

150 Days—Vote as if your life depends on it

National Committee CPUSA June 6, 2020
Joelle Fishman, Political Action Commission

As has been said, we are at a tipping point moment in our country, and it's so wonderful to have the strength and analysis of our Party expressed in the report from Joe Sims and the reports that will come from the comrades in the battleground states.

The clock is ticking. We have 150 days until the 2020 election, the election of our lives.

We approach the election from the perspective of the working class and democratic struggles going on and what we are up against as a class to move forward.

The unprecedented multi-racial uprising to end police terror against the Black community and end institutional racism is defining the issues and tactics of this election.

The outpouring of Black, Latino, and white youth demanding an end to white supremacy creates a new political climate for building unity. It likely helped elect Ella Jones as the first African American woman mayor of Ferguson, MO, during the protests.

The uprising of meatpacking workers, health-care workers, retail workers, and warehouse workers forced into unsafe virus conditions; and workers now facing large-scale unemployment, evictions, and lack of food and inequalities exposed in the pandemic are defining the issues and tactics of this election.

Car protests in support of the needs of essential workers have broken through the isolation of quarantine and placed pressure on Congress and state governments, setting the stage for union voter mobilizations now being prepared. And now our initiative for unemployed councils will make its contribution to organizing people facing economic crisis and mobilizing for the elections.

Our tactics are also shaped by the dangers a fascist-minded cabal in the White House and Senate pose to all democratic rights and to life and peace on the planet itself.

The severity of crises is a reflection of advanced capitalism's failures. In this "socialist moment" the urgency of changing control of the White House and Congress is the immediate task of the revolutionary process.

History teaches that a broad united front is needed to stop fascism's horrors. It will take a massive, united voter turnout to shift the balance of forces toward the working class in this election.

As Trump falters, he and the Republicans are already investing \$20 million to suppress the vote using the courts. They are enlisting 50,000 volunteers to intimidate voters at polling places in the

battleground states. Remember that Trump floated the idea of martial law. Even that can't be ruled out, although some in the military and some Republicans broke with him over that. Nothing can be taken for granted.

This election is not about Joe Biden, and it is not about the Democratic Party. This election is about how to change the White House, the Senate, and local offices to move the balance of forces away from the fascist threat and to open new possibilities by electing as many diverse candidates with a pro-worker stance as possible. We use the tools that are available to do that.

In these 150 days as we support and participate in the marches and caravans with demands including to defund the police, there are two pieces of legislation that can engage people for the elections.

A resolution in the House to condemn police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive force just introduced by Reps. Ayana Pressley, Ilhan Omhar, Karen Bass, and Barbara Lee who are asking for grassroots support.

The HEROES Act to extend unemployment and other relief, fund states and cities, and fund mail-in voting, which is now stalled at the desk of Mitch McConnell in the Senate. It is an example of how important it is for people's lives that the majority in the Senate be changed.

The best way to participate in the elections is with organizations of the core forces for social change—labor, African American, Latinx, Asian Pacific, Native American, women, youth, LGBTQ. Many have targeted one or another battleground state. Many are mobilizing around excellent progressive candidates at the local level who can pull out the vote, change the balance of forces locally, and influence the entire ticket.

In Iowa the methodology of Latino voters including our comrades who mobilized during the primary and impacted the outcome for Bernie Sanders is being utilized nationally for the general election.

The challenge to have a massive voter turnout is very great this year in the midst of the pandemic. New ways to reach voters and have conversations are being developed. The demand for voting by mail is before Congress and every state government. Even with mail-in ballots there are challenges to get people registered online in states which allow that and otherwise where it is not the law. It will be a challenge to follow through with new and old voters alike on what the local voting process will be. Possible mass evictions will further complicate the ability to find and contact voters. As well, the large proportion of COVID-19 deaths in the Black community is a factor.

Campaigning with labor, going to union households virtually or eventually door to door, to get out the vote helps strengthen union structures for the ongoing fight beyond election day. The Pro Act for the right to organize a union is the number one piece of legislation if the Senate comes under Democratic control. The stand the AFL-CIO is taking for justice for George Floyd and ending systemic racism adds to that importance.

SEIU has joined with Color of Change and Planned Parenthood with plans to register and turn out 3 million voters.

Young voters can be the difference in winning this election because of their size and their diversity and their searching for a better life, unwilling to go back to the way things were and demanding a more just, equal, sustainable society. The message is being spread to bring the marches to the polls en masse on election day, oust the white supremacists, and continue the fight for justice beyond the election.

We could make an important contribution reaching out to young people for the protests, for the August 28 March on Washington, having a voter drive, some educational, sharing People's World and the Specter and building the YCL. The example in New York is inspiring.

Ballot initiatives are another way to advance a people's agenda and increase voter engagement. We expect to get a nonbinding referendum on November's ballot in New Haven, Connecticut, connected to a national campaign which reads: "*Shall Congress prepare for health and climate crises by transferring funds from military budget to cities for human needs, jobs and an environmentally sustainable economy?*"

The work that we do in the next 150 days will make the difference in what kind of struggle we can wage starting November 4, the day after the election. With that in mind, the Political Action Commission put together a work plan which was approved by the National Board and sent to the National Committee yesterday.

The purpose of the plan is to help keep us all focused at every level of the Party and enable us to move as one over the next 150 days.

The section on Education and Communications includes all the venues that we have nationally that can be made available, including classes, social media, virtual town halls, and use of the People's World's excellent coverage as an anchor.

The section on engagement gives ideas for club outreach at the grassroots, both virtual and future door-to-door, use of People's World by writing stories and circulating them, and the big mobilizations including the Poor People's Campaign on June 20 virtually and the 57th Anniversary March on Washington on August 28.

The section on battlegrounds indicates the states that are polling as tossups for President, Senate, and House, which is a fluid list as the campaigns continue. At this time top battleground states for President and Senate are Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Hopefully this 150-day plan is useful at the club and district level to get started. It is a document meant to be added to and changed as new developments unfold.

In this transformative moment we Communists have a responsibility to make our best collective contribution to this "election of a lifetime." As we do, we will grow. As we grow we will make

bigger contributions to the uprising for racial, social, and economic justice and to the movement for socialism. Our lives depend upon it.

CPUSA NATIONAL WORK PLAN 2020 ELECTIONS: 150 DAYS AND BEYOND

The pandemic has been a great reveal of the depth of structural racism and inequalities, lack of health care, housing, impact of climate crisis, other basics. The lynching of George Floyd has given rise to a nationwide uprising demanding action to end police brutality and structural racism. There is strong determination not to go back to the way things were, but to transform society with massive plans like the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, including union rights and special measures to overcome racial and gender inequalities. Socialism has new appeal. Trumpites, protecting their wealth and power, are a threat to democratic rights and to restructuring on behalf of the 99%. This is the election of our lives. The outcome will determine much about the tactics of struggle going forward.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- [Article](#): "Unity in the Time of COVID 19: Vote as If Your Life Depends on It!"
- Club and District educationals (assistance? sharing?)
- Marxist Classes (Education Commission plans?)
- [People's World](#) (double circulation again?)
- Podcasts at cpusa.org: Specter. This Week @ CPUSA
- Social Media: Memes, Facebook, Twitter
- Trainings in social media
- Virtual Town Hall(s) / virtual rallies with allies (Uprising; Unemployed Committees)

ENGAGEMENT:

- Collaborate locally for long-term movement building with Labor 2020, unions, and other core forces, people's organizations in club area such as Poor People's Campaign and youth-led organizations like Sunrise.
- Connect participation in elections to unemployed organizing; organizing to challenge racist genocide exposed in the pandemic and police lynchings; and other issues.

- Apply creative tactics in club areas like car rallies, and visibility toward building a mass movement as part of the elections with special outreach to youth.
- Apply creative tactics in club areas to overcome voter suppression with massive turnout, including voter registration online methods and support for vote by mail.
- Club use of People's World and all our media to bring new members into CPUSA and YCL.

SOME RESOURCES:

-- **Working America (AFL-CIO):** Working America used e-mail, text, and phone calls to convince 105,000 members of social distancing and 350,000 to wear face masks during COVID in late March and early April. "While we cannot knock on doors right now, we are seeing that the trust we build now will make all of the difference in how these voters listen when we return to their front porches." Read the rest of the report [here](#).

-- **AFL-CIO's and Labor Councils Union member [candidate program](#)**

-- **State Federations and Labor Councils**

-- **SEIU**

-- **Poor People's Campaign**

-- **People's Bailout**

-- **[Sunrise](#)**

-- **Election Protection**

-- **[Congressional Progressive Caucus](#)**

CALENDAR:

Some national gatherings of the people's movement (more may become virtual)

- Sat May 23: National Day of Action to Protect Our Vote
- June 5–7: National NOW Conference (Washington DC)
- June 20: Poor People's Assembly (virtual)
- July 2–6: National Education Association convention (virtual)
- July 25–29: NAACP convention (Boston MA)
- July 27–30: AFT convention (Houston TX) *subject to change due to COVID*

- Aug 7–8: Local Progress national convening (Tempe, AZ)
- Aug 13–15: Netroots Nation (Denver, CO) "*monitoring COVID 19 situation*"
- Aug 17–20: Democratic National Convention (Milwaukee WI)
- Aug 24–27: Republican National Convention (Charlotte, NC)
- Aug 28: 57th Anniversary March on Washington for federal policing equality act
- Sept 16–20: Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference (*Virtual*)
- Sept 26–27: Voto Latino Power Summit 2020 (Houston, TX)

Battlegrounds 2020 (*Local battlegrounds to be added*)

Senate – Dems need to flip 3 or 4 seats to take control

House – Dems currently have a 3- seat advantage. Tossups: 17-D, 5-R

State	President	US Senate	US House	Local
Alabama		Lean R: Jones-D		
Arizona	Tossup	Lean D: McSally-R		
California			Tossup CD 21: Cox-D Tossup CD 25: Garcia-R	
Colorado		Tossup: Gardner-R		
Florida	Tossup			
Georgia	Lean R	Lean R: Purdue-R Lean R: Loeffler-R	Tossup CD 6: McBath-D Tossup CD 7: Open -R	
Illinois			Tossup CD 13: Davis -R	
Iowa	Lean R	Lean R: Ernst- R	Tossup CD 1: Finkenauro-D Tossup CD 2: Open-D Tossup CD 3: Axne-D	
Kansas		Lean R: Open-R		
Kentucky		Likely R: McConnell-R		
Maine	Lean D	Tossup: Collins-R	Tossup CD 2: Golden-D	
Michigan	Tossup	Lean D: Peters-D		
Minnesota	Lean D	Likely D: Smith-D	Tossup CD 7: Petersen D	
Montana		Lean R: Daines-R		
New Jersey			Tossup CD 3: Kim-D	
New Mexico		Likely D: Open-D	Tossup CD2: Torres-Small- D	
New York			Tossup CD 11: Rose-D Tossup CD 22: Brindisi-D	
North Carolina	Tossup	Tossup: Tullis-R		Gov Lean D: Cooper-D
Ohio	Lean R			

Oklahoma			Tossup CD 5: Horn (D)	
Pennsylvania	Tossup		Tossup CD 8: Cartwright-D Tossup CD 10: Perry-R	
South Carolina		Likely R: Graham-R	Tossup CD 1: Cunningham-D	
Texas	Lean R	Likely R: Cornyn-R	Tossup CD 22: Open-R Tossup CD 24: Open-R	
Virginia			Tossup CD 2: Luria-D Tossup CD 7: Spangerger-D	
Wisconsin	Tossup			