asking for a civilian police oversight authority for Winston-Salem police department, as well as the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office. We know that we have a civilian review board in Winston-Salem. We really are, you know, in gratitude to the work that was done by black activists and folks in the 80s and 90s around getting that in place in Winston-Salem. And we also know that one of the issues with review boards is that often they don't have enough power, they're not transparent, and they're not fully independent. So, one

of the issues in Winston, when a citizen makes a complaint, the initial decision is made by Chief Catrina Thompson, if they want to appeal it they can appeal it to the review board - a hearing then occurs. And then the review board gives recommendations for what should happen. The final decision after those recommendations happen occurs by our city manager Lee Garrity, who is not an independent entity. He works for the city, he also has a daughter who is a district attorney and he has a son-in-law who's a police officer in Winston-Salem. That does not constitute independence and so we need some authority aboard with teeth that can actually subpoena evidence, that can get records, and actually make recommendations for what should happen when someone violates someone's rights and this doesn't just mean through brutality. This means talking to people any kind of way, which really leads to a lack of trust in the community and a whole host of other problems.

So that's what we're asking for. We want to make sure that we know, we recognize the work that was done in Winston to get what we have now, and we are fully appreciative of that and we're just thinking through how we can move to have something stronger in place to help protect the people in this city and this county even more.

Miranda Jones:

00:53:56

Can I just, we just don't want our leaders to put their friends on the board because I have some friends who tried to get on that board and they couldn't get on the board and I'm pretty sure they are trackable on social media.

Does Bailey want to talk to us a little bit about the demilitarization of the Winston-Salem Police Department and Forsyth County Sheriff's Office and Bailey, break that all the way down for someone like myself who didn't really understand that fancy language?

Bailey Pittenger (she/her):

00:54:18

Sure, let me hop in on this. So when asking to demilitarize the Winston-Salem police department as well as the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, we're really looking specifically at federal grants and state grants that these policing forces apply for on a yearly basis. In 2020 these applications were really centered on a real time crime center which is essentially putting surveillance into high crime areas through private and public cameras. The real time crime

center is still being developed and even last week City Council members voted unanimously yes to another \$700,000 from a policing innovation grant that should last three years for the city to pay for a researcher in Greensboro to watch the real time crime center. So already, we're outsourcing outside of our city and paying someone on top of the issue with military grade surveillance systems in our own city.

The problem too, budget wise, with militarized grants like this is that as I said, like the policing innovation grant 700,000 for three years, after that all of the payments for the real time crime center specific to that one grant will fall onto taxpayer dollars. So grants only get things started, but then taxpayer dollars come in and pay for the employees that have to man the different systems that are coming in. So that's one example.

Another big example was last year when the coronavirus relief fund kicked in, WSPD got over half a million. And part of that money went towards barricades, shields, gloves, helmets, gas masks, Magnum foggers, and all of this was for a civil disobedience response team, in reaction to the murder of George Floyd and the protests that were happening across the nation. So you can kind of see like this money is coming in big chunks, but not being at all applied to actual safety or root causes of harm in our communities. So by demilitarizing we're really looking at taking away from systems that perpetuate crime, rather than absolve crime.

Miranda Jones:

00:56:43

And also to that one of the demands is end cash bail; Jillian, you want to jump in here? Is that you or is that me? Doesn't matter.

Jillian Sechrest:

00:56:51

I'm going to pass to Julie on that one, I apologize.

Miranda Jones:

00:56:53

Julie! I'm sorry, Julie!

Julie Brady:

00:5

No, you're fine. So I run the local community bail fund, the Forsyth County Community Bail Fund, and one of the things that we want to work towards is ending cash bail in Forsyth County. So I know that there's a lot of white people who do not really understand how the criminal legal system works. I know that I didn't understand it until I started going to law school and actually going to court every day and seeing what happens in that system.

But I think that most people think- the first thing that most people think about the criminal legal system is that there's a presumption of innocence and that people are innocent until proven guilty. So I think that a lot of people would be surprised to learn about how widespread pretrial detention is overall and that's when someone is arrested and they're put in jail and they haven't had a trial yet. And they're assigned a bond, and if they can pay that bond, then they get to go home. But if they can't afford to pay the bond then they have to sit in jail until their trial happens or until their charges get dismissed or until they plead guilty or whatever.

So really what the end result of that is to make it so that people who live in poverty, if they are arrested for crime get to stay in jail, just stay, and people who do not live in poverty, who can afford to pay bonds, get to go home, even if they committed the exact same offense, even if they're arrested at the exact same time. They try to justify it by saying it's a community safety thing, you know, we're not just gonna let these people go home because they pose a risk to their community, whatever. We've bailed out enough people that I know that that is not true, that people that we've bailed out have not presented risks.

I know that when Bobby Kimbrough gave his press conference and announced how many positives there were in the jail, you know, he said that they were doing all they could to keep out low level bonds and stuff like that, which I know is not true because days later I bailed out someone on a \$150 bond. You know, we bailed out 25 people in two weeks, and the jail population is 11 higher than it was when we started doing that, three weeks ago.

Miranda Jones:

00:58:50

Can I add, it sounds like people are criminalizing the poor is-

Julie Brady:

00:58:53

Oh, absolutely! It is an absolute criminalization of poverty. It turns the County Law Enforcement Detention Center into a debtors prison, and that's what it is and-

Miranda Jones:

00:59:02

And people need to donate, can we make sure our audience has the link to donate? Even if you don't want to sign a petition, donate. You know, people need your money.

Julie Brady:

00:59:12

We do need money because, you know, we did bail out 25 people in two weeks, and that did wipe out most of our money that we had left. So right now, you know, we're begging to end cash bail so that we can free hundreds of these people from this death trap of a detention center where they're not safe from the virus and where the numbers keep going up every day. Right now like more than a quarter of the people in the jail have COVID-19, have tested positive. More than a quarter of them. And I don't know how this percentage has changed during COVID, but before COVID 85% of the people who are detained in jails have not had a trial yet, they have not been convicted of a crime.

And people have this, I think, emotional response of like, "Well, if you release those people where are they going to go? Are you going to let them into your home? They're just going to be out in the streets!" and it's like, no. They're going to return to their homes in the community where they lived before they were arrested and put into jail. And they're going to get a job and they're going to continue paying rent and they're going to, you know, not lose their children or their homes or anything like that. And they get to, you know, continue living their life until their case is resolved. And I think that that's something else that a lot of people miss, like, the cases are still in the court system. The person doesn't have to be in jail until that case is resolved, you know, it's going to be resolved, there is going to be a trial or dismissal or whatever.

But until then, we don't need to lock people up in jail for being too poor to pay their way out. and that's what the effect is. So if we and cash bail you know I think that it would really help

with social distancing in the jail, which is like physically impossible because it's a jail and clearly it has not been working. But we're hopeful that, you know, if cash bail is ended, then we can move on to bigger and better things like taking a look at the convicted prison population and seeing how many of those people actually need to be in prison in the first place.

Miranda Jones:

01:01:02

And we, I feel like we can say those people locked up did not go try to stage a coup on the United States government with the help of local law enforcement.

(Julie Brady: Right, right.)

And I'm even guilty at times talking about the rapists, the murderers, the women beaters, they'all, they weren't at Capitol Hill and-

Julie Brady:

01:01:20

And also, you know, the people accused of rape and murder and stuff, those people aren't getting bonds at all. They're not getting a money amount next to their name that we can pay. If someone has a bond amount that we can pay, that means the DA and the judge agreed that that person could go home if they have enough money to pay to go home.

01:01:38

(Miranda Jones: And so-)

Brittany Battle

01:01:39

Other states, other jurisdictions are ending cash bail. So this is not, you know, North Carolina Forsyth County is not going to be, like, on the radical left end making any of these types of moves. It's happening everywhere because first of all it's not financially feasible to keep people in jail the whole time before their trial, right? And so we're seeing it's not financially feasible, but it's also not medically feasible. We have an outbreak in the detention center and people are going to get out and spread COVID into their communities that should have never been held on \$150. 150 dollars. They did not do anything that crazy for someone to say that they're too violent to go home.

Miranda Jones:

01:02:24

There's research that suggests that people actually do return to court so they're not like running off to another state, they're not running to another country, they actually do return. And I'm an educator, this is not my area, but when I was doing all this reading I told Britt, she'll tell you, I said, "Oh my god, I didn't know this. This is so shocking." So you can look at, like all kinds. I think D.C., New Jersey, people actually do come to court. People are not just shirking their judicial legal responsibilities. It doesn't happen, despite what we might think about people who we perceive as criminals.

Julie Brady:

01:02:57

Right, and we have seen much more money come back to us than we have forfeited, and we get the money back once the case is totally resolved without a failure to miss a court date so that means that people are showing up to court, just like we thought they would and just like the data all shows. And I do just want one final thing to draw attention to this.

So the five jail employees that were arrested for involuntary manslaughter and the murder of John Neville, they walked out of jail, the same day they got there on unsecured bonds, which basically means, like, you don't have to pay anything now to go home, but if you miss a court date then you're on the hook for however much money. So they walked in- they killed someone, they walked in, they got a manslaughter charge, walked out, went home and spent the night with their family. And the next day we bailed out someone on a \$50 charge that had been in for two weeks on a simple assault in the middle of a pandemic (This was like July. This

was a few days after the dependent McKenna reached employees of the the inside???) the population yet.)

And I remember just being- I'm still, I'm still, I will never not be mad about this. Why this black woman had to stay in jail for two weeks on a \$50 simple assault charge and these, you know, power-backed employees of the jail just get to go home for doing something way worse, way worse. I mean, there's just no consistent logic to it at all. It's completely arbitrary

Miranda Jones:

01:04:16

All right. Thank you, Julie. Selene, we'll jump right in with this all creation of mental health crisis intervention mobile unit.

Selene Johnson (she/her):

01:04:23

I'm just going to ask real quick. Julie, Renee asked, "Are you finding discrimination between similar charges with white versus black and brown folks and the bond amount?"

Julie Brady:

01:04:34

I don't think that we have enough data to be able to track that kind of thing; that would be really interesting and I would love to be able to. But as of right now, I can't say the right-

Brittany Battle (she/her):

01:04:44

But nationally, yes. The social science data, the criminological data show disparities at every stage of the criminal legal system from arrest to adjudication and including the bail amounts that are set between black and white defendants.

Selene Johnson (she/her):

01:05:00

Okay, I'll talk about the mental health crisis unit. This is another one of those demands that isn't a far left extreme kind of demand, this is something that's happening across the country, lots of different cities are looking at this and/or are already doing it.

What we're talking about is the fact that in the United States, people with severe mental illness generate about one out of every 10 calls to police, 911 calls, and they occupy at least one out of every five of America's jail or prison beds. So what we're talking about is that a lot of calls that are going to police for mental health, substance use disorder, you know, minor domestic violent disputes, things like that are being responded to- also like suicide threats concerns like that. These are being responded to by police who don't have training in the kind of de-escalation that's needed in a mental health kind of situation.

And so there are models all across the country, different models. And I think, you know, we're asking for our city to look at what the right model is for us. I'll just talk about a couple real quick. Firstly, just to let you know, Greensboro right down the road actually has been doing this for a couple of years. They have mental health workers that are responding to certain 911 calls so they train the 911 metro operators to recognize when they need to pull in a counselor, a mental health crisis worker, to go along with the police. So that's one strategy.

In the program in Eugene, Oregon, that's actually been around for 30 years, they actually have a two person crisis team. One person is a medic, so it could be a nurse, a paramedic, an EMT, and the other person is a mental health worker of some sort, they have training in mental health. And they have the option to pull in the police if they think they need them, so the police don't automatically go.

And something that happened in Minneapolis recently is they've looked at changing to that model because what they found is that when the police are automatically sent, there can be an automatic escalation.

If you already have a mental health situation going on and you're feeling in crisis and now you know the police are arriving, that can really escalate you. So they have the program in Oregon, where the folks only call police if they feel they need that backup, the medic and and mental health worker, and I think it was 2017 they found that only 17% of the calls that their mental health team responded to were adding police backup. So they were able to handle the majority of the calls without calling for police backup.

And, you know, one of the things that often comes up when we talk about reallocation is, you know, where do we get this money? We're adding these programs, like, where do we get this money? And a program, again out of Oregon that has 30 years of data, what they found is by reallocating money to the mental health piece, they've actually saved money in their police budget and their whole city budget. So it's about a \$2.1 million investment in the program, but it has a cost savings of anywhere from eight to \$12 million per year for the city.

So there's some funding for these kinds of programs and, you know, I just want to mention, you know, a lot of folks, you know, seem kind of resistance to some of this thing, like, you know, we support the police, we support the police, but I just want to say like this is supporting the police. They aren't in the capacity to be able to respond to all these calls, they're not trained in mental health the way mental health work crisis workers are, and our very own Chief of Police said, at the town trust talks on June 16, Chief Thompson said, "We are expected to be everything - teachers, babysitters, healthcare workers, mental health providers, oh and also handling crime" and she said she'd be happy to reallocate some of their funding into the programs that help to provide those things.

So I think, you know, we're asking our city to look at what is the right model for that. There's no question that we need that to be part of our 911 response.

Miranda Jones:

01:09:17

Thank you for that, Selene. So, everybody, we're gonna wrap up. But one of the things that we want you to do, please continue to share this video, quick questions, inbox any of us if you know us personally, email us so that we can respond to those questions. We know there's a lot of questions about the bail fund, which we think that's great, Julie's definitely going to check. And remember that we will have shows talking specifically about each of these demands. So hang with us, you know, stick in.

The email is ForsythCountyPARC, That's a capital PARC, @gmail.com, please make sure that you email us, WinstonSalemDSA@gmail.com, HateOutOfWinston@gmail.com, is it TriadAbolitionProject? @gmail? @gmail. Please, ForsythCountyCBF@gmail.com. Please, please, please email us any and all your questions because we do not accept when the mayor says that it's just us. We do not believe that, we believe that the people armed with knowledge will get behind these things.

Now, before we go, there are some actions that we want you to take, we want you to (do we need to put up that slide, y'all?) We want you to call, email, city council and county board members expressing support for the FCPARC demands, that is the coalition, that is all of these dynamic, powerful, formidable women you see on this call right here as well as our brother gentlemens who are not on here. We want you to let them know that you are supporting what we are pushing. If what you saw on last Wednesday, by way of law enforcement allowing people for some of y'all to take what you would call your country, moved you, we need you to make sure that you definitely do that.

If you do not know what ward you live in, we will provide you with the link for you to find out which ward you live in. If you are looking at the petition, there's a link on there now so that you can actually figure out your ward because we actually need that information, because ultimately a lot of city council reps. want to know, "Who are my constituents, who votes for me? Anyone who doesn't vote for me doesn't really matter," right?

So, we want you to do that, we would also love for you to talk to at least two friends about reallocation. Talk to them today, and police accountability. We definitely need for you to do that. Sign and share this petition.

We do a lot of research, y'all. I want to definitely give a big shout out to TAP. I love, you know, love my Hate Out women too, but TAP, like they are like beast when it comes to this research, okay? So we need y'all to kind of join us to help kind of get this work done because, you know, we're- (Aly, were you talking to- I'm sorry! Hope I didn't mess up.) We need people to kind of join us and help us get this work done because what we understand is that activism is not just about protest, it's about policy changes. It's about shifting the culture, shifting the dynamic and we want to dismantle white supremacy.

So make sure that you do that, learn about the Methods of Community Accountability with Dr. Ann Russo's 10 Strategies for Cultivating Community Accountability. I think I forgot number seven, join in Mariame (yeah, I can't say that) Kaba's 9 Solidarity Commitments to/with Incarcerated People for 2021.

Lastly, sign a petition, join us tomorrow livestreamed we can put that in here and join us livestreamed when we present to the public safety committee to kind of put this before them. We've done so with Mayor pro tem, we'll be doing so before the public safety committee. We need your help on and pushing these commands and solidarity. Y'all have a good evening.