

Femme, Mascs and Queers On The Frontlines
The Intersections of Racial, Gender, LGBTQ2IA+ and Disability
Justice
Transcript

[music plays. "Talkin' Bout a Revolution" by Tracy Chapman]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [A Google Sheets presentation is displayed. The current slide is on a white background. At the top of the slide is a large black box with white text. The text reads: People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. Beneath the box is black text that reads: FEMMES, MASCS AND QUEERS ON THE FRONTLINES: THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACIAL, GENDER, LGBTQ2QIA+ AND DISABILITY JUSTICE. Co-Hosts: Gregory Cendana, Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. DJ Kuttin Kandi, Asian Solidarity Collective. #OnTheFrontlines, #Building Solidarity. Organizational Co-sponsors: logos are displayed for the organizational co-sponsors. Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting, Asian Solidarity Collective, Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, The Bulosan Center, 18 Million Rising, Asian Pacific Islander Community Actions, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO. End of image description.]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Presentation is displayed in full screen mode. Video feed of Lydia appears briefly in the upper right corner of the screen. After about a minute, video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne appears in the upper right corner. Suzanne interprets the lyrics. End of image description.]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare navigates away from the slide to a music player window. The cursor clicks a new song, then navigates back to Google Sheets. The presentation is displayed in full screen mode. End of image description.]

[song ends, new song begins. "I Can" by Nas]

[music cuts out]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share displays a split screen showing the video feeds of Kandi and ASL interpreter Suzanne. End of image description.]

KANDI: Hello everyone, my name is DJ Kuttin Kandi and I am a Co-Founder, Core member and Organizer of Asian Solidarity Collective as well as part of The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. Welcome to the Townhall on the Femmes and Queers on the Frontlines: The Intersections of Racial, Gender, LGBTQ2IA+ and Disability Justice by The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation in partnership with Freedom Inc. and Asian Pacific Institute on Gender- Based Violence with the Organizational Co-Sponsors: 18 Million Rising, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO, Asian Pacific Islander Community Actions, Asian Solidarity Collective, The Bulosan Center, and Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. We wanted to start off this town hall saying that when we say "Femmes, Mascs and Queers;" we mean Transgender and non-binary adults and children across the gender spectrum, and cisgender women and girls; people of all other minoritized and marginalized genders.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare displays a slide. Video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne is reduced to the upper right corner of the screen. The slide is a white background with two photos and black text. The title reads: Co-Hosts / Co-Organizers. Beneath a photograph of Gregory is the text: Gregory A. Cendana. Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. (he/him/his/siya). Twitter/Instagram: @gregorycendana, @CSWSconsulting. Beneath a photograph of Kandi is the text: DJ Kuttin Kandi. Asian Solidarity Collective. (She/Her/Hers). Twitter: @KuttinKandi, @AsianSolidarity / IG: @djcuttinkandi. End of image description.]

GREGORY: Hello everyone. My name is Gregory Cendana and I am the President and Co-Founder of Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. Kandi and I are proud to be the co-hosts and co-organizers of this townhall and co-founders for The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. This is a reminder that you must click "closed captions" in the bottom menu to see the close captions, and to all of the speakers to be mindful of your pace to pause for 15-30 seconds when transitioning for the ASL interpreters. We will spotlight the ASL interpreters and if there are any issues, please be sure to mention something in the chat--we have volunteers who are monitoring and will do their best to address any questions or concerns that are raised.

We'd also like to acknowledge that June is also Pride Month--I'd like to bring into this space our ancestors and transcestors, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, who led the Stonewall Uprising of 1969 and are the reason why we are able to celebrate Pride more

than 50 years later. Unfortunately, police brutality and violence at the hands of the state continue to disproportionately impact Black communities and we hope to not only the systems of oppressions but also the organizing, resilience and resistance that Black folks and other people of color have done and continue to lead.

This townhall is the next in The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation's #BuildingSolidarity Series. Please use the hashtags #OnTheFrontlines #BuildingSolidarity for the conversation tonight. We will also be live tweeting from our twitter account @peoples_collect and streaming live on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PeoplesCollective4JL/>.

We also want to remind you to hit "gallery view" at the top right to see multiple screens at the same time. We also have Angel Trazo, an amazing graphic facilitator who will be providing us with a creative graphics recording based on today's conversation, and we will share it with everyone in the following days after the town hall. We wanted to let people know we are recording this townhall, we are providing ASL interpretation, graphic facilitation and closed captions.

KANDI: In this pandemic, where there has been a rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia, it is imperative that building solidarity is part of our organizing work.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide displays two photos and black text on a white background. The title reads: Co-Organizers. Beneath a photo of Grace Huang is the text: Grace

Huang. Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence. (she/her). Twitter: @GHuangWA, @apigbv. Beneath a photo of Kabzuag is the text: Kabzuag Vaj. Freedom Inc. (she/her/hers). Twitter: @kabzuag. End of image description.]

KANDI: Since our very first town hall back in March we knew early on we wanted to and needed to have a conversation on the intersections racial, gender, LGBTQ2IA+ and Disability Justice. And now going into our 5th town hall, we are proud to have partnered with our trusted friends and comrades to bring this to this platform. So a special thank you/salamat/mahalo to Kabzuag Vaj from Freedom Inc and Grace Huang of Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence who have co-organized with us for this townhall. We are extremely proud to be in partnership with you for this townhall.

GREGORY: To get things going, we would like to start with a Land/Indigenous Acknowledgement which will be done by Dr. Grace Jun with Asian Solidarity Collective.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide displays one photograph and black text against a white background. The title reads: Land Acknowledgement. Beneath a photo of Grace Jun is the text: Grace Jun. Asian Solidarity Collective. (she/her/hers). End of image description.]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare displays video feeds of ASL interpreter Suzanne, Kandi, and Gregory. After a moment, video

feeds of Gregory and Kandi disappear and video feed of Grace Jun appears. End of image description.]

GRACE JUN: Hello my name is Dr. grace shinhae jun and I currently reside on the traditional and unceded territory of the Kumeyaay nation.

For our land acknowledgment, I would like to focus on movement and energy to visualize and physicalize a connection to our place. We will center our movement on the breath, and if you are able, I invite you to participate in a movement gesture using your hands.

To pay respect to the past and present citizens of the Kumeyaay Nation and of the Indigenous Nations in which you currently are living and learning in, I ask you to focus on the energy all around you.

As we take a collective breath, inhale and bring it to your heart. Exhale and open that energy into the space that we are creating together. May this serve as a gentle reminder to embody the words we speak and to use our bodies to honor Indigenous sovereignty as we move forward.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of Grace Jun disappears. Video feed of Gregory appears. After a moment, the screenshare navigates back to the Land Acknowledgement slide, and video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne is reduced to the upper right corner. End of image description.]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare navigates to the next slide titled “Speakers,” then forward one more slide. New slide displays nine photos of behind-the-scenes team members and black text against a white background. The text beneath the photos reads: Melissa Kelley Colibrí. Accessibility Coordinator. (they/them/theirs). Leang Ngov. Accessibility Coordinator. (they/them/theirs). Suzanne Lightbourne. ASL Interpreter. (she/her/hers). Mónica Gallego. ASL Interpreter. (she/her/hers). Benny Llamas. ASL Interpreter. (they/them/theirs). Darryn Hollifield. Captioner. (they/them/theirs). Angel Trazo. Graphic Facilitator. (she/her/hers). Carmen Berkley. Chat Monitor. (she/her/hers). Suparna Kudesia. Chat Monitor. (she/they). End of image description.]

GREGORY: We now would also like to introduce you to our ASL interpreters, captioner, graphics facilitator, and other tech support including some of our new members of our Organizing Committee.

Accessibility Accommodations. Our Accessibility Coordinators: Melissa Kelley Colibrí and Leang Ngov. Our ASL Interpreters are Suzanne Lightbourne, Mónica Gallego, and Benny Llamas. And Closed Captions will be Darryn Hollifield.

For our Graphic Facilitator, Angel Trazo. For Questions and Chat Monitors, Ana Laura Martinez, Carmen Berkley, and Suparna Kudesia.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide shows more support team member photos and text. The text beneath the photos reads: Alvina Yeh. Tech Lead. (She/Her/Hers). Terrence

Ford. Live Tweeting. (he/him/his). Grace Jun. Tech Support. (She/Her/Hers). Stacey Uy. Notetaker. (she/her/hers). Helen Leung. Organizing Committee - TownHall / Timekeeper. (she/her). Shengxiao "Sole" Yu. Organizing Committee - TownHall. (she/her/hers). Ana Laura. Organizing Committee - Operations & Admins. (she/her/ella). Thavry Khun. Organizing Committee - Operations & Administrative. (she/her/hers). End of image description.]

GREGORY: Our Technology Lead is Alvina Yeh. Live Tweeting from our account is Terrence Ford. Powerpoint and Tech Support, Grace Jun. Timekeeper, Helen Leung. Notetaker, Stacey Uy.

We also are excited because we have been able to recruit an Organizing Committee of folks. And some have joined us today. Helping Organize Town Halls would be Helen Leung and Shengxiao "Sole" Yu. And supporting Operations & Administration, we have Ana Laura Martinez and Thavry Khun.

KANDI: Before we begin the program, we want to introduce all of the speakers and panelists for the townhall in alphabetical order by last name. We will share a little bit of their bio and their picture, which will be shown on the screen.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is titled "Speakers" and features a poster against a white background. The poster has a dark grey background and light blue and light grey text. It shows photographs of eight speakers. The text reads: People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. FEMMES AND

QUEERS ON THE FRONTLINES. THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACIAL, GENDER, LGBTQ2IA+ and DISABILITY JUSTICE. SATURDAY JUNE 27, 2020. 12 PM to 2 PM HST/3 PM to 5 PM PST/5 PM to 7 PM CST/6 PM to 8 PM EST. Live ASL Interpretation, Caption Services & Transcription will be provided. The hashtag #ONTHEFRONTLINES is displayed vertically down the upper third of the right-hand side of the poster. Beneath that text are the eight photographs of speakers and panelists. Beneath the photographs is the text:
LYDIA X.Z. BROWN, disability justice advocate and organizer.
CHHAYA CHHOUM, Mekong NYC.
CAYDEN MAK, 18 Million Rising.
MONICA SIMPSON, SisterSong.
AMITA SWADHIN, Mirror Memoirs.
BO THAO-URABE, Coalition of Asian American Leaders.
KABZUAG VAJ, Freedom Inc.
ISA WOLDEGUIORGUIS, Center for Hope and Healing Inc.
Register: bit.ly/GenderLGBTQ2IAJustice.
Accessibility: pc4jl.accessibility@gmail.com.
Logos are displayed for organizational cosponsors: Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. Asian Solidarity Collective. APALA. APIGBV. 18MR.
Icon is displayed indicating the event will have ASL interpretation. The hashtag #BuildingSolidarity is displayed. End of image description.]

KANDI: Today we have Lydia X. Z. Brown, who writes about disability, race, and queerness. They are an organizer, advocate, educator, attorney, strategist, and writer whose work has largely

focused on interpersonal and state violence targeting multiply-marginalized disabled people living at the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, and language. Most recently, Lydia was named to Gold House Foundation's A100 list of the most impactful Asians in America for 2020. They have received many awards for their work, including from the Obama White House, the Society for Disability Studies, the American Association of People with Disabilities, the Washington Peace Center, the Disability Policy Consortium, and the National Council on Independent Living.

GREGORY: Our next speaker is Chhaya Chhoum. A Cambodian refugee, Chhaya Chhoum is organizing Cambodian and Vietnamese refugee communities in the Bronx and throughout NYC. As the executive director of Mekong NYC she works to end deportations and institutionalized oppression, and create thriving communities.

KANDI: We also have with us Cayden Mak, Executive Director at 18 Million Rising (18MR), who is a movement technologist interested in building trust, community, and independent power on the internet. He serves on the advisory board for the Kairos Fellowship and was the 2019 recipient of the Everett B. Parker Award from the United Church of Christ, Office of Communication for his work fighting for internet freedom and media justice.

GREGORY: The next speaker is Monica Simpson. Monica Raye Simpson is the Executive Director of SisterSong, the National Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. Monica has organized extensively against human rights violations, reproductive

oppression, the prison industrial complex, racism and intolerance, and the systematic physical and emotional violence inflicted upon African American women and the African American LGBTQ community in the South. She is also a Revolutionary Soul Singer, culture worker & strategist, full circle Doula and was recently named a New Civil Rights Leader by Essence Magazine.

KANDI: We also have with us Amita Swadhin, who is an organizer, educator, storyteller, and strategist with 20 years of experience working to end interpersonal and institutional violence against young people. They are the Founding Director of Mirror Memoirs, a national storytelling and organizing project uplifting the narratives, healing and leadership of LGBTQI+ Black, Indigenous and of color people who survived child sexual abuse, as a strategy to end rape culture and other forms of oppression. They are also a published writer whose work has appeared in several anthologies, academic journals and online publications.

GREGORY: The next speaker is Bo Thao-Urabe. Bo Thao-Urabe is co-founder and Executive and Network Director of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) and a possibilian who believes a liberated future where power and prosperity is shared is possible. Her life's work has focused on creating community-centered, asset-based solutions that push for meaningful change and cultural transformation for those who are most impacted by systemic inequities. She's built movement work locally, nationally and internationally.

KANDI: We also have with us Kabzuag Vaj, who was born in Laos and came to this country as a refugee child with her mother and

siblings. She is the founder and co-executive director of Freedom Inc. In the past 20 years, Kabzuagj has spent her life working to build collective power and social change within Southeast Asian and Black communities.

GREGORY: The next speaker is Isa Woldeguiorguis [struggles to pronounce the last name]. Apologies. Isa Woldeguiorguis has been the Executive Director of The Center for Hope and Healing (CHH) for over 8 years. CHH has served victims of rape and sexual assault, provided education and awareness raising to eradicate sexual violence in the greater Lowell Massachusetts area for 45 years. Prior to this, Ms. Woldeguiorguis has worked in the antiviolence field for twenty-five years, holding several statewide and national roles in the movement to end sexual and domestic violence.

GREGORY: Based on the RSVPs and interest from across the country and globe, this shows how critical this conversation is especially for the moment we are in. While we don't have enough time to do introductions of everyone who's joined, we wanted to do a quick poll to get a sense of where people are watching the townhall. Also, feel free to drop in the chat or the comments below and if you are watching from the facebook stream, please share your name, pronouns and where you are watching the townhall from. This leads us to the first poll question:

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is black text on a white background. The text reads: Poll 1: Where are you watching the townhall from? (Drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch or Twitter). The options listed are:

West, Midwest, Northeast, South, Alaska, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam or the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico or U.S. Virgin Islands, and Outside of the U.S. End of image description.]

GREGORY: Poll 1: Where are you watching the townhall from? Drop it in the comments if you are watching from one of the streams. We are also curious about: What is your race? So we'll give folks some time now to complete the poll or drop it in the chat.

Alright. We are now at over 50% of folks who have completed the poll. If you haven't had a chance yet, please complete it. And please continue--we're seeing folks drop it in the chat. So please continue to drop it in the chat or in the comments as well.

Awesome. It looks like we also do have some folks who are out of the US. West Coast is represented here as well.

Awesome. [pause] All right. Will give it maybe 30 more seconds y'all. If you haven't had a chance yet, please complete the poll or drop it in the chat. And we'll share the results shortly.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is black text on a white background. The text reads: Poll 1 Part 2: What is your race? (Drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch or Twitter). The options listed are: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, East Asian, Black or African American, Latinx, Latino or Hispanic, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White. End of image description]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now video feed of the ASL interpreter Benny is displayed in the upper right corner of the screen. End of image description.]

GREGORY: Awesome. All right. Five more seconds for folks who haven't filled out yet. We are about 80%, we have a good majority of folks. Also feel free to drop in the chat. I'm seeing folks continue to drop it in here, thank you so much.

All right. So why don't we go ahead and end the poll...and share the results with folks.

Thank you. All right. So it looks like we have representation from across the country, including some folks who joined us from outside of the US. It looks like we have a crew of folks from the West Coast--from the West. Followed by folks from the Northeast. We also have Midwest and South representation and folks in Hawaii. Awesome. If you're outside the US, please drop in the chat where you're at. We'd love to know where folks are at.

And then, in terms of folks who answer the second question on race, a majority of folks here are Asian. We have a strong Southeast Asian representation. East Asian. We also have Latinx, Latino or Hispanic folks. Some White folks. Black or African-American. And we also have a Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaska Native folks as well. Awesome. Thank you so much for completing the poll.

And now we would like to introduce you to our first opening speaker who will provide context and framing for our town hall, Bo Thao-Urabe.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide shows a photo and black text against white background. Beside a photo of the speaker, the text reads: Opening Speaker. Bo Thao-Urabe. Coalition of Asian American Leaders. (she/her/hers). Twitter: @bothao, @caalmn. End of image description]

BO: Hi, thank you Gregory.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare displays a split screen, showing the video feeds of ASL interpreter Benny and speaker Bo. End of image description.]

BO: And hi everyone. Thank you for joining us today. I believe that every moment is a moment for us all to push ourselves to do better for our communities, our cities, our country and world. So that we can have justice, prosperity, and peace for every person.

But as I join you today, I know this is not what we currently have--and not even our starting place. Black, Indigenous, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latinx identities are what we've talked about as being made vulnerable in this moment. But we know that this is incomplete.

COVID and the blatant disregard for Black lives that's led to the global awakening because of the killings of George Floyd, Tony

McDade, Sean Reed, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rashad Brooks, and more, again exposes how deeply entrenched our systems of white supremacy and patriarchy are. It's literally causing Black deaths every day. And in the uprisings that have followed, we know that it is now also about who and where we must turn to, to reimagine what is possible. And to do better, so that we don't lose momentum in this moment.

That's why today's session is so critical for us all. As a humble learner and practitioner in the movement, I believe our greatest teachers are those who are most impacted in our communities. So I opened up the space for us all to listen deeply to our speakers. That instead of being uncomfortable or unsure, I invite us all to examine ourselves within the existing systems of racism, colonialism and imperialism, heterosexism, capitalism, and ableism. So that we can grow and act with more intention to transform the hearts, and minds, and systems--yes, systems are necessary.

If I just think about the lowest hanging fruit of our nation has used gender to make us complacent through using white women, we see how having a white cisgender framework has failed us. White and cisgender women and girls have been used over and over throughout history to uphold white supremacy. And it has done little to liberate trans, femme, cisgender women and girls, and nonbinary people across the gender spectrum.

So I know, as many of you do, that the uprisings now have never been about race alone. Because liberation and abolition must

include race, imperialism and colonialism, ableism, and gender and sexuality.

The world we want is something that not a single one of us has ever had. So it will take all of us, and every intention to dismantle and rebuild something in its place. To do that, we must listen to femme, masc, and queer folks who have been on the frontlines. Because while it's true that our communities have experienced oppression because of race, the experiences of femme, masc, and queer folks are what tell us we have so much more to do to be intersectional in our movement for liberation.

As you listen in, I ask that you not come up with solutions for the folks who are sharing with us, but instead to look to their brilliance and leadership so that we can uplift the most liberating and innovative work that is occurring. It's that that we must follow to confront interpersonal violence, rid us of community-generated violence, and transform our systems of oppression. This is a movement moment that offers us the chance to not just show up momentarily, but to truly push for transformation in all realms of our lives.

So, I thank you for joining us and I look forward to hearing from the panelists. And I want to turn it over to Kandi to introduce our panel now.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [video feed of Bo disappears. After a moment, it is replaced by the video feed of Kandi. End of image description.]

KANDI: Thank you so much Bo for providing us with some important, insightful words with us today. Next, we would like to introduce the moderator of our panel who will share a few words and provide framing for the conversation they will be moderating today. Please welcome Kabzuag Vaj from Freedom Inc.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [video feed of Kandi disappears. After a moment, it is replaced by video feed of Kabzuag. End of image description.]

KABZUAG: *Nyob* zoo and good afternoon. I'm so excited to be facilitating this conversation today. I want to thank you all for joining us. And this particular topic is very close to my heart for many reasons.

I think too often in movement spaces, femmes, mascs, queer folks, women and girls are left out of movement conversations, our contributions deemed Insignificant, and our labor dismissed and invisiblized. So in today's conversation, I want to uplift, make space, and let the world know how we continue to contribute to the fabric of movements, rebellions, and revolutions, all the while taking care of families, villages, and communities.

As gender, queer, and disability justice advocates and movement leaders, we understand too well what patriarchal violence looks like and how it continues to harm our communities.

Surviving these acts of violence (domestic violence, sexual violence, reproductive injustice, state sanctioned violence)--it's not new to us. But what we've learned in the past four or five months is that the COVID pandemic and the Black power uprising has helped to shine a brighter light on the forms of gender based violence--both interpersonal and state sanctioned system violence that we experience.

In addition, it has proven to all of us what we've known all along--that this country has never invested in people in the ways that it invests in profits and properties. From the schools--the distance learning--to simply essential workers not having the ability to get COVID tested, to the many, many deaths in our communities that could have been prevented.

These two historic events happened--COVID pandemic and the George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade uprising--has helped us to understand all these failures and all the ways that our communities continue to rise up and take care of each other.

And today I want to hear from our panel of experts about their work and their visions during this moment. This conversation will be with Black and Asian American leaders, with a special focus on gender, queer, and disability justice. And if you're joining us right now, the terms that we're using, when we say "Femmes, Mascs and Queers;" we mean Transgender and non-binary adults and children across the gender spectrum, and cisgender women and girls, people of all minoritized and marginalized genders.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide features six photographs and black text against a white background. The slide is titled: Panelists. The text beneath the photos of the panelists reads: Kabzuag Vaj. Moderator. Freedom Inc. (she/her/hers). Twitter: @kabzuag, @AboutFreedomInc. Isa Woldeguiorguis. Center for Hope and Healing, Inc. (she/her/hers). Twitter: @chhlowell. Chhaya Chhoum. Mekong NYC. (she/her/hers). Twitter: @MekongNYC. Cayden Mak. 18 Million Rising. (he/him or they/them). Twitter: @cayden, @18millionrising. Monica Simpson. Sistersong. (she/her/hers). Twitter: @monicarsimpson, @SisterSong_WOC. Amita Swadhin. Mirror Memoirs. (they/them). Twitter: @aswadhin, @mirrormemoirs. End of image description.]

KABZUAG: I would like your speakers to introduce themselves. And we will start with Isa...from the Center for Hope and Healing, Inc.

ISA: Good evening. I'm Isa Woldeguiorguis, she/her/hers. I'm the Executive Director at the Center for Hope and Healing in Lowell, Massachusetts. Thank you for having me.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare displays video feeds of ASL interpreter Benny, and panelists Isa and Monica. End of image description.]

CHHAYA: Hi everybody, this is Chhaya Chhoum from Bronx, New York with Mekong NYC.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare adds video feed of panelists Amita and Cayden. End of image description.]

CHHAYA: Excited tonight to begin to be part of this conversation.

CAYDEN: Hi everybody, my name is Cayden Mak. I'm the Executive Director of 18 Million Rising, calling in from unceded Chochenyo-Ohlone land in Oakland, California.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feeds of panelists Isa and Cayden disappear, leaving only video feeds of ASL interpreter Benny and panelists Monica and Amita. End of image description.]

MONICA: Peace and blessings everyone, my name is Monica Raye Simpson and I am the Executive Director of SisterSong. We're the national women of color reproductive justice collective based in Atlanta, Georgia. She/her/hers. Really, really honored and blessed to be here this afternoon.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Monica disappears, leaving only video feeds of ASL interpreter Benny and panelist Amita. End of image description.]

AMITA: Hi everyone. My name is Amita Swadhin. I use they/them pronouns. I'm calling in from Tongva territory in Los Angeles County and I am the founding director of Mirror Memoirs. Also very happy to be here and so happy this discussion is happening!

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Amita disappears. After a moment, it is replaced by video feed of moderator Kabzuag. End of image description.]

KABZUAG: Okay, so each one of you, starting with Isa again, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself and a little bit about your work?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of moderator Kabzuag is replaced by video feed of panelist Isa. End of image description.]

ISA: Absolutely, thank you. This is Isa again. You know, I'm a little uncomfortable with the term "expert," and so one of my colleagues describes themselves as a "possibilian," and I so like that word so I want to adopt that. Because what I've learned, I've learned from the people in the communities that I work with and that I serve.

So, grateful to be here, again. Thank you to The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation and this amazing town hall.

I guess I want to say that in Lowell, Massachusetts, where I live and work, we know that sexual violence is often used alongside other forms of violence by the military, by states, by systems, as a weapon of social control, and a weapon of war, to terrorize people into submission. So, when we talk about the intersections, when we talk about the oppressions that we live at and work at, we have to understand that sexual violence is a primary tool. That's why it's used in war, it's used in military violence. And when we talk about moving away from carceral approaches to ending sexual violence,

we have to understand the oftentimes, unfortunately, police are responsible for a great deal of sexual violence that we experience in our communities.

The other thing I think is important for us to remember is that sexism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia--they all help embed sexual violence in our communities. When we accept, when others accept these oppressive and harmful norms, especially about Black people, queer people, we help accept and normalize violence in our communities. And we uplift and are subject to white supremacist violence that we are living with in our communities. And I like what the framers said earlier, and I think you all are brilliant, is that sexual violence against Black, Indigenous and other people of color has a legacy. Has a legacy, a purposeful legacy in our country. It's done exactly what it has intended to do. Particularly around the hypersexualization of Black women that has been a piece of the intentions of this country of subjugating, particularly Black bodies, Black and Brown bodies. So I know our time is limited and we will have other opportunities to comment, but I just wanted to lead with that around the role and the power of rape and sexual assault in the oppression of our communities.

KABZUAG: Thank you Isa. Chhaya?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Isa disappears and is replaced by video feed of panelist Chhaya. End of image description]

CHHAYA: Hi, thank you everybody. So I hail tonight from the Bronx, New York. And thank you for the music, by the way, 20 years ago I think we put the Tracy Chapman song into our video “Eating Welfare,” so folks should take a look at that. It’s beautiful.

So I was resettled in the Bronx in the 1980s, and the Bronx happened to be--of the 62 counties in the Bronx, we are the most unhealthy borough. This is because of the long history of divestment, abandonment and structural racism that existed in the Bronx and the war on drugs. And folks know in the 1980s, the Bronx was literally burning because landlords were burning their buildings for insurance money.

And the Bronx is the city's poorest borough and it is the borough with the highest Southeast Asian population since our resettlement in the 1980s. And so combined with high employment rates, highest rates of diabetes, asthma and living in substandard housing, it really felt like in less than a month, the work to rebuild the Bronx became even more of a challenge for organizations and people who are already struggling to survive.

And so really, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the deep and structural racism that this community already faced. And just alone in the Bronx, we had over 4000 deaths.

[clattering in the background]

CHHAYA: And so for months and months and 24 hour sirens made the days and nights seem really, really long. And always seeing

ambulances in front of our buildings and our loved ones being carried away.

And it just so happened that the majority of essential workers were women who continued to have to go to work. Over what we quickly realized is that we are only essential until we are not essential. Right? So, I think Angela Rye says it best, that Black workers matter, because we are essential workers, whether it's to pick up your garbage or secure your building, but your survival does not matter."

And so every day, women who are in the workforce make up over 70% of the healthcare workforce are going back home to a single household--usually multigenerational--

[car honks]

CHHAYA: --with the probability of affecting their children, not knowing if they will or will not get infected with COVID-19.

And particularly for Southeast Asians, it meant very quickly that organizations like Mekong NYC and that women and femme and queer folks jumped into mutual aid, organizing care packages, community funds, and checking in with our members. And this is actually where we begin to hear stories of how unsafe it was to be home.

And as women and children are forced to stay in homes with their abusers, it also meant that also going to the hospital was not a safe

place--when you don't speak English or you don't speak the language. And we've heard many stories that our community members stayed home because they thought that they would probably die if they went to hospital because no one could speak their language so they would not get the care that they deserve. And actually that no one will actually be home with the children.

And I know for Cambodians who, particularly Southeast Asian women--our role is caretakers--this sense of chaos and uneasiness felt very familiar, and the despair felt familiar because of the genocide that we've lived through just 40 years ago. It meant that memories we kept away, deep within us that has shown up as PTSD and depression became more prevalent than ever. It brings up the missing narratives of what women endured during the genocide. And what was not uplifted in the tribunal processes of forced marriages, rape, and the start of the sex industry in Southeast Asia as it stand to day, where children (mostly girls) were disappeared and stolen in the refugee camps.

And it also recalls for us memories that we hide deep in our bodies. It recalls the deep grief and mourning and rituals that we could not afford for our loved ones. You know, one of the big things that was a challenge in our community is actually conducting funerals. And for us, the rituals of funerals is so important because we honor our loved ones. We honor people who have legacy, and who have raised us, and our ancestors. So having that part missing as part of our mourning has been such a tremendous pain in our community.

But I also want to say that it also recalls the strength and resilience and love for humanity that when people were on their way picking up children along the way as they fled over dead bodies and bombs into the refugee camps and eventually here in the US. And it is, right now, an opportunity to call in community conversation about violence, gender based violence that can no longer be a secret in our community.

KABZUAG: Thank you Chhaya.

CHHAYA: I can only imagine how many--Okay. [laughs nervously]

KABZUAG: [laughs] We will come back to you.

CHHAYA: It's all good. Thank you.

KABZUAG: Cayden?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne appears. Video feed of Chhaya disappears. Video feed of Cayden appears. Video feed of ASL interpreter Benny disappears. End of image description.]

CAYDEN: Hi everybody. I wanted to talk a little bit about the internet. [laughs] Because I think one of the things that the COVID-19 pandemic has really pointed out is--I mean, there are two things. One is how critical the web is now for our communities and for our families. But also how unequal access to the internet is,

still, in this country and how many young people also lack access to the internet.

18 Million Rising was--our sort of founding principle is really based in my own experience, growing up as a gender nonconforming person in the suburbs in the Midwest and feeling really alienated in quote unquote “real life” offline. And finding the community that I needed to survive online.

And that's not to say that the internet is not a difficult place to be in--on? In? Like, we know very well that the internet is also a place where a lot of harm happens, as well as a lot of healing. So the web is pretty--it is a space to be contested. Right? And I think our work is really based in the idea that we can and should contest the internet as social space and as a space for organizing.

So our work is about organizing on the internet for young Asian Americans, really thinking about the web as, like, a translocal place so that we can build shared stakes and a broad vision of solidarity.

Aspirationally, I think this is a way of thinking about the internet as a social space that is and can be totally lifesaving, but it's really complicated. Right? It's not natural--err, a natural outgrowth that the internet is not community. We have to build community online just the way we have to build community online.

And so the work we do is really about culture and belonging. One of the things that has come out of this period of uprising has been the call to defund police and I think that for a lot of online organizing groups, the most logical place to put our energy is in

policy fights. We're very used to mobilizing large numbers of folks to call on legislatures, state, local, and national governments, to change policy. And I think that's a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for abolition. Which is why we started a campaign called "Call me, not the cops." I think that my understanding of abolition is also about personal and social transformation, not just about changing of policies. And really importantly, we saw an opportunity to bring our community together around these sort of questions of: What *will* we do instead of calling the police? What are we *already* doing instead of calling the police?

I think this work is really important to do on the internet too because that's a place where we can reach a lot of folks who are beginning to be politicized, beginning to understand what abolition means, and put the tools into their hands to have those conversations with their families, with their housemates, with their neighbors.

Abolition, I think, is ultimately not a destination, but it's a process. Ruth Wilson Gilmore talks about how abolition is not the absence of police but rather the presence of alternatives. And that's what we're trying to figure out online. She also emphasizes that to get there, we need experiments everywhere and we need our wild imaginings. So I really appreciated Isa's framing of us not as experts.

KABZUAG: Thank you.

CAYDEN: If you're interested in getting involved and accessing these tools, we've got them all on our website. If you want to start with the pledge to not call the cops, it's

action.18mr.org/dontcallpolice--all one word--and pledge not to call the cops too. We'd be really excited to have you join us and hear what you think about the resources that we have to talk about your community and your family.

KABZUAG: Thank you Cayden. We're going to come back to that in depth. So thank you for bringing that up. Monica?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of Monica appears. After a few moments, video feed of Cayden disappears. End of image description.]

MONICA: Greetings everybody tonight. Thank you again to The People's Collective for having me on. I really want to focus my part of the conversation on the work that I do every single day at SisterSong and in partnership with all of my comrades in the reproductive justice movement, and to really lift up right now the importance of talking about reproductive justice and how this framework and this movement, in these particular times--within a pandemic as well as also as we are in the midst of uprisings in this country--why this particular work is extremely important right now.

So for those who don't know, Reproductive Justice is a framework that was developed and birthed by Black Women in 1994. It's also a movement that's led by BIPOC all across this country today.

And what I am so grateful for about this framework is that it is one that has always pushed for intersectionality, has always pushed for us to center human rights, to center the most marginalized, and to be on the frontlines of dismantling white supremacy in this country.

As we know that all that it breeds directly impacts our abilities to make our own decisions about our bodies, about our families, and about our lives.

And as a Black lesbian woman who grew up in the rural South and had no access to comprehensive sex education, who is also a product of the Black church (which has its own way of talking about sex and sexuality which is basically to not talk about it at all), as a survivor of sexual assault, as a person who believes in the power of the erotic, as a person that has always contemplated motherhood--and as I am approaching 41 now, I'm thinking about in even deeper ways... I found myself in this framework. And found safety, and found so much of what is important to me in my life every single day in this framework.

And, you know, Audrey Lord told us that we can't have single issue movements because we don't live single issue lives. And that's just real in this moment. So when we think about the way that COVID is showing up, it is absolutely putting a spotlight on the ways in which our reproductive lives are constantly under attack in this country. We can talk about that from slavery, to colonialism, to so many different ways in which we have seen reproductive oppression show up in this country. And in these days and times, it has not gotten any different. We think about how we define reproductive justice at SisterSong as the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, to have children, to not have children, to parent the children that we have in healthy and safe environments free from all forms of reproductive oppression and violence. We are absolutely talking about what is real in our lives right now.

We think about the fact that maternal mortality for Black women is on the rise in this country and has been for many years. And we think about the ways in which racism shows up in that. And we then put a global pandemic on top of that--those who are carrying children right now are definitely having to look at this and some very serious ways, in terms of our health and access. We think about the fact that for the past 10 years or more, that we have seen hundreds of bills run through our state Houses that are pushing abortion access further out of reach for our communities. And when we think about how we then connect that to a global pandemic and to uprisings, we can see deep connections there, and how difficult it has been for our people to be able to get access to what they need to be able to control their own fertility.

We think about the chipping away of healthcare access in this country, and how Medicaid expansion is under attack in this country. And then when we think about a global pandemic on top of that, then we can just see the continued connections there that are making it difficult for our folks to survive and thrive. And that is what reproductive justice puts at the front.

When we think about the children that we have seen slain in the streets, when we think about the parents who are having to deal with the fact that they're no longer holding onto their children--whether they are 18 years old, as Tamir Rice would've been this week, or a grown man like George Floyd--then we are looking at reproductive injustice in this country.

KABZUAG: Thank you.

MONICA: When we think about the fact that we are still waiting for Breanna Davis's murderers to be held accountable, but her ability

to be able to live into her destiny was taken away from her too soon, we are talking about reproductive injustice.

So I'm excited to continue to get in the conversation with you all, but that is what brings me to the conversation today and what I hope that we can continue to talk about as a group.

KABZUAG: Yes, thank you Monica. We have several other questions that we want to dive into, so...Um, Amita?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Monica disappears. After a moment, video feed of panelist Amita appears. End of image description]

KABZUAG: We want to hear from Amita first, and then we'll dive into our conversation.

AMITA: Thank you. I'm going to start my timer because there's so much to say and I'm just really feeling what all of my co-panelists have shared with us. I think I want to start by saying a lot of the work that I'm doing now in Mirror Memoirs stems from my own deep relationships over the last 10 to 15 years with Black, Latinx, and Indigenous transgender and Two-Spirit people, from whom I have learned so much--even about my own gender identity. I identify as a nonbinary person who is very cis-passing. But we've done a lot of work as a community together in Mirror Memoirs' base around reclaiming our childhood narratives. And we're all survivors of childhood rape and sexual assault, doing healing, justice, and organizing work together. So it feels important to me to name the traditions that I'm moving in and the communities that I'm accountable to.

I also want to name that in this moment, we are all simultaneously, worldwide living through THREE global pandemics. There's been a lot of discussion in the media and in the organizing world about COVID-19 and white supremacy and global anti-Blackness. I think the third global pandemic that also was pre-existing before COVID is the global pandemic of childhood rape. And for my communities and for myself, we are all people who were already before COVID simultaneously navigating survival within the dual pandemics of white supremacy & anti-Blackness and childhood rape.

And within this new, more stressed reality with the virus, Asian Americans specifically must respond to the needs of our own families and communities while simultaneously de-centering ourselves on a national level. And for myself and my colleagues and peers who are also female-assigned and/or queer or trans people, and especially those of us who are second generation, third generation, fourth generation, not directly immigrants ourselves but people who were born here in the United States, I really think we have to contend with what it means that we have all found a level of liberation from the violence generational patriarchy that is indigenous to so many of our homelands--a level of choice too many of our ancestors did not have. That our family members who emigrated here *gave us* in their choice to leave those homelands. But we have to acknowledge that this level of choice and freedom in how we control our destiny with more choice than our ancestors had comes from being settlers in a country that has been founded and is still functioning thanks to the ongoing legacy of genocide and the enslavement of both Black and Indigenous people.

And I think for those who came as refugees in various Asian American diasporas, I've been spending a lot of time lately thinking about what it would mean if we all understood that if most Black

Americans and Indigenous people were to leave this country right now, especially those who are transgender or Two-Spirit, many would actually meet the conditions that qualify one as a refugee on this planet.

We also have to contend with the interrelation of child sexual abuse with the constructions of the nation-state, of race, of gender, and ability. And we need to rethink the dominant and traditional frames of "gender-based violence." We have traditionally been thought to think about violence as a unidirectional arrow of harm from cisgender men toward cisgender women and girls, period. But in reality, the arrows of harm move in all directions.

And so, what does this mean on a movement-building level? For me, it means that we hold the liberation of Black transgender people and Indigenous Two-Spirit people as our North Star. And I really want to call in the work in a beautiful example that Kabzuag is doing with Freedom Inc as one example of how Asian American people can move in solidarity and deep relationship with Black people and also a right relationship with Indigenous people and the land that we're on. We aspire toward that model in Mirror Memoirs as well.

I think an intersectional and abolitionist approach is necessary. And we have to expand the notion of "abolition" when we're talking about child sexual abuse survivors and our welfare to be infused with disability justice, and to realize that psychiatric institutions are also an arm of the prison system. And so, when we say "defund the police and fund mental health work," I want us all to be really creative about what we envision it will take our people to be well. I

think a lot in this project of Mirror Memoirs about reclaiming land collectively in projects that are led by Black and Indigenous survivors. Right? And that invite the rest of us to live in communities that are about caring for each other--

KABZUAG: Thank you Amita.

AMITA: --that are anti-capitalist, that are about sharing resources.

And just to close, to build on what Monica was saying when we think about reproductive justice, I think about how even now during the COVID pandemic, in the weeks leading up to the pandemic, there were at least 12 states that were trying to pass bills to criminalize transgender youth seeking medical care and to criminalize the doctors that sought to help those trans youths. So absolutely agree with what Monica said, body autonomy is key to all of our liberation--especially when were thinking about trans people and Two-Spirit people who have survived rape and sexual assault beginning in childhood. So thank you again, and I'm looking forward to the questions.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Amita is replaced by video feed of moderator Kabzuag. End of image description]

KABZUAG: Thank you so much. I'm really enjoying myself and learning so much and it's been really hard to cut you all off! [laughs] And so, I do appreciate that.

Our first question, which is going to go to all of our panelists, is around...

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Monica appears. End of image description.]

KABZUAG: ...I know--I agree with you I think, Amita, we have definitely been surviving several pandemics, prior to even the COVID pandemic.

This question is very particular to the COVID pandemic. And we want to know: How has the COVID pandemic shed light on the dehumanization and violent ways Black folks and other folks of color have not been able to have their basic human needs met?

And so, I want to start with Monica.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Monica appears. After a moment, video feed of moderator Kabzuag disappears. End of image description.]

MONICA: Yeah. Um...It has been really hard for the folks in our communities. Right? I think one of the ways that it showed up really major for us as an organization--well, a couple of ways. The first is that we started to get a lot of our community people reach in and say, "Hey, this is hard. This is hitting people not only in a scary way from a health perspective, but economically as well." And needing to be able to take care of their families and make sure their babies and their families, their children, had what they needed.

So we had to respond to that need as an organization and work in partnership with our other organizational partners in Georgia and other states that we're in. Because folks were just not able to meet their basic needs of getting the diapers they needed, of making sure that there was food available for their children. So, their children are home all day long now, and so how does that really start to impact the way that folks are being able to take care of their families. That was one of the first major ways that we saw this coming up for folks.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feeds of panelists Isa and Amita and moderator Kabzuag appear. After a few moments, video feed of panelist Cayden also appears. End of image description.]

MONICA: And then it started to get deeper, in terms of how do we make sure that those who are pregnant right now are able to get access to the care that they need--the prenatal care that they need--to be able to have healthy pregnancies. We know that maternal mortality, infant mortality--in particular with Black folks--is on the rise in this country, and has been for quite some time. And so we've been having to contend with that. How do we move our birth workers in to be able to support those who are pregnant to make sure that they're having the healthiest pregnancies possible and also having healthy babies?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Chhaya appears. End of image description.]

And then for folks who are not wanting to have babies right now, and wanting to be able to have access to abortions in this country. Again, not only from a policy perspective of seeing these abortion bans coming in and sweeping across our nation, but also just being able to make sure the folks have access to the funds to be able to get them, to be able to get to their appointments to be able to get them. There's so many barriers that have been put into place.

And so, with COVID being what it is, that forces us to stay inside, that forces us to socially distance and to stay away, all of these different things have come to the surface for our folks in terms of them being able to take care of their families AND for them being able to control their own fertility, is just a couple of examples of what's shown up for us every single day that we're doing this work.

KABZUAG: Thank you! Amita?

AMITA: Same question, yes?

KABZUAG: Yes.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of panelist Monica disappears. End of image description]

AMITA: I think that in the Mirror Memoirs base, the first thing that myself and one of our board members did when COVID hit was to start a mutual aid fund. Because Black, Indigenous, and other people of color who are transgender or Two-Spirit have been left

out of the formal employment economy, due to the intersection of transphobia and white supremacy, for too long.

The arc of violence often begins in childhood for trans and Two-Spirit people of color, but continues into adulthood. And so that could look like being forced out of high school because of violence there, not having access to higher education. Definitely not having blood family support--so much violence from the blood family. That is then, if you choose to run away from home as a young person, perhaps you engage in survival sex work as a young person, then you're opening yourself to police violence. Not that you're inviting the police violence, but that you're moving in a criminalized economy, you're living on the streets, right?

And so our community was already under duress by violence from the state long before COVID. What it has meant to be sheltering in place for a lot of people--well, if you're depending on survival sex work to pay your bills, how are you doing sex work during a global pandemic? Right? Especially, then, when the curfew hit and you literally could not leave your house without having to interact with the police. And if the state is saying that you should depend on your blood family or your neighbors to survive this time--well, for transgender people of color, it's usually your blood family and your neighbors who are a source of violence, either already that's happened or a threat of constant violence.

So the mutual aid fund was very important, and I will just name that unfortunately, our non-profit was not set up well to receive money that was not intended for staff members. So we had to partner with

a separate non-profit. We have a fiscal sponsor for Mirror Memoirs. We had to partner with a 501(c)(3) in Colorado named “Youth Seen” that is led by a Black nonbinary queer person that was able to funnel money from our GoFundMe and distribute it throughout the country. It was a very complex model that we had to figure out because most non-profits are not set up to actually just put money into people’s pockets. And that is a huge problem for transgender people of color, Two-Spirit people of color, where they don’t just need a non-profit that has a staff, that’s funded to provide services. They need money in their checkbooks right now, in their banking accounts right now, to be able to survive at this moment.

So I just really want to encourage anyone listening to this webinar to rethink, during this pandemic, how you are redistributing your money to really be in solidarity with, particularly, Black trans people, who are calling for Venmo accounts, Paypal accounts, Cash Apps, to actually be supported at this time.

KABZUAG: Thank you. Cayden?

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreter Suzanne’s camera turns off, displaying a black screen with the white text: ASL Interpreter Suzanne. After several moments, video feed of ASL interpreter Benny is displayed, taking up the entire screen. End of image description.]

CAYDEN: Yeah I think...I mentioned in my introductory remarks this challenge around infrastructure. And I think one of the things that COVID has really pointed up for a lot of folks working with, on,

or about the internet, is the fact that internet access in this country is still incredibly unevenly distributed.

The thing that we've been hearing and seeing a lot from folks is that youth, especially, are super impacted--especially thinking about going back to school, where online instruction is becoming the norm. The problem is: a lot of young people don't have the internet at home! So how are they meant to complete assignments, to attend classes--to keep up with, basically, what they're expected to keep up with to participate--if they don't have access to the internet at home?

And I think there are a lot of layers to this that are about the overall fight for internet access and the fact that the internet is no longer a luxury--it's actually critical infrastructure for our families and for our livelihoods. The question of who is able to work at home, who has a job that allows them to work at home, is also related to what Amita was saying. Being able to do your work on the Internet is, itself, a really big marker of the divide between folks who have access and folks who do not.

And I think for us and for our work, one of the things we worry about is: who is left out of the conversation? And who is left out of this move to build belonging because they don't have access to the Internet? AND: how do we pull those people back in? There's not a simple answer to that question.

KABZUAG: Thank you. Isa? And then Chhaya.

ISA: Thanks! I'm so excited and I just want to give a shoutout to all my co-panelists for your absolute brilliance. I'm over here snapping, like, "yass, that's right, I want to have more conversations!" [laughs] So, in this platform, as you mentioned Cayden, it can be difficult to have those real, genuine conversations. But you all are brilliant and I just want to say that.

I guess I want to answer this question by sort of saying, about the humanization of Black folks: were we ever meant to be seen as human in this country? That's the question I want to ask. Was there ever any intention to see us in our wholeness, in our humanness, and get us what we need to survive? So as others have said, COVID is just an overlay on the intentionality of this country in destroying Black bodies in particular, Black and Brown bodies. So I guess that's one response to that.

And for me, as a Black lesbian who's leading a community-based organization, caught up in the non-profit industrial complex, with a multi-racial staff of many identities and backgrounds--you know, we are seated in a community that has the second-largest Southeast Asian population outside of California. And the folks we're working with when all of this happened said exactly what you were talking about, Cayden. We had family members saying, "My kids are expected to go totally online and do their schoolwork that way? Not only do we not have tablets, we don't have internet! I can't afford to pay what it's going to take for the broadband in order for me to do this for my kids."

Testing? When we have so many folks with documentation issues, with immigration issues, who have been told that, “You can’t be tested.” Right? Testing was requiring IDs and documentation in our community. So you couldn’t just show up and get tested. So it became a matter of access. It became a matter of barriers--insurmountable barriers to survival. And that was the real experience.

So, you’re right, Amita, in that our role sometimes as non-profits in this with 501(c)(3) status is to share resources.

KABZUAG: Thank you. Chhaya?

CHHAYA: [ice cream truck music sounds in the background] Yeah, I mean I think folks--and you can hear the ice cream truck. Can’t be in the Bronx without hearing the ice cream truck. Apologies for that.

But, you know, one of the things that we quickly learned is that...our life doesn’t matter. We have to risk our own lives to make sure the rich and the wealthy get to live the same way that they were living. And so, we were very alarmed that there were no testing sites in the Bronx--there was one--and that even essential workers weren’t getting tested. And so, for our community, most of our community members were nail salon owners and workers. And so...even people coming and saying, “Hey, I want to get my nails done...” like, the idea that we can’t be poor, we can’t be suffering through the same kind of pandemic you have, but we still have to serve you? It’s what I’ve learned that this country--property over people, right?

And one of the things it uplifted for us also is this thing that came up for us as “survivors and warriors” and “claiming and honoring,” and “healing and organizing,” everything that we do every single day of our lives. That this pandemic made our labor and our work most invisible. And that we have to do all of that all at the same time, while trying to feed our families, while trying to deal with intergenerational trauma that people talk about, and just trying to make ends meet. And I think that this pandemic only makes our suffering greater but I’m also hopeful that it also brings some clarity to the dehumanization of our people--especially Black people. You know, we have one of the highest diabetes rates in the city. And so for us, deciding, “Should I take my medicine or go to get tested?” These are just impossible asks for people who are already poor. And so we’re asked to either live or die by these little choices that wealthy people get to make every day, that we don’t get to make. And so that’s one of the things that I think exacerbated our suffering here in the Bronx.

And the mutual aid also--we came in quickly. We found people who couldn’t afford their rents anymore, and the \$500 we were giving to people was helping pay half of their rents. And you know, people who were sex workers can no longer work. People in nail salons can no longer work. People in factories can no longer work. So we still have a lot to see of what that impact is, but I know that it’s going to last for generations.

KABZUAG: Thank you. So we’re moving on to the next question. I’m going to wait for a slide.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share displays a slide. Video feed of ASL interpreter Benny is reduced to the upper right corner of the screen.]

New slide displays black text against a white background. The title reads: Movement for Black Lives-Defund The Police. Below that is a black box with white text inside that reads: VALUES & VISION.

Below that is text that reads: For much of U.S. history, law enforcement meant implementing laws that were explicitly designed to subjugate Black people and enforce white supremacy. That's why Black people, along with hundreds of thousands of others, are calling for city, state, and federal governments to abolish policing as we currently understand it. We must divest from excessive, brutal, and discriminatory policing and invest in a vision of community safety that works for everyone, not just an elite few.

Beside that paragraph is a black and yellow icon featuring and two silhouettes of people, and one silhouette of a person wearing a police hat. Above the three people is a dollar sign. An arrow points from the police officer up to the arrow, indicating that money is being taken away from the police. An arrow points down from the arrow to each person, indicating that money is being given to the community.

We know the safest communities in America are places that don't center the police. What we're looking for already exists, and we already know it works. We need look no further than

neighborhoods where the wealthy, well-connected, and well-off live, or anywhere there is easy access to living wages, healthcare, quality public education and freedom from police terror.

Beside that paragraph is another black and yellow icon featuring silhouettes of people with two arrows drawn in a circle around the silhouettes (reminiscent of the recycling symbol), indicating that resources and care are circulating throughout the community. End of image description.]

KABZUAG: As you all know, this is a historic moment. All the things that we never thought could happen--which is defunding the police, and re-imagining what security and safety could look like for us. As you all can see, in Minneapolis that's happening. And people are pushing throughout the US to defund the police and to invest in people and life-saving services. And so right now, Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), one of their values and demands is to defund the police.

And as you all know, in this field--in the gender justice, queer justice, and disability justice field and movement--we've always been used as the reasons why we need policing, the reasons why we need health and safety and security. People are always asking, when they want to talk and they're against abolition, they're always saying, "What about the rapists? And what about the pedophiles? And what about the people causing harm?"

And so I think this is such a unique moment for us in this movement to share some of the things that we've learned. And so

the next question for you all is: In all of what I just said, one of the core demands is this. How do you define what “Defund the Police” means to you all? And then I'm going to add the additional question to that: What does #DefundThePolice mean to you and how does it relate to your work?

And then also, if you can re-imagine--you all know that we've put in place alternatives. This is how we kept our community safe for all these years. We have values, and we have alternatives. What are some of those alternatives? And how do you see us leveraging some of those resources if we do defund the police, and putting them into lifesaving programs that we have? Keeping in mind, centering survivors and impacted people.

So this is a two-part question: what is the definition of “defunding the police” and what does that mean to you and your work? And then if you could re-envision where that money could go, what are some things that you think are innovative that people are already doing?

Isa, you get to go first.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share stops displaying a slide. The video feed of ASL interpreter Benny takes up the entire screen. End of image description.]

ISA: [playfully sarcastic] Oh thanks Kabzuag, just toss me the easy question, why don't ya? Nice! [laughs]

That is *the* question we're asking ourselves right now. I think first and foremost for me in the anti-violence movement, I would say, is really to demilitarize our own movement, our own silos. Right? And it also means that the mainstream, especially the domestic violence, sexual assault, gender-based violence movement has got to get out of bed with the police and the carceral system. Whether it's federal Violence Against Women Act dollars or child welfare dollars, right? As a system, as a domestic violence and child welfare system, we've gotten in bed with, we've gotten behind--hiding behind. Like you said, people use "what about the rapists?" Well guess what? The police in my community are the rapists! When we talk to survivors, when our folks answer hotline, it's trans women of color, it's queer and trans youth who are afraid to call the police, because they know what awaits on the end of that call.

The other one is the opioid crisis in my community. Folks struggling with addiction who say, "I can't call the police," because what our folks are told is: "No one's going to believe you. You can call the police, you can say you were raped, but no one's going to believe you."

So I think for us, in order to move to more solutions, we have to pull the covers back, and get out of bed, and end our relationship with the carceral system and the white supremacy of that system. I think that, as my brilliant colleagues have said, there are so many alternatives that funds could be reused and repurposed for, that are about mutual aid. You know, before there was a domestic violence and sexual violence movement there were Black women helping

Black women. Right? There was Rosa Parks--before she sat on a bus, she was an anti-rape advocate, documenting the experiences of black women.

So those are the initiatives that I would fund immediately, today. And as Amita said earlier, we have to move those funds away from these systems and our industry and into the hands of communities who need them.

[silence]

KABZUAG: We lost you, Isa.

ISA: I'm still here, but did I freeze? I was done.

KABZUAG: Yes.

ISA: I was just talking to myself at that point.

KABZUAG: [laughs] Okay! I'm sorry we lost that last point. Monica, you're next.

MONICA: Yeah, just to build on what Isa was saying, the systems were never designed to protect us. [Wry laugh] At all! They were not designed to care for us and give us what we need to be able to survive and thrive in our communities. So when we say "defund the police," we mean exactly that. There's no other fancier way that I can say that, other than "take the money away from the police."
[Laughs] To abolish these systems that continue to inflict harm on

our people. And at the same time, that means that money could then be directed to so many of the services that we know our communities need. To healthcare centers in our own communities. How can we also be making sure that our communities have access to abortion care? We could be putting that money into abortion funds. Have we thought about that? Have we thought about being able to create the different types of programs needed for our young children to have access to comprehensive sex education? We could think about the money that could go into maternal health care in our communities, and across our states, and across our nation. There's so much that actually need to be uplifted and supported right now. So all of that is the most important thing. To fund birth workers to be able to do work for pregnant people in our communities, and that not having to fall on other systems. So that's where we could put the money.

But I also think it's important for us to say, "yes, let's defund, let's abolish," and at the same time, let's also realize that we are traumatized people in this country because of all of these systems of oppression. And so violence is still, unfortunately, something that we're going to have to contend with in our own communities as well. And so how do we not say that these conversations are separate from each other, but they are conversations that need to be happening in tandem with each other?

And so those who are working against the systems are also those who need to be in these conversations with folks who are coming from a trauma-informed place, who have been working with survivors and working at these intersections for years. Like, we all

have to be at the same table *together* in these conversations. Because, again I am a person who is experienced sexual assault in this country, and I want my people to be protected, absolutely. I absolutely want that. And I know that the systems that are created are not those systems to do that.

But how are we building those bridges in our own communities to build the trust back up in our own communities? So that we know who we are in our communities. How often are we talking to our neighbors? Do we know the folks down the street? Are we creating opportunities in our communities for us to be able to do that work with each other? That's the kind of stuff that we have to do, so that we are moving both of these things down the road at the exact same time.

And we have such beautiful models of that! When I think about the "grand midwives" and the "granny midwives," they knew their communities! They knew how to be in communication with folks. They knew how to provide care. We've always controlled our own fertility. We have so many models of how we historically, across different social justice movements and all of that, taking care of our communities. How do we get that education back to our people to let folks know that this ain't new to us? That we've always known how to do this for ourselves? And the only thing we have to do is rebuild trust with each other to be able to hold these things again for ourselves. And the more representations that we have of that, at the smallest level to the biggest level, the more we build up our strength to be able to know that we can actually do that!

KABZUAG: Thank you so much. Chhaya, Cayden, and Amita, you each have a minute! [verge of nervous laughter]

CHHAYA: I'll just say ditto to everything! I mean, Monica you hit on the point. As you were just speaking, I was just like, "Yes." Because for us, for Southeast Asian refugees now that are being deported--people who came when babies, like me as a refugee at seven years old, are being deported, because of the criminal justice system, the deportation system. Defunding NYPD means defunding ICE for us. Right? And taking away the system that jails. And so when we're thinking about ending deportation, we know that it is a pipeline, we know that it's part of that system. And we know that when we're calling to defund ICE, we're also calling to the same system that supports are people, that kills and incarcerates Black and Indigenous people of color.

So yeah, I will pass it to Cayden, I know that we're running out of time too.

CAYDEN: Yeah no, same. I also want to just echo that fire from Monica.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Video feed of ASL interpreter Benny is replaced by video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne. End of image description.]

CAYDEN: Because I think that the thing that feels really important to me about this moment, and the political possibility that this

moment has opened for us, is that people are open to imagining what safety means in new ways. And that's so powerful!

I think it is really the one thing over the past month that has really buoyed my spirit--is seeing people who five years ago were afraid to say "Black Lives Matter" in public, engaging in imagining what safety beyond prisons and policing looks like, and really having that conversation with *their* people. And I think that's very profound. We're in a very special time, a special opening to be having these conversations.

Amita?

AMITA: Thank you. Ditto to especially what Isa said and what Monica said. You know, Mirror Memoirs has been an abolitionist project since the beginning.

And very much in the tradition of Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P Johnson, who, Sylvia especially, was outspoken about being a survivor of rape by the police--multiple rates by the police. She was also outspoken about being a childhood rape survivor and having run away from home to escape family violence. And in their work with Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), they pooled their income as sex workers--Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera--and rented a tenement house in Manhattan and let trans youth of color stay there for free, in the hopes to spare them the burden of having to do survival sex work and face rape by the police.

So, our communities have been taking care of ourselves, completely separate from the state, for a really long time. And I think that we need to make sure our people, and I'm specifically thinking about the Black, Latinx, and Indigenous trans people in Mirror Memoirs--it's an incredibly housing insecure community that I am accountable to.

And if you abolish the police and take the funds that we used in the police--and let's be clear and expand the abolition vision to the military as well. You know, Congresswoman Barbara Lee's bill proposed, it doesn't entirely abolish the military, but it does strip \$350 billion--this is *our* money as taxpayers! Think about what reparations could look like. You know, I think about Nicole Hannah Jones' article in the New York Times, calling for reparations. Like, we have the money, if we defund the police and strip away money from the military, to make sure the people who need homes have been. And once you are housing secure, you can actually start to focus on healing beyond just survival mode. And I very much want that for my people.

KABZUAG: Thank you so much. I wish we had more time to dig deeper into this conversation. I hope that as Asian Americans and Black leaders in this movement, we continue to dialogue and we continue to learn from each other and learn about examples of how we've been keeping our communities safe, and how we've been caretaking for our communities. As whichever pandemic were trying to survive, that we as queer, femme, masc, women and girls, folks across the gender spectrum, have been taking care of each other for centuries. And we know how to keep our communities

safe. So I want to thank you all for joining me in this conversation. And I hope that the listeners have learned a lot from you all, just like I've learned a lot. I'm going to hand it over to Kandi now.

KANDI: Hello. Wow, thank you Kabzuag for moderating such an important conversation. And thank you to all of our panelists for sharing with us so much wisdom. I do have to add that not only are we learning here on the forefront of what everyone's sharing, we're also learning in how we organize and coordinate with you all. So I appreciate all the offerings you've been giving and sharing over the years, as well as so much gratitude for sharing these helpful tools, knowledge, and resources with us. Now, I am going to turn over to Greg who will lead us into another poll.

GREGORY: [audio distorted] Awesome! Well, thank you so much again for that panel. I learned a lot and I think these are the kinds of conversations we need to be having in this moment, as we continue to build transformative cross racial solidarity. [clears throat]

One of our goals as The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation is to learn more about the folks who are watching and get a better sense of where folks are at. And so our next poll is around domestic violence and sexual assault. This is one where you can check all that apply.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share displays a slide. Video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne is reduced to the upper right corner of the screen. New slide is black text on a white background. The text

reads: Poll 2. Please check all that apply: (Drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch or Twitter). The options listed read:

- I am survivor of domestic violence/sexual assault.
- I know a survivor of domestic violence/saxual assault.
- I am aware of domestic violence/sexual assault resources in my community.
- I feel comfortable having a conversation with a family member or loved one about domestic violence/sexual assault.

End of image description.]

GREGORY: But we're curious for the following. Also if you're watching from Facebook, Twitch, or Twitter feel free to put in the comments or in the chat below.

But the question here is if you are a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault, if you know a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault, and if you are aware of domestic violence and sexual assault resources in your community, and if you feel comfortable having a conversation with a family member or loved one about domestic violence or sexual assault.

So we'll give it a little bit of time for folks to complete it right now. But please continue to fill it out and also include, again, if you're watching on any of the live streams that are going on right now, feel free to put in the comments on Facebook, Twitch, or even Twitter and include the hashtags #OnTheFrontlines and #BuildingSolidarity.

We're a little over 60% now, so we'll give it a minute or so to let more folks be able to join the poll. We appreciate folks sharing and being in community with us. And the poll will help us inform some of the follow-up and some of the additional things that will be helpful that we will be able to provide on our website.

We're at 70% now, so I'll give it another 30 seconds to let more folks complete the poll.

Awesome. And then I also will just ask, for the panelists, I know that there were some questions that folks weren't necessarily able to get to, to answer. So if you're able to share some additional thoughts in the Q&A or in the chat for some of the questions, we also welcome y'all's engagement in the Q&A or chat as well. In case you have some thoughts you'd like to share with folks. And there's so much knowledge!

Alright, so just 10 more seconds and then we're going to close it. But it looks like we're almost at 80% of folks filling out the poll.

Alright so I'm going to go ahead and end the poll now, and I'm going to share the results now.

It looks like of the folks who are watching on Zoom, 58% are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. Let's sit with that for a little bit. Thank you all for sharing and being willing to share that with the group. 85% know a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault. 71% are aware of domestic violence or sexual

assault resources in their community. And 56% feel comfortable having a conversation with a family member or loved one.

So, either folks know or are a survivor--something to be mindful of as we continue to navigate these conversations. And thank you to folks for sharing.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with black text. The title reads: Speaker. Beside a photograph of the next speaker is the text: Lydia X.Z. Brown. Disability Justice Advocate and Organizer. (they/them/theirs). Twitter: @autisticchoya. End of image description.]

KANDI: Thank you for that poll. And thank you everyone. Now we would like to introduce our phenomenal closing speaker, Lydia X.Z. Brown.

[clicking]

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share stops displaying a slide and video feed of ASL interpreter Suzanne takes up the entire screen. End of image description.]

LYDIA: This is Lydia. My video is actually on mute and one of the hosts will have to turn my video on.

First I want to thank our panelists and our opening speaker for their words of wisdom, their brilliance, and their offerings. I deeply appreciated the words that you've shared and the work that each of you are doing toward liberation and freedom.

I want to speak about the importance of disability justice in our movements. There are two ways that disability justice writ large can offer us a path toward what liberation, freedom, justice, and healing might look like. The first is inside our own movements. Within our movements, if we do not practice a politic of disability justice, then we are not actually caring for, supporting, or working to amplify the work that one another are doing. Disability justice requires us both to emphasize and honor our needs for care and for rest as humans not machines, against the tide of capitalism and white supremacy that teaches us that we are simply our production. Not just our production itself, but the means by which we produce, what it is we produce, the manner in which we produce, and for whose benefit and to whose detriment we produce.

We operate within systems, within processes, that teach us that we have to constantly prove that we deserve to be treated as human. That we deserve to be considered human beings. And that if we cannot sufficiently prove it or prove it for sufficiently long a time, then it is acceptable for our lives to be destroyed and for our existence to be stamped out. And in our movements, we so often end up replicating those same violent structures. Whether it is in, as Amita talked about earlier, our acceptance of certain forms of violence in the forms of carceral spaces that target people on the basis of disability in a systemic way. Or whether it is in the ways that we approach one another. We spoke to this earlier on the panel as well.

When we speak about what a response to sexual is, and recognizing that those who perpetrate sexual violence are often those that the state has invested power into--it is the police and it is the prisons that are the greatest sources of sexual violence in our society. And that addressing that sexual violence does not require a carceral response to it. That incarcerating killer cops were prison guards is not actually working towards abolition or transformative justice.

Disability justice also asks us to treat with care how we hold one another, the expectations we place on one another to prove that we are sufficiently doing activism or organizing. Did you show up to enough protests? Did you organize enough events? Did you write enough public statements? Did you create enough cultural projects? Were you taking enough phone calls? And if you weren't doing those things, then are you now suddenly insufficient or inadequate because you are not *productive*?

We internalize and we replicate capitalist demands on ourselves. We internalize and we replicate white supremacist power structures and cultural norms on ourselves. And all of those are rooted in, dependent on, and produced by, and productions of: ableism. What that is, is "ableism" is a system of values about whose body-minds are valuable, and worthy, and desirable. Whose body-minds are healthy, functional, whole, sane, strong. Whose body-minds deserve to be counted, and whose body-minds are instead expendable, disposable, and destroyable.

Ableism teaches us that even within marginalized communities, and even for those of us at the margins of the margins, our value and our worth is determined by our productivity, by our perceived intelligence, by our behavior, by our functioning, by our appearance. Disability justice as a practice, as a set of theories, as a set of principles, was co-created by disabled queer and trans Black, Indigenous, and other negatively racialized people of color.

Disability justice teaches us that in order to end white supremacy, we have to end ableism, and in order to end ableism we have to end capitalism, that in order to end capitalism, we have to end settler-colonialism. That absolutely none of these systems is separable. And that also relates to how we relate to our own body-minds and how we relate to the body-minds of those in our own movements and communities.

That in turn teaches us how disability justice must be a guiding principle and practice for all of our organizing work. We heard, I think it was from Monica who was speaking earlier, so forgive me if I'm not recalling correctly, on what the nonprofit industrial complex does to movements. By over-relying on capitalist destructive systems of white supremacy in order to perpetuate itself, that is, nonprofits do not have a reason to exist but for the violent conditions under which they operate, and that require them to persist to receive grant money, to pay employees. And that in turn, prey upon the ways in which our political economy connects housing, and healthcare, and access to food to employment.

The nonprofit industrial complex *deprives* resources from communities. It *extracts* resources from communities. It *exploits* community organizers, and community leaders, and community builders. And one of the most insidious and vicious ways that it does that is by directly *removing* resources from communities while claiming to quote unquote “empower” communities.

For me, speaking a bit personally as a transracially and transnationally adopted person from China, brought to the US by white parents and white family, what that means is I was treated as an object of a white supremacist worldview. That is, not just the idea of white saviorism in the individual context (that I needed white people to “save me” or “rescue me” from my own culture, my own country, my own community), but also that civilizationally, the ableist logic of settler-colonialism and imperialism teaches us that nations and communities in the global South, predominantly those of negatively racialized peoples, *require* the civilization and democratizing by white Western global North countries.

This is actually a deeply and profoundly ableist logic, and disability justice helps us to understand that. It helps us to make the connections between both our personal lives and the ways in which oppression and marginalization target us, target our body-minds, and teach us to fear and be ashamed of the ways in which our own body-minds operate, are precarious, are fragile, lose functioning, and are fluid in their own capacities throughout our lifetimes--but also the ways in which our movements and our communities are constantly subjected to dominating and oppressive powers and

forces systematically, systemically, structurally, and institutionally. Globally and at home.

Disability justice helps us the connections between psychiatric violence and police violence. It helps us understand the ways in which schools are part of carceral systems. It helps us understand the ways in which both nonprofit organizations that claim to empower communities, and academic institutions that claim to democratize knowledge, actually often do the exact opposite. And that it is often precisely those organizations that situate themselves as the most progressive and even the most radical or revolutionary, that are often the most harmful, violent, dangerous, and deadly. Precisely *because* they can operate with a politic of saying all of the right words, putting forward all of the right terminology, the right position statements--and yet at the same time *destroy* the lives of the multipli-marginalized people on whom they build their work and reputation.

Disability justice offers us not only a path to think about what liberation looks like in a world that is free of ableism, and white supremacy, and capitalism, but also what our individual lives might look like if we can breathe freely.

I often ask people to imagine what justice feels like. Or what freedom tastes like. And the reality is that almost none of us have ever actually experienced freedom or justice. In part because we are so often denied and deprived of opportunities to receive rest, and care, and love. Other folks who do disability justice work, who teach us, people like Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, like

Talila Lewis, like Kay Ulanday Barrett, or Patricia Berne--they all teach us that disability justice is a practice and a politic of active love. That is, that disability justice work, that solidarity work, *requires* us to radically love and care for one another--very similar words to the charge that we receive from Assata Shakur: that we must love and protect one another.

To love one another means to do the hard work of access. It means to recognize and understand that access is neither a checklist nor something you can do as window dressing to claim that you are progressive, but in fact it is an ongoing practice of care and of justice. That there is no cost or labor amount at which a person's access becomes optional or too inconvenient or burdensome. It is affirming that for each one of us, what contribution looks like can sometimes be our simple existence.

It's a slogan that we see on T-shirts and banners that "existence is resistance." But we so often fail to actually practice that because we expect organizers and activists to *prove* that they are actually *contributing*--that is to use the very same language as the capitalist settler-colonial state, that we "contribute" through our labor, through our production, in order to be counted as sufficient or valid enough workers in movements for liberation or justice. And I will tell you: that is not what liberation or justice feels like to me.

Disability justice helps illustrate and make clear the ways in which we are simultaneously reminded that care and rest and love are necessary for us to grow and thrive as human beings. That it is not simply our *survival* that we need to be fighting for, but the ability to

one day--perhaps if we are lucky enough to build it and sustain it in our lifetimes--the ability to live freely every day. Not *just* survival.

But also the ways in which ableism and cisheteropatriarchy, misogyny, transmisogyny, anti-Blackness globally, settler-colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism--all these violent systems of domination and depression--actively deny and deprive us, especially those of us at the margins of the margins, the ability to ever rest. Because for so many of us who are here on this call tonight, we are the ones who are people treated as resources for whole communities. We are the ones who take those 4 AM calls from people in crisis every single night. We are the ones whose inboxes are inundated by messages crying for help. We are the ones single-handedly creating whole programs, and projects, and cultural works, making it out of whole cloth. Because nobody else will do it for our own communities.

One of the projects that I work on, The Fund For Community Reparations For Autistic People Of Color's Interdependence, Survival, And Empowerment, was born out of the reality that autistic people of color, as disabled Black, Indigenous, and other negatively racialized communities, are actively deprived of the same resources that white disabled people are. We exist because we knew that nobody else was going to step up to do the work with and for us. We had to do it for ourselves. We can't wait for somebody with more power, and privilege, in resources to save us. And yet, in the two years that we've been working on that project, as an all volunteer group of almost entirely autistic people color ourselves, you know what we rely on to keep existing? Our tiny

donations from our own directly impacted community members who are also extremely likely to be unemployed, underemployed, precariously employed, or doing criminalized work.

Grant organizations aren't giving us money. Why would they? Because we believe in directly redistributing resources to the communities from whom those resources have been extracted and denied. Because we believe that it is directly-impacted people who should be making the decisions about what we do with the resources that we are able to gain access to, about what just and equitable distribution looks like. Because we believe that multipli-marginalized people have the wisdom, and the agency, and the knowledge to decide what is best for our own fucking lives! Instead of allowing the white people--the nice white lady therapists--to make those decisions for us.

In the work that each and every one of us is doing in abolition, against sexual violence, for transformative justice, all the ways in which each one of you, and of my fellow panelists, and those that are here tonight, are doing to disrupt and to end violent systems, disability justice has something deep and profound offer each of us. Many people understand disabilities simply as a medicalized or pathologized phenomenon. They understand it through the frameworks of burden, of pity, of charity.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreter Suzanne's camera turns off, displaying a black screen with the white text: ASL Interpreter Suzanne. After a few moments, video feed of speaker Lydia takes up the entire screen. End of image description.]

LYDIA: They understand disability as also the realm of white people! Because that's one of the ways that ableism and white supremacy work together--to define both "disabledness" and "abledness" as against whiteness. That is, that we all--including in communities of color and negatively racialized communities--associate disability only with whiteness and don't use the language of disability very often to talk about it. AND we understand that abledness is defined within whiteness. That white people are defined as the epitome of ability. And therefore disability detracts both from the ability of white disabled people to participate in the same level of white supremacy--which also gives them the shield to cover themselves by claiming they don't benefit from it, which is a lie. But it also prevents us from being able to understand and recognize that it is disabled Black, Brown, and Indigenous leaders who have always been paving the way.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share switches to video feed of ASL interpreter Benny. End of image description.]

LYDIA: Many folks do not name or uplift that Marsha P Johnson was in fact a disabled, mad, neurodivergent trans Black woman. Many of us do not understand, or honor, or name that Grace Lee Boggs was disabled, that Harriett Tubman was disabled. That so many of the people who we look to as our leaders, as the people who created brilliant wisdom for our movements today to learn from, were sick, disabled, mad, and neurodivergent. And that that was a deep part of their identities and experiences, regardless of what language they might have used to describe that. And that

remains true today. That today, it is queer trans Black and Indigenous, negatively racialized people who are disabled, mad, neurodivergent, and sick who are always bleeding our fights for freedom and justice. Because we understand better than all of the people who hold power and privilege in resources, what it means to live at the margins of the margins, and therefore what it means to put us at the center. What it means to actually build a world, and societies, and neighborhoods that value our body-minds and all of their complexities and intricacies for who we are. Thank you.

GREGORY: Thank you Lydia for those remarks. I was over here snapping, clapping, giving you all of the fire emojis. So we appreciate how you were able to really connect all of what folks were talking about. Thank you again.

Now, as we're getting ready to close and get towards the end, we do want to encourage everyone to stick around, as we wanted to share some action steps, some resources, and some few words before we close out. But before we do that, we're going to actually launch us into another poll! Let me do the poll now.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Screen share displays a slide. Video feed of ASL interpreter Benny is reduced to the upper right corner of the screen. New slide is a white background with black text. The text reads: Poll 3. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being low and 10 being high, where are you in support of defunding the police? (Drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch, or Twitter). The options listed read: 1 (low), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (high). End of image description.]

GREGORY: And this is related to the ask around defunding the police. We are asking: On a scale of 1-10, 1 being low and 10 being high, where are you in support of defunding the police?

So please complete the poll. And we're going to share in a little bit. We're at 50% already. It looks like a lot of you feel very strongly about this, which I'm not surprised but definitely appreciate the affirmation. So we'll continue to get folks' thoughts on this particular question.

We're at 74% actually now, folks completing the poll. So please do. We'll give it another 20 seconds to allow for any folks who haven't had a chance to fill out the poll yet.

Alright! Okay. I'm getting ready to close the poll. If you haven't had a chance to do it yet...there you go.

Alright! So, 87% are at 10! So that's a super-super-super majority of y'all are ready to defund the police. So thank you for sharing that with us. And for the work of folks--I think part of the panel today was to help us really understand how we can leverage some of those resources (the more than \$100 billion that's going to police alone each year) and ways that we could re-allocate those resources.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with black text. The text reads: Action Items. Bulleted list: • Follow or like "People's Collective for Justice and Liberation"]

on Facebook, Instagram (@peoplescollective4jl) or Twitter (@Peoples_Collect) for information on additional town halls, trainings and roundtables.

- Support local grassroots organizations a part of these networks:

- a. Grassroots Asian Rising: <https://www.grassrootsasians.org/>.

- b. Southeast Asian Freedom Network:

- <https://1lovemovement.wordpress.com/southeast-asian-freedom-network/>.

- c. National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance:

- <http://www.nqapia.org/wpp/member-organizations/>.

- Support the following campaigns:

- a. 18 Million Rising's Call us, not the cops campaign:

- www.action.18mr.org/dontcallpolice.

- b. Mirror Memoir's campaigns: Donate and support the leadership of Black trans and non-binary abolitionist survivors:

- www.tinyurl.com/MirrorMemoirs2020 and Complete membership survey (for anyone who wants a world without child sexual abuse):

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MMmembership>.

- Join a local multi-racial, multi-gender, multi-generational coalition with a social justice practice instilled with an intersectional lens and transformative justice practices.

End of image description.]

GREGORY: So now we're going to share with folks some action items in some ways to get involved. So if you haven't had a chance to yet, please follow or like "People's Collective for Justice and Liberation" on Facebook. Follow us on Instagram or on Twitter. For information on additional town halls, the other trainings and roundtables that we're able to do.

We also ask that you Support local grassroots organizations. There are three networks in particular that we want to lift up: Grassroots Asian Rising, the Southeast Asian Freedom Network, and the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance. If you click on those links, you'll get to know all the different groups who are affiliated or are part of those as well.

There were a couple of campaigns that were mentioned that we also want to lift up. 18 Million Rising's Call us, not the cops campaign. Mirror Memoir's campaigns, you can donate and support the leadership of Black trans and non-binary abolitionist survivors or complete the membership survey (for anyone who wants a world without child sexual abuse).

And then there's also the fund that Lydia spoke about earlier, the Fund for Community Reparations for Autistic People of Color's Interdependence, Survival, and Empowerment. If you are any of the folks who were agreeing with a lot of what Lydia said, please support the organization as well.

And then, join a local multi-racial, multi-gender, multi-generational coalition with a social justice practice instilled with an intersectional lens and transformative justice practices. There are different ones. And if you are looking for one in your area, please let us know, and feel free to reach out to us as we're happy to give some recommendations.

Awesome. I'll pass it to Kandi who will talk about our upcoming events.

KANDI: Hi! Thank you for sharing all the action items we can all get involved in.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with a title in black text that reads: Next Steps. The center of the page has a text box outlined in a thick red border. Inside the text box is the text: SAVE THE DATE. SATURDAY JULY 25, 2020. 3pm-5pm PST / 5pm-7pm CST / 6pm-8pm EST/ 12pm-2pm HST. People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. In red all caps is the text: THE FAR RIGHT, THE ELECTIONS, & THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY. In black all caps: PREPARING ASIAN AMERICA FOR POLITICS IN POST-COVID AMERICA.

The hashtags are displayed: #FutureOfDemocracy (hashtag future of democracy), and #BuildingSolidarity (hashtag building solidarity). In red text: From the people who brought you the townhall on #antiasianracism (hashtag anti asian racism). In white text along the lower red border: REGISTER: bit.ly/FutureOfDemocracy. www.PEOPLES collective4JL.org. ACCESSIBILITY: pc4jl.accessibility@gmail.com.
End of image description.]

KANDI: Next month, we are going to be getting into our next town hall, which we're teaming up with Scott Nakagawa who was from Change Labs, who was with our first original town hall on anti-Asian racism. And he'll be partnering up with us to coordinate

this event on “The Far Right, the Elections, & the Future of Democracy: Preparing Asian America for Politics in Post-COVID America.” That will be Saturday, July 25, 2020. I hope you all can attend. Please visit our website or our Facebook, so that way you can register at the Future of Democracy on the register link.

We also will be announcing a few COVID workshops in between in the next few days as well! And I’m going to bring it back to Greg.

GREGORY: Thank you Kandi.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is titled: Visit our website. A poster is shown on the slide. Against a black background, the poster displays a grayscale screenshot of speaker video feeds from the Zoom call of the first townhall. Beside the photograph in white text reads: People’s Collective for Justice and Liberation. In large white all caps across the entire poster is the website URL: PEOPLES collective4jl.org. Below that is the text: organize, agitate, politicize and build solidarity in the era of covid-19. End of image description.]

GREGORY: So, another reminder to visit our website: peoplescollective4jl.org. The website does include all of the videos, the transcripts, and all the graphic recordings for all of our past town halls. And so we’ll make sure to upload the ones for this one as well. It’s a lot of great resources on there.

We also are very, very excited because we have a special announcement!

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide has the all-caps title: ANNOUNCEMENT! A large black logo displays a black box background with white text that reads: UJL. UNIVERSITY FOR JUSTICE AND LIBERATION. Above the text is a white circle containing a power fist which is holding a heart shape. Beside the logo is the text: Sign Up for Additional Information: bit.ly/UJLinterest (case sensitive). Beneath the text are the logos for the People's Collective for Justice and Liberation and the Bulosan Center. End of image description.]

GREGORY: The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation wants to announce a partnership with the Bulosan Center at the University of California Davis. Something that is called the "University for Justice and Liberation," or "UJL" for short. UJL will offer an opportunity to deepen your understanding, your skills and networks, to build cross racial solidarity by participating in the first ever, inaugural University for Justice and Liberation!

It will be a series of dynamic webinars and critical conversations to ground you in the history of organizing by people of color and serve as a bridge to current campaigns, [inaudible], or organizations and events on justice and liberation for all people.

If you are interested and want to know more information (once we are able to roll it out) please go to bit.ly/UJLinterest, it is case sensitive. Fill out the form and we'll be able to follow up with additional information when it's ready. But this is something exciting and it will be launching--it will be happening starting in August. And

we'll be sharing more information. So please make sure to fill out the form.

We also now want to bring your attention to a list of a variety of resources.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is titled: Resources. Bulleted list:

- Stop AAPI Hate to report an incident:
<http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/>.
- 10 Principles of Disability Justice:
<https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>.
- Disability COVID19 Resources:
<https://www.aclu.org/fact-sheet/covid-19-disability-resources>.
- Asian American Justice Toolkit: <https://www.asianamtoolkit.org>.
- Disability Visibility Project: <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com>.
- 18 Million Rising: www.18millionrising.org (healing justice series!)
- Mirror Memoirs Resource sheet:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J5TuwxmDsiRD-EhwKqYKuiVx39sd8LXg/view?ths=true>
- To learn more about the intersection of RJ and the Movement for Black Lives watch our townhall at www.RJ4BlackLives.org.
- To support us in growing our Birth Justice Fund to help Black Mamas in GA, NC & KY please donate to
<https://bit.ly/SisterSongBirthJusticeFund>.
- If you are or know BIPOC birth workers in GA, NC & KY please fill out our survey to help us get our communities connected to services at <https://bit.ly/SSBirthWorker>.

End of image description.]

GREGORY: There's many here, including the website if you want to report an AAPI hate incident, the 10 Principles of Disability Justice, Disability COVID-19 Resources, the Asian American Justice Toolkit, the Disability Visibility Project. We wanted to lift up 18 Million Rising again and the healing justice series. The Mirror Memoirs Resource sheet.

And then, the next couple of here are around reproductive justice, and the Movement for Black Lives, and the Birth Justice Fund. We'll actually have a couple of slides in a moment that we'll share. So rather than list it here, we'll actually share a slide in a second.

Next slide, please.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is also titled: Resources. Bulleted list:

- Hotlines: if you are in need of immediate support, please contact one of the 24/7 hotlines below:

- a. RAINN - National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-HOPE (4673).

- b. Trevor Project - National Suicide Prevention for LGBTQ Youth 866-488-7386.

- c. Trans Lifeline - Transgender Suicide/Crisis Hotline US: 877-565-8860 / Canada: 877-330-6366.

- Books:

- a. Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement, an anthology edited by Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha.

b. Dear Sister: Letters from Survivors of Sexual Violence, an anthology edited by Lisa Factora-Borchers, foreword by Aishah Shahidah Simmons.

c. Fumbling Towards Repair: A Workbook for Community Accountability Facilitators, by Shira Hassan and Mariame Kaba.

d. Love WITH Accountability: Digging Up the Roots of Child Sexual Abuse, an anthology edited by Aishah Shahidah Simmons, foreword by Darnell Moore.

- PodCasts:

a. Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence <http://www.creative-interventions.org/>.

b. Healing Justice Podcast <https://www.healingjustice.org/>.

- Black Emotional + Mental Health Collective (BEAM)

<https://www.beam.community/>.

- Black Women's Blueprint <https://www.blackwomensblueprint.org/>.

End of image description.]

GREGORY: So now we also want to make sure that we also share a variety of different hotlines. These are sexual assault, suicide, and transgender suicide and crisis hotlines, both for the US and Canada.

And these are also a variety of books and podcasts as well. A lot of these resources were collected from all of the speakers and panelists today, so a special thank you to folks for sharing these resources and allowing us to provide these resources to folks who are watching here and on the stream.

Next slide please.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide features two posters against a white background. The first poster has a rich yellow background with a large navy blue circle. Inside the circle is the text: DEFENDING BLACK BODIES: A Reproductive Justice (RJ) Townhall. Featuring Ash-Lee Henderson of the M4BL, Charlene Carruthers, Author & Founder of the Chicago Center for Leadership & Transformation, Dr. Toni Bond, RJ Founding Mother & Co-Founder of IVRJ & RJ Leaders from across the country. Moderated By: Monica Raye Simpson, SisterSong. LISTEN NOW TO LEARN HOW RJ & THE MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES CONNECT! #RJ4BLACKLIVES (that's hashtag RJ numeral 4 Black lives).

At the top upper third of the circle is a cluster of photos of Black speakers. Beside that cluster of photos in the upper right of the poster is a white circle containing black text that reads: Recording of townhall available now! In the bottom left corner of the poster is another white circle containing a website URL in black text that reads: www.RJ4BlackLives.org. End of first poster description.

The second poster has a navy blue background and the upper quarter of the poster shows a close-up on two Black hands, adorned in jewelry, holding each other tightly. One of the hands has overlaid text that reads: Sister Song. The text is stylized using only one S for both words. Against the navy blue background, white text reads: The SisterSong Birth Justice Care Fund provides support to Black and other people of color who are pregnant, laboring, and postpartum people, especially Queer and Trans folks. We fund prenatal, labor, and postpartum support, transportation and food,

and other essential items, such as formula, diapers, wipes, clothing, car seat, changing table, and bassinets.

Bulleted list:

- For those in need, visit <https://bit.ly/BirthJustieCareFundApplication> to complete the application.
- For birth workers, please encourage your pregnant and birthing clients to utilize this assistance.
- For our community, please consider giving to the fund <https://bit.ly/SisterSongBirthJusticeFund>.

Let's show up for our communities and make a positive difference in this difficult time. End of second poster description. End of image description.]

GREGORY: So here is more additional information. This is the website if you're interested in reproductive justice and the Movement for Black Lives: www.RJ4BlackLives.org.

And then this is more information on the right of The SisterSong Birth Justice Care Fund and you can learn more at <https://bit.ly/BirthJustieCareFundApplication>. Thank you so much.

And then the next slide, please.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide displays a poster against a white background. The poster has a periwinkle background. At the top, highlighted in dark blue is white text that reads: Calling BIPOC Birth Workers:

Below that is dark blue text that reads: SisterSong is compiling a list of BIPOC birth workers across Georgia, North Carolina and Kentucky who represent Reproductive Justice and are able to provide services to Black birthing people and families who are in need of support during COVID-19, the current revolution, and beyond.

Highlighted in dark blue is white text that reads: If you are interested complete the survey: <https://bit.ly/SSBirthWorker>.

In the lower left corner is a drawing of a pregnant person sitting with legs spread as a Black birth worker holds them from behind. Neither character has any facial features except for eyebrows. In white text against the periwinkle background is text that reads: Artwork by @_kiawilliams (that's at underscore Kia Williams). In the bottom right corner of the poster is the SisterSong logo. End of image description.]

GREGORY: Awesome. And so now this is a call for Black, Indigenous, and people of color Birth Workers. If you are interested, please visit <https://bit.ly/SSBirthWorker>.

Great. Next slide please.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is black text against a white background. The text reads: Evaluation. Please complete it here: <https://bit.ly/FemmesMascsQueersForm>. End of image description.]

GREGORY: And so now, we're asking for folks to please complete the evaluation. Your feedback is very important to us. We actually

go through all the responses and it helps inform our planning and our programming for the future town halls, and workshops, and sessions that we host. And you can find the form at: <https://bit.ly/FemmesMascQueersForm>. And we'll also drop it in the chat. So please, please, please take a couple--it won't take you more than a couple minutes to complete the form. Thank you so much.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is black text against a white background. The text reads. Contact. List:
Gregory Cendana: IG/Twitter: @gregorycendana, @cswsconsulting.
Kuttin Kandi: IG @DJKuttinKandi | Twitter: @KuttinKandi, @Asian Solidarity.

Lydia X.Z. Brown: Twitter: @autistichoya (that's at autistic hoyo).

Chhaya Choum: Twitter: @MekongNYC (that's at Mekong NYC).

Cayden Mak: Twitter: @cayden (that's at Cayden),

@18millionrising (that's at 18 million rising).

Monica Simpson: Twitter: @monicarsimpson (that's at Monica R Simpson), @SisterSong_WOC (that's at Sister Song underscore WOC).

Amida Swadhin: IG: @amitaswadhin (that's at Amita Swadhin),

@mirror.memoirs (that's at mirror dot memoirs) | Twitter:

@aswadhin (that's at A Swadhin), @mirrormemoirs (that's at mirror memoirs).

Bo Thao-Urabe: Twitter: @bothao (that's at Bo Thao), @caalmn (that's at CAALMN).

Kabzuag Vaj: Twitter: @kabzuag (that's at Kabzuag),
@AboutFreedomInc (that's at About Freedom Inc).
Isa Woldegiorgis: Twitter: @chhlowell (that's at CHH Lowell).
End of image description.]

GREGORY: And now I'm going to share the last--the next slide!
[laughs] Which is the contact information. This is how you can stay
in contact with all the speakers and panelists today. Please,
please, please continue to follow and support them as we want to
continue the work that they're doing and rep the organizations that
they are a part of. And this is how you'll be able to keep up-to-date.
And thank you to all the panelists for allowing us to share this
information. So please, please, please follow them.

So yeah. So again, just another plug to please complete the
evaluation. A link will also pop up at the end of the webinar. And we
will also send a follow up email with it in there as well, in case you
don't get a chance to do it now--but please do it now. The sooner
the better.

And as we continue to push our dreams of liberation into fruition,
and while we fight the ongoing pandemics of COVID-19 and
racism, and work to build transformative solidarity with
communities of color and other marginalized peoples, we continue
to be grateful to folks who support the work of The People's
Collective for Justice and Liberation.

And I'm going to pass it to Kandi for our closing remarks.

KANDI: Thank you so much for all that information, Greg, and for sharing all the resources as well as the announcements that we've got.

I just want to thank everyone for attending here. We appreciate all of our sponsors, our organizers, our whole organizing committee team including our accessibility team, everyone that was part of this process, our panelists, and all of our attendees for the support and the trust everyone has given us to do this work--and the trust to teach us as well. And the series of town halls and dialogues for the months to come. We're really excited about continuing to build with all of you and we look forward to continuing to learn and build with all of you. So until then, we'll see you all next time!

[End of townhall recording.]