Results

Monthly National Webinar

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Meredith: Welcome, everyone. Let's start by making sure folks see our anti-oppression values. We won't go over them in detail, but we like to ground our conversations in them. What sticks out for me is that poverty cannot exist without oppression. I appreciate all of you being on and adhering to these values today and every day.

This is our first national webinar since the American Rescue Plan, which was the $1.9 trillion COVID relief package, was signed into law. I am so inspired by the work you've already done in 2021. This package can reduce child poverty by as much as 56% according to the researchers who were analyzing this in real time. One reason this package has such a big anti-poverty impact is that it builds on what Results and other advocates have done, and it builds on the work some of you have done for years and decades, especially when it comes to educating members of congress on the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit. You can see over 40% of that reduction in child poverty is because of the child tax credit expansion this year.

Today we are focusing primarily on our work around housing. I know we've discussed the historic opportunity to enact broad, bold legislation this year, and we have a great opportunity with a fabulous guest speaker to dive into housing. But just to put us in context, I wanted to remind everyone of our goals in housing.

One is focused on dramatically scaling up rental assistance so it reaches all low-income renters by making rental assistance universal. But really we need to address issues in the supply of affordable housing, and longer term we are interested in looking at the intersection of home ownership and racial wealth and inequality. We want to focus our opportunity on assistance to low income renters. You can see here why it's important for us to be doing that and why it's important that we are getting our own members of congress to speak to leadership in support of making housing assistance universal and affordable.

Our ask in the short term is that members of congress weigh in with the Biden/Harris administration. They have a great opportunity to influence proposals, which we'll see more of in the next couple of weeks. As they're doing that, we want the negotiators, the congressional leaders, in the room deciding the priorities and how bold to be knowing that there's broad support from their peers.

With that, I'm excited to introduce our guest speaker, Diane Yentel. Diane, thanks so much for joining us today. You have hundreds of Results folks from all over the country. Diane, are you there?

Diane: Hi, I'm here. Thanks so much for having me.

Meredith: Thanks for being here. A formal introduction. They just had their big annual conference this week. So an extra thank you for Diane for being on today, because I think any of us who have been involved in pulling off the results conference can tell you that on a beautiful Saturday right after, we probably don't want to be on Zoom.

Diane is president and CEO of the National Housing Coalition, which is a membership organization that is dedicated to achieving socially just public policy that assures people of the lowest income in the United States have affordable homes. She and her amazing team have helped me and many others understand issues around affordable housing and community development. She's testified recently again on Capital Hill, and we have worked closely with her organization on housing policies. Diane, I really appreciate everything you and your staff do. Thanks for being here today.

Diane: Thanks, Meredith. I appreciate the chance to thank everyone in Results for the wonderful work you've done. I appreciate your campaign on rent relief, all the meetings and letters to the editor you've written, really making a case for eviction and rental relief really made a big difference on our federal eviction moratorium. It's flawed, but it's there.

Meredith: Anyone on Twitter should follow Diane because she's a great source for information. I like knowing that when I'm tweeting out all the media pieces, Diane is probably catching some of those.

Can you tell us a bit more about the national low income housing coalition, in particular where you all focus and what you prioritize when it comes to housing issues?

Diane. Sure. Our work is all about advancing federal policy solutions to make homes affordable and safe for the lowest income renters. Since our founding over four years ago, we have always focused most on extremely low income people, whether they are renters or people experiencing homelessness. And we focus on those lowest income people because the research makes really clear that they are the only segment of the population for whom there is an absolute shortage of affordable homes. So if we are to solve the housing crisis, we have to solve it for extremely low income people first, and then we will be able to solve it for others as well.

Meredith: One of the things I think many of us were keenly aware of is that we had a housing crisis before the pandemic began. Can you give us some of the data you're seeing about the affordable housing crisis, and what broad buckets of policy can help address this?

Diane: Sure. Even before the pandemic came to our country, we had a shortage of about 7 million affordable and available homes to the lowest income renters. For every ten of the lowest income renter families, there were fewer than four apartments affordable and available to them. That shortage ranges from most to least severe, but there is no state without a shortage. Because people were struggling so much to pay the rent pre-pandemic, they struggle more now. Pre-pandemic, we had about 10 million of the lowest income households paying 50% or more of their income for rent. When you have such limited income to begin with, you're always one financial shock away from missing rent and facing eviction and becoming homeless. The coronavirus and its financial fallout was that financial shock. They lost jobs and wages and it was harder than ever.

So despite our success in keeping people stably housing during the pandemic, those resources, however historic and unprecedented they are, were always only to stabilize people during the pandemic. Now we have this tremendous obligation to make sure that $46 billion in rental assistance gets to the people who need those resources the most. And even then, we will still be in the housing crisis we were in pre-pandemic, and those same renters will still struggle because they need longer term solutions.

Meredith, you named two of the top solutions. We need rental assistance available for all eligible households who need it. People who are living in apartments now and can't afford them, we need to bridge that gap. We need to make rental assistance universally available to all households in need. In some communities, there are not enough apartments for the people who live there, and we need to increase supply. We need to make sure those apartments are affordable to people with the greatest needs. We do that through expanding the national housing trust fund.

We also need to have permanent emergency rental assistance available. We learned during the pandemic just how important this is. The shock someone can face might just be the everyday disaster of a broken down car, a missed day of work, or a sick child.

And finally we're going to be working to rebalance the incredible imbalance that exists right now between landlords and tenants, where landlords hold so much power at the expense of low-income tenants. We learned during the pandemic just how harmful evictions always are. So we'll push for strong renter protections through things like right to counsel, just cause evictions, expunging eviction records, and more.

Meredith: For those who aren't familiar, when we talk about evictions, first in the case of those proposals pre-pandemic. Clearly we can see the direct consequence of decades of racist housing policy because of who's more likely to be facing hardship in terms of being cost-burdened and facing eviction. So I think those issues are really important even if we can't get them passed immediately in the next legislative package.

Can we talk about housing choice vouchers specifically? What they are and how they work when people are struggling to make rent, and why it is that not everyone can get them already?

Diane: Housing choice vouchers are a type of rental assistance that's proven effective at ending homelessness and housing poverty. It bridges the gap between what people earn up to a reasonable amount. Tenants with a housing voucher pay about 30% of their income to rent, and the government pays the rest up to a reasonable amount. So it's very effective in helping people afford the apartments they're in. We have in our country a system where only one in every four households who needs that rental assistance receives it. So 75% of the people who need rental assistance don't get any. They are usually adding their names to years or decades long waiting list hoping to win what is essentially a housing lottery system where only the lucky 25% gets the help they need.

It's very different from other social safety programs like food assistance, retirement assistance, etc., where those programs are funded as needed. That's not the way housing assistance works. It has an arbitrary cap on spending. If people need assistance up to where there's some budget, they get it. Everyone else doesn't respond to the need. That's a key change we're going to work on. That comes partly from a commitment from the federal government to say that everyone who needs housing assistance and is eligible and low income should receive it.

We also need to increase the way we pay for it so it is more like other social safety net programs where the funding responds to the level of need

Meredith: You've talked already, but I know a number of folks in our network are themselves on a waitlist to get access to federal housing assistance and know first-hand what it's like when there isn't adequate funding. Can you elaborate a bit on the policy changes that we need to couple with expanding housing choice vouchers to make sure folks can use them, and in particular that they're not reinforcing the deep segregation that exists across the country?

Diane: Right. As you said, we have decades of often purposeful and explicitly racist federal policies that created this tremendous disparity in who experiences homelessness. With rental assistance, it can be a challenge for people to utilize that voucher once they receive it, which is especially terrible and painful after they've waited so long. They get their voucher, and these vouchers are used in private market. So a tenant knows they have this housing assistance. They go to go a landlord, and the landlord says they won't rent to them because they don't want to accept their Section 8 voucher. That's often laden with racism. We want to make sure these vouchers actually work for people of color.

One way we do that is by having federal protection against discrimination. A landlord can't say they don't want to rent to you because you have a voucher, no more than they can say they won't rent to you because you're of color.

There are other changes that are needed as well. It can be very difficult for people of color who maybe have young kids and who want to move to communities with higher performing schools. So we also need to think about housing councilling funds to assist these families. And we need to be investing in communities with lower performing schools and less access to transportation so that people can stay in their communities and have more access to opportunity.

And there are changes that need to be made in terms of how we determine the amount of a voucher. Those apartments in neighborhoods with those higher performing schools or better access to opportunity often cost more, but the voucher isn't enough. There are things called small area FMRs that need to be implemented so vouchers reflect the cost in the community and there's genuine choice for people in where they live.

There are other ways to provide rental assistance. Section 8 vouchers are an important one. We should also look at a renter's tax credit. It's a hidden subsidy, so issues of landlord discrimination become less of an obstacle. When we're funding things through the tax code, we often find a willingness to be more generous. So I think we need to be creative in how we think about expanding rental assistance.

Meredith: As I think you know, Results is very interested in renter's credits as a long term approach, even if short term expanding rental assistance is different. We've remained committed to that idea.

So speaking of getting something big done, I've heard you talk about this being a unique moment, a once in a generation opportunity. Can you say more why this is a key moment for some bold housing policies?

Diane: Yeah, it's at least once in a generation. Maybe it's once in a lifetime. It's in the next six to nine months. There's a number of reasons why we have this opportunity now. One is coming out of the pandemic, I think there is increased awareness and understanding, and some increase in champions from policymakers who want to address the underlying housing crisis so we don't get to the brink of disaster next time. There's also a lot of momentum. The success you've all had at Results I hope makes you feel like more wins are possible. And that's true across the country. We really have an expanded, effective, broad housing movement that's ready to seize this moment.

We also have a president of the United States who talks about housing as a human right. We've never had a president make anywhere close to that kind of ambitious commitment.

We have Democrats in congress with the majority who are intending to be really bold with that majority. And we have bipartisan support for these resolutions as well. So now congress and the White House are turning their attention to a potentially $2-3 trillion infrastructure spending package. In the housing community, we've been making the case for many years that housing is infrastructure. So President Biden is proposing $213 billion for housing. Seeing what just happened with the COVID relief package, it's very possible that we can achieve that funding amount.

And the details of how that is spent are so important. Again, we always come back to, and I know you all do too, that resources have to be targeted to those with the greatest need. We have an incredible opportunity now. We have a starting point for negotiations. We have to work to make sure we get at least that proposal and that those funds are directed towards the programs that serve the lowest income people, that could really make a tremendous change in homelessness and housing poverty. And if we get this right and continue over the next year and a half to push other housing policy changes we need, this could really be the year that we start to end homelessness and housing poverty once and for all.

Meredith: That's what I want to end with because that's such a powerful rallying cry. Thank you so much for being with us today, Diane, and thank you for the leadership you provide. I am really excited about more victories and getting more important policies done in the coming months.

Diane: Thank you, and thanks to everyone who joined today. We need your advocacy.

Meredith: Just to close out this opening section, we have two great new colleagues on the Results staff supporting our US policy work. You'll get to meet Max on a future webinar, and I'm delighted that after completing his first week after starting on Monday, that we have Michael Santos on the line. Michael, can you do a quick update on the housing pieces people have been working on?

Michael: Sure. Hi, everyone. Looking forward to working with everyone. I'm a visual person, so this is just showing you why we need a concerted effort as a nation to address the affordable housing crisis. There is no state with enough affordable housing for low income renters. You can find more information about your state and the country with the link I'm putting in the chat.

On Tuesday, there was a letter circulated and sent to the administration of President Biden asking to prioritize housing assistance policies for low income renters. Those are the big asks we just covered that Meredith and Diane talked about. Thanks to all the push that a lot of you have made this past week, last Tuesday before it was sent to President Biden, we got about 61 sign-ons in the House and Senate, and we're still waiting on a final tally.

Just as a reminder, on Wednesday, March 31, President Biden and the White House revealed their plan. There's a lot of work ahead of us. Looking forward to working with all of us.

Meredith: I want to flag that on our website, you can see more about tools to support you and work on this housing campaign and also our work on tax policy. Jos, if you can skip to slide 15. You have a chance. I know there were questions we didn't get a chance to get to. Michael will be doing our next monthly policy forum on evictions on the 15th. If you need coaching sooner, especially for lobbying meetings, this coming Monday we have one of our first 100 days lobbying hours.

I'm going to turn it over to Joanne.

Joanne: Thanks, Meredith. Greetings to everyone from Washington D.C. I'm the executive director of Results. I want to say a big welcome to everyone joining us and a special welcome for folks joining us for the first time, including Michael.

I want to start today in particular by acknowledging our friends and fellow advocates from the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Results stands with you, and we recognize that the increasing violence right has deep roots in structural racism. We are committed to doing our part to end oppression in all its forms.

And also as we remember George Floyd and watch the trial unfolding in Minneapolis, I want to recognize the trauma of this moment for communities of color.

In the face of all of this, and in the ongoing and unequal consequences of this pandemic and its economic fallout, I am so deeply inspired by what this community continues to make possible in the country and in the world. You just heard in part from our team and our speaker, the COVID relief package passed this last month was perhaps the biggest action against poverty in this country in a generation, or maybe in several generations. And we are nowhere near done. But it has to remind us and show us that change is possible in a massive way.

Our guest speaker, Senator Sherrod Brown, joined us a few minutes after the package was passed. And one of the first things he said when he joined the call was that you all make a huge impact. It was the best day he had ever had in the Senate because of what this bill did and does. All of you played a part in that victory, providing more desperately needed emergency rental assistance as well as relief globally including the biggest commitment to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

If there's one thing I wanted to get across, I think it's really important to understand that your role in this was not peripheral. It is very likely that if members of congress across the country heard from advocates, it was you they heard from. We are now two months into our first 100 days to push congress members towards even bolder anti-poverty actions. You all have had more than 200 meetings so far this year, and it's lighting up the map.

We are not slowing down. We're actually doubling down. As we've been talking about, we have a window for bold action, and we have to use it to its fullest in this moment. We have to convert incredibly important and urgently needed emergency responses into large-scale structural change. We just heard about what's needed urgently and ambitiously. We're pushing to make sure that low income renters who need rental assistance are able to get it. To have a program to support low income renters to have a roof over their heads. To be so vastly undersupported is an unacceptable failure of policy and priorities.

Those transformational expansions of the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit are temporary. In a little bit, we'll hear from another leader reminding us what else is at stake in poverty fueled by colonialism, deeply harmful expansions in the 1980s and '90s. We're seeing the consequences of longstanding equity global. We're focusing on the roles congress has to be undo this inequality.

Later in this call, my colleagues will also share recommendations and resources for how all of us can do things to prevent anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander racism and hate.

We have launched a survey for all advocates and staff. Our Results statement says that poverty cannot end as long as oppression exists. This survey is for your honest feedback to make Results the best it can be in all of our work. I urge you to take that survey, and thank you in advance for taking that survey and for your ideas and participation. With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague, Sarah.

Sarah: Hello, everyone. First, welcome to new Results advocates. We have names on the screen. We are so happy that you're all here and appreciate all the hard work you do.

I want to chat about our meetings so far. As of April 2, we have 209 meetings, which is just outstanding. 210. We had one added since yesterday. That is incredible. Like Meredith said, we are so inspired by the work you do and the things you've accomplished in such a short amount of time. We've covered 62% of all Senate offices. Our goal is 100%. We've additionally secured 132 House meetings and covered about 27% of the House. Our goal is 75%.

Jos ran some number the other day just randomly, and back in 2020, when there wasn't a 100 campaign, you all had 150 meetings within the first 100 days. In 2019 when we had a first 100 campaign, you secured 210 meetings. You're already at 210 now, and I have no doubt you will surpass that number.

How can we meet our goals? Each group, including our free agents, will need to meet with Senate and congressional offices that you cover according to your personal roadmaps. I know this sounds like a lot, but I believe this is something we can achieve. You all are so inspiring and extremely effective when it comes to advocating for anti-poverty policies. So continue to send out those emails and write those letters and joining town halls when available.

Members of congress were voted into their positions, and they work for us, not the other way around. You all do a great job reminding them, and it really shows with the passing of the COVID relief bill. You'll have the chance to hear from other advocates in the breakout sessions on what's worked for them in securing meetings.

I will be emailing out to all states, including all group leaders and regional coordinators, with some really helpful information on your state's coverage. You'll receive a screenshot of all current congressional coverages for your state. Additionally we've included tips for securing meetings. We'll go over some of those in a bit.

Your regional coordinators will be included so they can be an added support to you at this time and so everyone is on the same page. Again, thank you all so much for your incredibly passionate hard work. We have a lot to do over these next four weeks. If we can do anything to support you further, please let us know. Now I'll pass it to Ken so he can explain the breakout rooms.

Ken: Thanks, Sarah, and congratulations to everyone on the fantastic work you've been doing in the first 100 days. Let's see if we can reach all those Senate offices and 75% of the House. It'll be challenging, but I know we can do it.

I want to share some tips about getting their attention and getting that meeting. Then we'll create breakout rooms for you to talk about tactics. A goal of these meetings is that we all learn something new. Some of you may be stuck in getting your members of congress to respond.

One tip is just noting in the subject line of your email that this is your second or third request. Those things will encourage them to want to respond knowing that you've contacted them multiple times.

Meet with a different aide. If the DC folks won't respond, go local. And then show them what kind of people you are, how well prepared you are and how passionate you are, and they will recommend that happens in DC. That happened with our local representative in Asheville, NC recently.

Send articles and videos and things like that to the staff members as a followup. Check out this interesting video or piece! It really highlights the request I just made to you.

I've done things like asking the receptionist to put a post-it note on the chair of the staff member in DC. It creates that personal touch. Reach out to them on social media. Work with other organizations to request your meetings. If there are multiple constituent groups represented in your request, that's more likely to get their attention. Acknowledge your intentions in the media and send it to them. One member did an interview on television and we sent a note saying we saw that.

And just contact the grassroots and impact team to help you.

We're going to give you a few minutes here. We're going to put you in breakout rooms for a few minutes, probably about six or seven minutes, and see what sort of challenges you're having with getting offices to meet with you, and what has worked for you in getting those meetings. Those are the two things we want to discuss in the breakout rooms. You'll get a notice on your screen to join a breakout room. Click on that, and you'll have an opportunity to chat with folks about these two questions. What challenges are you having getting your meetings, and what has worked for you in getting meetings. So go ahead and join those. You should see something on your screen.

We have a lot of folks that have not joined their breakout rooms yet. The good news is that we can have our own conversation here in this room. Let's answer those questions. What kinds of struggles may some of you have had in setting up meetings with your congressional offices, and if anyone has a tip, you can share that as well. Feel free to unmute your line. You are all able to do that if you have some ideas to share, or questions.

Meredith: Hi, folks! Kathleen, I think it makes most sense to follow up with you separately on that.

Ken: So we have most folks back, it looks like. If you have a good tip and you know what you're going to do based on conversations you had, put it in the chat window. Or if we have one person who wants to do a quick share, let's do that. Go ahead and put those in the chat. So share these ideas with each other. I hope you had some constructive ideas.

I'm going to turn this over to Jos, and then we'll move on to the global section of the call.

Jos: Thanks, Ken. Ken will be doing a training on deepening our relationships with members of congress this Tuesday night. It should give you good tools and tips. I encourage you to register for that and attend. Also as mentioned earlier, you can read our full statement on the issue of anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander violence and racism. We're also currently going through an anti-oppression audit, and your input on our survey will be invaluable in this. The survey is anonymous and takes about 40 minutes to complete. So just click on the link in the slides or find it in the weekly updates. It'll only be open for two weeks so please take it as soon as possible.

And of course the biggest event of the year is coming up, our annual conference. We're disappointed that we can't be in person, but this event will be inspiring, informative, and fun. And of course, what would a Results effort be without lobbying meetings. Don't miss it. If you are going to participate in advocacy week, please register by May 1.

Ken is doing the training next week, and I will be doing a media training in how to write letters to the editor and get them published. I'm looking forward to doing that with you all.

Also on April 21, Results founder Sam Daley-Harris will be doing a webinar on the champion scale. You don't want to miss that training. Please register.

This Monday we will be holding our bimonthly first 100 days office hours. Please dial in if you have a question. Also be sure to register for our monthly policy forums. We'll be talking about housing on the US one and global nutrition on the global one. They are back to back if you want to do both. But be sure to register to attend those. You can find our other announcements on the Results calendar.

And it's that time of year again. We are taking nominations for the grassroots board elections. Grassroots board members are your voice and play an important role in shaping our organization. Please submit any submissions by April 30, and we will have more information next week on the blog.

Ken: Thanks, Jos. Joanne, are you on the line?

Joanne: I am.

Ken: Go ahead.

Joanne: Welcome now to the global section of our webinar that we know all of this work is deeply interconnected. I am thrilled to welcome a leader and great ally in driving global health equity, Keifer Buckingham. Keifer, welcome. I wanted to give an introduction and then we can start with questions.

Keifer leads open society foundations, US foreign policy advocacy work relating to global health. Before her current role, Keifer was a key legislative staffer for Barbara Lee. She covered a number of equity issues. We had the good fortune to work with her closely in that role. Keifer comes from a youth advocacy background and has a deep understanding of the power of grassroots mobilization. When it came to really mastering how grassroots can be supported, Keifer really understood this and worked with Results annually to ensure that grassroots letters came out early so you had time to work on them. She played a really central bipartisan support role in congress, and we were proud to partner with her and her boss. She's also been really willing and effective in being a relationship builder on these critical issues. She continues to drive forward the conversations in Washington and internationally on what's next with her work at OSF.

Results advocates just came off working on the COVID relief package and helping to ensure domestic priorities and key emergency funding for the global fund and other international needs and are now deeply engaged in annual funding around these priorities. We would love if you could start out, given the array of your experience, giving us the perspective on what influences the decisions of congressional leaders on these annual funding priorities and how important it is for members of congress to weigh in, and how important advocacy is to members of congress in shaping those priorities.

Keifer: Thank you so much, Joanne. I should let you start my mornings. And thank you to everyone else to inviting me. I am so happy to say that I have been a friend and partner with Results for many years now and especially when I was on the Hill was able to work in lockstep with advocates. Even though my congresswoman Barbara Lee was sold on these issues, we loved having advocates on the ground. I know you all have been hitting the pavement virtually, and I want to start by saying it matters. As a former staffer, when we get requests from constituents, that's always our first priority, making sure we're sitting down and chatting with members of the community. There aren't a lot of folks who do it better than Results. You're able to connect stories on the US and the global side. I want to thank all of you for your commitment to this work, and I'll continue to commit to be a partner with results no matter my role in DC.

For congressional staffers, the stories matter. We often don't get to get out into the field. Sometimes there are trips that can be made where we can actually see US programs in action, but that's few and far between. So we depend on folks to help bring the stories from in country to us in our offices or in front of Zoom. The other part of that is not only connecting the positive outcomes of these taxpayer-funded programs, but also hearing why that's important to you and a connection for you as a constituent.

We're always trying to figure out how to connect US to global issues. Anytime you can make the connection between what's happening in your community and why things happening thousands of miles away matter to you in your community, that is stuff that really resonates in congress. At the end of the day, we have to bring things to our boss. In order to do that, we need to be informed and make recommendations. The things you tell us directly inform that memo we may write to our boss. Hey, you need to support this account, or will you sign on to this HIV letter? In order to do that, the senior leadership in a congressional office will often say, why does it matter? We were able to say our constituents support this account and this work. That's usually all we need to get the green light to get a member of congress to sign on to a letter or make a vote. So making the connection to your community is the biggest key.

I think right now as we continue to dig our way out of this global pandemic, we have an opportunity to do that. When we talk about global health funding, about pandemic response and preparedness, we're seeing it in our own communities. So we have an even better opportunity in this moment to connect what happens globally to what happens in our communities. That's where we're looking to you all as you have these conversations on the Hill, to really bring that perspective to staffers.

Joanne: Thanks. Maybe a good next question about that is, do you have thoughts or examples of local to global connections? Also we've been having a dialogue about it. How do we talk about these things with language that resonates on the Hill and also through an anti-oppression lens? Not continuing stereotypes that are harmful.

Kiefer: There are a couple of things I would say, and I'll actually touch on the last one first. The language we use matters. The US has been a global leader on big bilateral investments in global health for a long time. But that doesn't necessarily have to be from a lens of charity. We're just helping poor people. It can come from a language of solidarity and of capacity-building for communities to serve their own populations. Not a handout. And I think that's a lot of what resonates right now in the United States, helping communities pick themselves up. We are seeing a lot of those same issues in our own communities, and we are seeing how the effects of those systemic problems, whether it's racism or classism or whatever that might be, we can see that through this lens of disproportionate effects on people of color, on marginalized populations like LGBTQ folks, women and girls being disproportionately affected by hunger and climate change, by various other economic and social drivers. Can we connect those experiences we have here in the United States from the racial uprising last summer to the water crisis in Flint to the fact that black and brown folks are disproportionately not getting access to vaccines?

We can connect that to the work we're doing globally. I'll give a good example. A couple of years ago, we had the risk of famine in four countries in 2017. We were looking at famine in Nigeria, in Yemen, which is still struggling from hunger. And one of the things we were able to do to bring republicans along was to make that connection with folks in their own communities. If they were struggling to access food, what would that look like?

The other connection we made for them, and it always depends on who you're talking to, but it was around instability and insecurity. And when communities are in need of food and healthcare, they turn to whomever might be able to provide those resources. It might be a militant group or something, but if they're able to provide those resources, we're going to figure out how to get food in our babies' mouths. If you're not on board with "it's the right thing to do and a human right," we can also talk to people about why full bellies and healthy lives also means folks aren't reaching out to more radical sources to get the care they need.

I think the main point here is that you always tailor your message depending on who you're talking to. If you're talking to someone about access to clean water and sanitation globally, do the research and figure out what's going on in that member of congress' own community. If we're talking about nutrition work, see if you can find the right talking points and make connections for your audience. We know that the spectrum of political views on the Hill is much wider than just right or left. We know that we can meet people in different places. But that requires us to do a little work to figure out the connection that might resonate with them.

Did they have a staffer that worked in the Peace Corps or a son or daughter who worked abroad? Sometimes that can help us make that personal connection.

What else was a question, Joanne? Messages.

Joanne: Messages, and just. I think you actually answered them both well. In this moment, what are examples we can give of that local/global connection, but you just did that brilliantly. One other big one as we wait for questions in the chat. This moment is a big one everywhere and also an opportunity to be bold. We're going to the Hill and asking for a billion dollars for tuberculosis, doubling funding for nutrition, and an increased pledge on global partnership and some other areas. So just from your own perspective, how we can speak to this moment on this local to global connection.

Keifer: It's hard, right? It's hard to ask for more money in this moment. It can feel daunting. Who are we to ask for more money for this account? There's a lot going on. But the point, especially for TB, is that we have the tools. We know what works. When you think about how long TB has been around, for centuries. The fact that we haven't figured out how to get rid of this thing. And by the way we just produced vaccines for COVID-19 within a matter of months with billions of dollars of taxpayer investment, and thank you Dolly Parton. We should be able to do this. One example is to talk about the amazing innovations in America. You want to talk about American ingenuity and technology. The Moderna vaccine was done 99% with taxpayer money. That is Tony Fauccian science. We should be grateful. But we should say we have the technology and the science. Now we need the political will.

Look at how much we've done and accomplished! We're going to defeat this pandemic if everyone joins together and makes sure that everyone has access to the vaccines that rich countries have. We can actually do this for TB and HIV and malaria. And a billion dollars is nothing compared to what we've just dropped on this emerging pandemic, which we obviously needed to address.

But I think the other piece is that there's going to be a lot of talk as we climb out of the pandemic and as we will see spikes in certain communities, partly because of vaccine hesitance and variance. There will be a lot of dialogue about what it means to have a resilient community. Some people will talk about health system strengthening or global poverty. In our case, when we're talking about these preventable, treatable diseases and plagues of poverty, like child nutrition, access to vaccines, TB, that are disproportionately affecting the folks who are forgotten, who don't have a voice or whose voice is not being heard.

It's an opportunity for us to say that when we give communities the resources, they are resilient. They are able to be fully functioning members of the society and the economy. And a rising tide floats all boats. We are showing that now with COVID-19. And unless we come together in global solidarity, none of us are safe until all of us are safe. It doesn't matter if we reach herd immunity here in the United States if other strains continue throughout the world.

Yes, that solidarity can feel all lovey-dovey, but it's actually science-based good public health. It's something that if we don't use this moment for more than just COVID-19, then what have we learned from this crisis? We can take the moment we're in and use it to get a jumpstart and re-energize on everything else. I think we can do that. I'm actually not an optimistic person, too. That's why I need you all. I've worked in DC for too long.

But I actually think we do have a moment. If we don't seize on that moment, then what are we doing? So that's my answer to that. I think we have to use this moment. Otherwise we're going to let it go, and I don't think we'll have this opportunity again to go big and go bold for a long time.

Joanne: Thanks. You may say that you're not an optimist, but thanks for the power of that. Not just that perspective and vision grounded in lots of real world experience. Doesn't everyone wish we could bring you into our congressional meetings. But now we will.

Just in terms of, maybe before closing. I'm seeing lots of thank-yous.

Ken: A couple of quick questions. In terms of talking to various offices, is it better to pitch US trade investment and other things, does that depend by office? And someone said that the expert machines we've invested in around the world to address TB are being used for COVID. Is there a promotion point there?

Keifer: Great points. The first one is around the talking points, and I see a lot of great pieces in the chat around language. Language matters, but it also matters to who you're talking to. When I go into an office I know is fighting to empower communities and has been out there marching with Black Lives Matter and is doing amazing work on reducing police brutality, I'm going to talk to them about folks in the diaspora being disproportionately affected. If I'm talking to a member of congress who is a veteran, I'll talk to them about how hunger and poverty feeds instability. And it's a cycle of instability and folks being taken advantage of by militant groups and falling into poverty.

If I'm talking to a member of congress who sits on a certain committee, I'll talk to them about how getting the US back onto a global stage and sharing technology related to COVID-19 will get us further in economic development and relief. So it really does depend on who you're talking to. That's why it falls on us to do that research and understand that thing that will resonate the most. I can't stress that enough. That's why it's always that fine line between saying the language and living our values in terms of how we frame the issue. But you don't have to compromise on your values just to cater a message to someone. I know some of you could probably do this same lecture. But you've learned over the years how to change your talking point a bit without compromising on our values and centering the people we serve.

Ken, what was the last one? Oh, I've got it. Investments. That's another really big thing. When Ebola broke out in West Africa, one of the first things was thanking the American taxpayers for building the infrastructure to enable the Nigerian government to handle that on their own. I think we should make that case for TB. I'm not a technical expert on that, but yes. We've done it before on advocating and we need to do it again. Again, this gets back to the broader, 30,000-foot level we can take with global investments. We know that when we make these investments, we'll also building more resilient communities for the future.

For example, I'm working a lot right now on ensuring not only that the US shares doses of vaccines. And by the way, we have enough to vaccinate all of our population plus 33 million additional doses. We are sitting on those right now. It's not enough to share those doses, but to build manufacturing capacity elsewhere. That will prepare communities to respond to the next pandemic. And we know that it's not a matter of if, but when. That again gets at that capacity building.

We know that a lot of sites that were doing HIV testing are also doing COVID testing. We have good examples from the field that the decades-long investments we have made as a country have paid off in responding to this pandemic.

Joanne: Really important piece to end with in terms of where we need to go. It's the technology and capacity too.

Keifer, really great to have you on, especially right now in the heat of this work and seizing this moment. Thanks for your huge leadership and your generosity in being with us today.

Kiefer: Always always always happy to come chat to this group. I hope you will have me back. Also shoutout to Susan Osher from Oakland, who I got the opportunity to work in Barbara Lee's office. You might be off payroll, but you're not off staff. I have my Oaklandish hoodie on today. I appreciate all of you for your work. Don't hesitate to reach out. Thanks again, and best of luck. We're counting on you. Thanks so much for the work you do, and have a great weekend.

Joanne: Thanks so much, Kiefer. And now turning the call back over to Ken.

Ken: Thanks for that, Joanne. Wow, that was quite fabulous. Happy Saturday, everyone. I'm here to give you a brief global policy update. I want to note that my colleague John is the one who usually does this. He's off on leave for the next couple of months, but the rest of the team is here to support you. Don't be shy to reach out to us.

Quickly just to understand the appropriations process we're working in. You have the President's budget. Congress forms a budget resolution to give top line numbers for the spending levels for the coming year. That goes to the appropriations committee, which divides that amount up into little slices of 12 and hands them out to the subcommittees in appropriations to decide how their slice will be spent.

One of the subcommittees is the state and foreign operations subcommittee of appropriations. Members of congress can weigh in directly with them. What constituents want to see with that money is important. Members of congress have forms on their websites, or you can contact their office to say how we would like that money spent. So you're submitting those individual requests.

There are also sign-on letters right now, one on TB and one on education. They'll create their final SFOPS bill. The more often that the members of that subcommittee hear from us about our specific requests, the more likely they are to include them in the final spending bill, which is what we're going for.

Our voice really matters in this process. Members of congress want to hear from constituents. We have the three priorities I mentioned, tuberculosis, partnership for education, and nutrition. In the House right now, they've set a deadline of April 28 to hear from all members of congress. That means your members of congress need to hear from you much sooner than that. Same with the Senate. We need to get our requests to them before the deadlines they're setting.

The requests we have for these issues are here on the screen.

So our request right now for everyone to work on is to continue to ask your representatives and senators to submit our appropriations requests to SFOPS. A lot of our advocates have gone to the website, and the forms to fill out are right there on the websites. Not in all cases. Otherwise you can find them at the foreign policy aide. Our office are happy to fill those out for you if you send the links and the deadlines.

The next thing we've got that is kind of new are two sign-on letters in the House. We have a bipartisan tuberculosis sign-on letter. We have an education letter that is out calling for robust funding for GPE and global education. There is a nutrition letter in progress. You can always ask members of congress to sign on to those along with submitting our requests.

Continue meeting with your House and Senate offices. I put that number 3 because the first two are on a timeline. If you can do it during a meeting, that's great, but don't wait to make the meetings.

There's a bonus ask on the global partnership for education. Sometimes members of congress don't want to do appropriations requests. This is a great secondary request you can ask for.

Lots of resources here. You can get these slides on the website. It will point you to all the resources we have for appropriations.

On this coming Monday the fifth, we're having these open office hours where the Results staff is there to answer your questions. There will be a focus on questions about appropriations forms this coming Monday from 4:00 to 5:00pm ET. If you need help, please join those open office hours on Monday.

Do fill out the anti-oppression and equity survey. We need all of your input on that. Thank you all for your tremendous advocacy and partnership. Let's keep it up for the first 100 days. Have a great weekend, everybody. And let's give you a chance to unmute your lines. There, you can all say goodbye and happy springtime to everybody.

[End of webinar]