

Fit for a King Summit 1-14-21

>>: Hello. I'm Michael Dunne, Board President of the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center. Welcome to the 14th annual Fit for a King summit which is annual tribute to the work and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther king Jr. This is our first virtual summit. We miss seeing you in person. Before we begin, we'd like to take a moment to acknowledge that any time we talk about housing, we are also talking about land, while we may be virtual this year, the land we occupy is indigenous land. I'm coming to you from what we now call New Orleans, but it was once known as -- a place of many tongues and home to tribes such as the Houma, and Choctaw tribes among others. As we talk today as displacement and resistance in Louisiana, we hope to honor this indigenous history in the ongoing struggle against colonialization of this land. We know this is important to remember as we combat environmental racism, our topic for today which has had devastating impacts on indigenous communities for generations. We also recognize that indigenous leaders have been at the forefront for fighting environmental justice.

For environmental justice. We have lost family members, neighbors, and friends to the COVID 19 pandemic, particularly communities of color that have been hit hard due to generations of systematic racism. We watched as George Floyd and too many others were murdered. We've seen desperation grow as policy makers inability to prioritize health and safety has put 30 million at risk of eviction. And we've seen rapid escalating white supremacist violence. Despite all of this, communities have stand strong to protect each other and provide mutual aid for justice. Throughout our summit this year. Fit for a King 2021 will run over 3 days. Today, we'll be discussing environmental racism with a panel from red lines to the front lines COVID collides with environmental racism in Louisiana. A keynote address by Collette Battle, executive director for the Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy. We'll hear a performance to present our annual award for courage award. Next Thursday we'll be discussing connections between gentrification policy and January 28th speakers will explore the eviction crisis. You can see the full agenda at

fitforaking.org.

>>: Fill out your evaluations today. We carefully review feedback and use it to review feedback this year. If you have to log out before the end of the program, you'll see the evaluation pop up immediately when you log out. If you have any questions for the speakers, please use the Q and A function at the bottom of your screen. If you have technical questions ant Zoom throughout the day, you can reach us by e-mail at info at LAFairhousing.org or chat in the chat box.

Before we get started, I want to share a little bit of information about the Louisiana Fair Action Housing Center. We know that housing discrimination leads to segregation and that neighborhoods and communities are not treated fairly. Housing discrimination has to end if this nation is ever going to achieve racial and economic justice. We work to end housing discrimination in several ways. Education and outreach provides fair housing trainings to make sure people throughout our community know their rights and responsibilities. Policy staff work at local, state, and national levels to push policies that

make housing more fair and accessible to everyone. Our enforce. Team investigates complaints about fair housing violations to find out where and when housing discrimination is occurring. Also victims with filing complaints and lawsuits to hold discriminators accountable. Our home protection program counseling for homeowners facing foreclosure. And lastly an eviction defense program to provide league representation for residents faces eviction during the pandemic including undocumented community members who may not qualify for other services.

>>: We are a statewide service organization. We couldn't do this work without you. So thank you. We would love for you to get more involved in our work through working with us to offer fair housing training to our staff, members, clients, or students by making referrals by providing input on policy that impact the community. But alerting us if you see housing discrimination in any form. By meeting our action alerts or becoming a mystery shopper. You can read more about our work at LA fair housing dot organize. Finally, this year has shown us how important it

to be agile and able to shift our work as needed. Your support makes that possible. We are asking people in your network to consider signing up as a recurring donor in any amount today. Please sign up at [LA fair housing dot organize](http://LAfairhousing.org).

I would like to introduce Giazzlyn Duncan who will be moderating the first panel.

>>: Good morning. My name is Giazzlyn Duncan, I am the director of protection. This morning, we will be talking about climate justice and we will be hearing from panelists Sharon Lavigne from RISE St. James. Lydwina Hurst from the residence of Gordon Plaza. And Monique Harden from the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice.

Before we get started, we will be showing a video of RISE St. James.

>>: Good morning. I'm sorry for a little bit of a technical glitch. I am the Director of Education and Outreach at the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center. We are going to pause to invite our interpreters to talk to us a little bit about the interpretation they will provide today.

>>: Interpreters speaking in Spanish.

>>: I am joined today by my comrade and co-interpreter. We are members of language justice collective in New Orleans.

>>: Speaking Spanish.

>>: The land where many languages are spoken.

As language justice workers, we strive to create space for everyone here to understand and be understood in the language we feel most powerful.

Today we will be providing simultaneous integration from English to Spanish and Spanish to English and there is ASL interpretation today as well as part of our effort to create multilingual spaces.

Please speak at a slow and steady pace. If you talk too fast, we'll do this hand signal to slow down. Also, please speak loudly and clearly. We will do this hand signal if you are speaking too softly. And keep an eye on the chat in case we send a message to slow down or speak up. Keep your mic on mute when you are not speaking.

If you are have headphones, please use them. We ask one speaker at a time. We don't want to be in the position of having to decide which voice to privilege over the other.

>>: Speaking Spanish.

>>: You will be able to access the interpretation platform in just a few moments after this instructions.

If you are using a computer, you see a globe icon at the bottom of your screen with the word interpretation. Click on it and select the channel with the language of your choice, either English or Spanish.

For smart phone or tablet, look for 3 dots that read more. Click on that to make your selection.

When making your selection, you will see an option to mute original audio to shear only the voice of the interpreter. To hear the original audio, you may leave it un-muted and you can change your selection at any time.

Thank you for your commitment to creating a multilingual space. The host will now assign us at interpreters. And don't forget to

click on your language of choice. If you have any problems, please sends a message in the chat.

>>: Good morning again. Again, my name is Giazzlyn Duncan. I will be presenting the pan list. We've had a slight change to the order of the panelists. One of them was not able to make it. I will introduce the panelists and from there a short video and then we will begin our discussion. Our first pan list, Sharon Lavigne. She is from RISE St. James.

>>: Video:

Oliver was the love of my life. We were together for 17 wonderful years. He was vibrant and healthy. Then the came in. Oliver was diagnosed with COPD. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He died just a few years later and there's no doubt that the pollution killed him. I've been to over 30 funerals within the past 5 years. My brothers have cancer. My neighbors are sick. And I am worried about my children and grandchildren. Now plastics wants to bring one of the largest plants here. It is too late to bring back out. I don't want our children and grandchildren to be next. Formosa Plastics.



>>: We will have Sharon Lavigne introduce herself and share her stories about her community.

>>: My name is Sharon Lavigne from St. James, Louisiana. I'm the director and founder of a faith-based grassroots organization called RISE St. James. I'm a lifelong resident of St. James. In my area where I live, we have 12 refineries and pet row chemical industry within a 10-mile radius. We have 7 districts in St. James and I live in the 5th district. In the 4th district, we have 9 refineries or pet row chemical industries. In 2018, our governor John Bel Edwards announced a \$5.4 billion Formosa plastic plant to come into St. James into the 5th district. It would be only 2-miles from my home. That was the first time I found out about it. With the citizens of St. James didn't know about it. Our public officials approved it. They didn't consult us. I feel like we have too many already. We already cannot breathe the air. The water is not clean and the soil is not productive.

So to bring this industry into St. James, we will not be able to breathe the air.

We will not be able to live. In 2018, I formed our organization to fight Formosa Plastics. And now during this fight, we have 3 other industries trying to come into the 5th district. We are also going to fight those. We just filed lawsuits against Formosa, the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. Right now, the federal judge in Washington suspended the permit that the Army Corp. of Engineers tried to have approved. A judge from Louisiana also told them to go back and redo their application because the permit that they submitted is obsolete. And it is also with a lot of racism.

Formosa chose a black -- poor black community like St. James to bring this industry in. We are fighting for our lives because Formosa don't think about the people; all they think about is the profit they plan to make. Governor John Bel Edwards won't even stop this industry from coming to St. James because he approved it. He thinks that this plant is going to bring a lot of revenues for the state.

My question to him is: If this plant is so wonderful to bring revenue nor the state, why not put it in his hometown because we are full. We

can't take anymore. I don't feel like St. James should be the sacrifice zone for the state. The state can find somewhere else to put this industry. They don't consider the people. They don't consider our lives. They just want to do what they want and get the money that they want. To them, their wealth is their profit.

To St. James, our wealth is our enemy -- in other words, our health is what we want. If we don't have our health, you can have all the money in the world, you won't be able to enjoy the money because your health will decline. So we want anyone that can help us to stop this industry from coming into St. James because St. James residents don't want to move. And we want to live. And we want to live healthy because we already have enough that already have died. And we have a lot that people that are sick. Mostly with cancer.

We are asking everyone to please help RISE St. James in this fight to stop Formosa Plastics. Thank you.

>>: Thank you so much,  
Mr. Lavigne.

Next is Lydwina Hurst

>>: I am a retired nurse. I reside in the Gordon Plaza Subdivision located in the Upper 9th Ward Desire area of New Orleans, Louisiana. The homes in this area were built on a dump site. This issue has motivated me to serve as an activist fighting for an end to environmental racism and injustice. I am a board member of the resident dense. Gordon Plaza, Inc. I participate in board meetings, rallies, meet with political leaders and members of organizations in regards to environmental racism and injustice. I also participate to help organize meetings with the residents of our community.

The homes in this subdivision were built on 20 feet of toxic soil. The former agricultural landfill site. Construction of the homes were completed in the early 80s and marketed to low- and middle-income families. The African American residents were unaware that their newly purchased homes were built on a dump site which contained over 150 chemicals with 50 contributing to cancer causes.

In 1994, the site was decimated designated as a superfund site. In 2001, a cleanup

was done removing 2 feet of soil from around some of the homes at the cost of \$40 million. It was estimated that residents could have been moved for less. Many residents of this community have been diagnosed with cancer, respiratory diseases, skin conditions and other illness. Unfortunately many residents have died as a result of their illness.

A report from the Louisiana tumor registry that was published in the Times Picayune found that the cancer rate within the census tract that includes Gordon Plaza has the second highest sustained rate of cancer in the state of Louisiana.

For decades, residents have fought many legal battles with none resulting in fully funded relocation for all of the residents. In a civil class action lawsuit, 9 plaintiffs were made whole. Attorneys were made millions of dollars. Fifty-four residents continue to live on this site. Our homes are well kept and man -- with manicured lawns. But the appraisal value of our homes is lower than it would be if our homes were not located on toxic soil. I ask myself frequently the question: Is this what I planned to leave my children and grandchildren as generational wealth?

>>: Thank you so much, Mrs. Hurst.

Thank you for those introductions.

Our question that we have for both man lists. Mrs. Sharon, I'll have you go first and then -- the question is the past year has highlighted so many ways that institutions and systems treat black lives and communities as if they do not matter. How have past discriminatory policies and systemic racism placed your communities at risk? Mrs. Sharon first?

>>: I think to place our community at risk because by letting these industries come into our community, first of all, we are at risk. And because we are poor and black. So these policies I don't think they are good for everyone. It is for certain people. I think a lot of the policies need to be changed. To accommodate all the people. Not just some.

>>: Inclusive policies.

Absolutely.

>>: The residents of Gordon Plaza have worked and purchased homes hoping to attain the American dream which turned into an American nightmare. We are tax paying citizens living on

toxic soil. We have invested in this city that has refused to reinvest in us.

Due to the environment our residents are dying. I believe that if one Caucasian family had purchased a home on this site, we would have been relocated years ago. Our community organizations has teamed up with people's assembly a New Orleans-based movement for economic, racial and environmental justice to continue our fight. We have reached out to our politicians on all levels by making telephone calls, sending letters, inviting them to our community meetings with little or no response. Our fight has also consisted of numerous public protests and media outreach. Our black lives matter also. We are demanding that as a country is crying out under the banner of Black Lives Matter, that the city of New Orleans finally do what is necessary to fight for our black lives as we yet live. We are asking Mayor Cantrell as she requests additional resources from the state and federal government that we be included in that request for a fully funded relocation.

>>: Thank you so much.

So for the next question and this

will be for both of you. How has environmental racism contributed to the deadly racial disparities we have seen in the impacts of COVID 19? Mrs. Sharon?

>>: With the COVID, I think it is a double whammy because we are already suffering with the industry here in St. James. The emissions are really high and the COVID didn't do it any justice for this parish. We have people that died from COVID. We have people that are sick right now as I speak. And we are trying to be protective about our lives and cautious and everything. But we have double. We have COVID plus the industry. The emissions that they are releasing on us. So we have double in our area.

>>: And Mrs. Lydwina, how would you say environmental racism has contributed to the racial disparities with the impacts of COVID 19 in.

>>: COVID 19 is a health pandemic that we recognize since the beginning. Residents in the Gordon Plaza subdivision face both COVID 19, extraordinary cancer rates, and other illness due to the toxic soil and environment that the city of New Orleans built our homes on. Due to the toxic



soil that we live on, the underlying conditions in addition to the fact that most of the residents are senior citizens puts us at a high risk for COVID 19. We have been forced to shelter in place on toxic soil. We are enslaved in our own homes.

>>: Thank you so much, ladies.

For our last question: How can people watching this take action now to engage? Do you see any opportunities for the climate justice movement with the president -- with the new presidential administration?

Sharon?

>>: With the new administration, I'm trying to be hopeful that the new president will look into our issues. That even if you have to come to St. James and see what we are going through. Just by us telling them, they really need to see it. So I'm hoping that the new administration would have the time to sit down and talk with us. If they can't come in person because of the pandemic, at least talk to us virtual. And let them have more consideration to what is going on around the world, but especially in Louisiana and especially in St. James parish.

One of Biden's speeches, he mentions St. James parish in one of his speeches. I'm hopeful that he will think about us after he is inaugurated and come to see about us and help us to solve this dilemma. That is what I'm hoping for.

>>: Absolutely. Thank you.

How about you. What is the way that you think people with engage? Do you see any opportunities with the new administration?

>>: Yes, the board has made numerous attempts to reach out to our congressman Cedric Richmond about our issues without success. However, during this last election, we were able to ask him along with other candidates if he supported a fully funded relocation. And he finally stated yes in writing. Hopefully, our mayor will actively pursue congressman Richmond and collaborate to secure funds to resolve this issue before we experience the loss of one more neighbor.

We pray that with the new presidential administration and their take on climate justice that those will open for us to

receive a check for a fully funded relocation.

I am asking for everyone to engage in our fight by contacting our Mayor Latoya Cantrell and her administration at (504)658-4900. Or (504)658-4945. Or they can be e-mailed at mayor@nola.gov.

You can also log into the people's assembly web site at PeoplesAssemblyNewOrleans.org or e-mail them at Peoplesassemblynola@gmail.com.

>>: All right. Thank you so much, ladies.

We have a couple questions from the audience that we would like to ask. First off, and I hope everybody got that information. Hopefully, we can get those numbers in the chat box so that the audience can see.

So we have a question coming from the audience. What can residents of New Orleans do to help bring about the fully funded relocation for all residents of Gordon Plaza that have been thus far emptily promised? And this is for either one of you.

>>: As I stated, you can contact

our mayor, contact our political leaders, congressman Richmond. And also follow us as we do our rallies, our community meetings, at the sites I gave you on People's Assembly it would be really appreciated.

>>: In St. James, if you contact our local leaders, they will not respond. We ask them, we talk to them, gone to council meetings. The people that represent us, they are not helping us at all. So if you want to help us, contact RISE St. James. You can find us on Facebook on the web site. We have done lawsuits against the industries, against about 3 or 4 of them. And we try to stop the permit that they are trying to give to these other industries. But the parish officials are all for it. And the local -- Louisiana department of environmental quality, they just administer all of these permits whenever they apply for them. So RISE St. James are doing all the work of the public officials. All I can tell you is to contact RISE St. James. That is our only hope for St. James Parish.

>>: We have another question. Have members of the community -- have members of

your community taken individual legal actions against the companies that develop the businesses and properties in the hazardous manner? Have is there been class action lawsuits and have you all been successful and what barriers have they encountered?

>>: We haven't had any class action lawsuits in St. James. We haven't had any lawsuits, to be honest with you. We just had the lawsuits that our attorney did against a chemical plant like Formosa. But not any individual lawsuits or not any class action lawsuits that I know of in St. James.

>>: Have you been successful as far as litigation?

>>: Not really. Not really. No.

>>: How about you, Mr. Lydwina? Have you all filed some type of legal action against the companies? If so, were they successful?

>>: For the last decades, we have filed lawsuits. We had a class action civil lawsuit. And only 9 plaintiffs were allocated enough money to move off this site. The attorneys were paid millions of dollars. We have had

lawsuits since then where we were not made whole and one incident, we were given from anywhere from a couple hundred dollars to a couple thousand dollars which would have not brought us anywhere.

And we are at this time with a lawsuit with the lawyers at Tulane law school. However, several of the filings, motions that have been filed has been rejected. We have had lawsuits that went all the way to the Supreme Court and we are still in our homes in the Gordon Plaza subdivision sitting on a superfund site.

>>: Thank you so much. So how can the average person contribute to your causes?

>>: My cause? Ask them to talk to the public officials, the governor. Go straight to Washington. Ask them to join with us on this fight. Ask them to spread the word. Anything that they can do to help us, we role would appreciate.

>>: Absolutely.

Mr. Lydwina?

>>: How could the average person contribute to your cause?

>>: Presently, we are seeking

funds, however, the allocation of those funds have not been finalized. The most important thing at this time is if people will call in to our elected officials, especially the Mayor of New Orleans, the governor, our state representatives, our congressmen, and Washington DC to be sure that there are funds allocated, funds are found for everything else. In New Orleans, \$40 million.

>>: We can't hear you.

>>: Some technical difficulties.

In New Orleans, \$40 million was allocated to put up crime cameras which as you know our crime rate is high right now. So the benefit of those cameras are very questionable as far as I'm concerned. So if you can find many for those things, grants have been granted to raise buildings because of flooding. If you can allocate money and find money for all of those things, why can't you find the money to remove 54 families whose lives are at stake off of this site?

>>: Thank you so much.

Absolutely.

There is a question about the green deal. I know later on our Latino speaker

Ms. Pichon will be speaking about the green deal. But specifically to this audience, should we be advocating and educating the public on the green new deal and transitioning to clean and renewable energy in.

>>: Should we be concentrating on the green new deal?

>>: Yes.

>>: I would think so.

>>: How about transitioning to clean and renewable energy for your communities?

>>: Yes, I agree with that. We need clean everything so we can survive, so we can live. So yes, the clean new energy is that mostly from New Orleans? Is that a question from Miss Lydwina?

>>: That is for both panelists.

>>: Okay.

>>: How about you Mrs. Lydwina? How do you feel about the green new deal?

>>: The public should be educated on clean air, clean environment, dump sites, because it is very important. Our lives matter, our health is at risk. The air we breathe every



day along with this COVID 19 is not helping any of us. So it is very, very important that the public is educated on all of these issues.

>>: About the burial ground in your communities and the strategies that have been used to bring that attention.

>>: The burial grounds on Formosa site was discovered by an archeologist. We found out that the previous owner of the property had pipes run through the graveyard. And Formosa didn't tell us about the grave site until after rise St. James brought it to the parish council members. They wasn't planning on telling our parish officials at all even though they give them the approval to build. The grave sites have been there since way back in the 1800s. 200 slaves on that property with one burial site. They have about 3 different grave sites on Formosa's property.

We have been having events on the property, for example, on Juneteenth of last year we had a celebration out there. They didn't want us to go on the property, but we had to get the judge to give us permission to go on the property. We celebrated our ancestors. And it was a wonderful

everyone out there. But I don't think that anybody should be spared a grave site. And Formosa was about to do it without letting our parish officials know about it. They lied to them about so many things. And our parish officials would not rescind their decision to stop Formosa from being built in St. James. But they don't care. And they were going to desecrate that grave site.

So yes, we brought it to the attention. And so far, Formosa put a fence around the grave site, around one grave site. So we are still working on that also.

>>: All right. Well, thank you so much. We have reached our time. I do have one more question. I believe we have time for one more question. And I also noticed in the chat box that there will be a rally, Gordon Plaza residents will be speaking at a rally on January 20 at 3:00 o'clock p.m.

Our last question before we wrap up, aside from the immediate relocation, what support can one contribute to the residents of Gordon Plaza?

>>: Could you repeat the question?

>>: Aside from immediate relocation, what support can one contribute to the residents of Gordon Plaza currently?

>>: They can support -- we can be supported by attending the rallies, writing letters, if you do not want to make the telephone calls, to our elected officials. Attending community meetings. And our protests. Our media outreach which we will be doing on MLK day as you just stated. I ask that people, they can come out to those events. But simply making a telephone call or an e-mail to our elected officials encouraging a fully funded relocation. And because we say fully funded relocation means that we do not want anyone to just decide where they want to put us on another site. We want to be issued a check so that we can purchase our own homes, have enough money to move off this site. It is not something that we are asking for someone to give us. We deserve every penny of it. We were not aware, we were not educated, about this before we purchased our homes on this site. Thank you.

I believe we have one more question.

>>: With respect for people

seeking to purchase a property, is there something or somewhere that one can look to find out about the history of the property, specifically with the idea of having this type of history behind it?

>>: I didn't hear the question because I went out. I keep going out and reconnecting. So could you repeat that question for me?

>>: Absolutely.

So with respect to someone who is looking to purchase a new home, is there something or somewhere that they can find information, history, about the properties or specifically your area. Would you all know? Do you have any insight about that?

>>: Do we have insight about homes in our area?

>>: Specifically, if somebody about to purchase a property, say in your area, is there any information or do you have a web site in where they can get more information about the property? Or your area community?

>>: You can go to the agriculture street landfill site. I don't have the exact web

site.

>>: I can hear you.

>>: And that will give information about the boundaries of this landfill of this dump site. That was designated back in 2001. When they were placed on a superfund site. Or you can go to the EPA superfund site and possibly pull up that information there, also. But is there is information out there that tells what the boundaries are for this site.

>>: Thank you so much. Thank you to Mrs. Sharon and Mrs. Lydwina.

That is a conclusion of our panel today. We will have a performance after this.

>>: Thank you so much to for moderating the panel and the panelists. Thank you for taking time out of your day to be with us today and thank you so much for the work you are doing to make our communities safer places and to advocate to your communities.

I want to take a minute to introduce our performer who is going to share some music with us now.

On the interpretation channel, the

performance will be in English. You can stay on the channel and hear it quiet in the background or click to the interpretation channel by going to the globe icon on your careen. If you do that, one of the songs, we are going to be posting the lyrics in the chat. We don't have translation for both. But you can listen to interpretation for one and read the lyrics in the chat.

We are going to go ahead and bring out Michaela Harrison who is going to be performing for us today. She is an international vocalist whose career is rooted in relaying the healing -- holding a bachelor's degree in international affairs and -- has an extended repertoire of world music. Rendering songs in their original languages. As she continues to spend extensive time in Brazil where she has headed music festivals and attended numerous events. She is currently engaged in a project called whale whispering.

Welcome.

>>: Thank you for having me. It is a blessing to be here with you all. Thank you for the good work you are doing. I miss New Orleans. It is still home in my heart. So it is

good to be here with you all today.

Speaking of home, when I set to meditate about what would be appropriate to share with you all today, this is the first song that came to mind.

When I think of home I think of a place where there's love overflowing. I wish I was home. I wish I was back there with things I've been knowing.

When that makes a tall trees bend into leaning show me the rain drops that fall have a meaning. Sprinkling the seed makes it all clean. Maybe there's a chance for me to go back now that I have some direction. It sure would be nice to be back home with it love and affection. And just maybe I can convince time to slow up giving me enough time in my life to grow up. Time be my friend. Let me start again.

Suddenly my world's gone and changed its face. But I still know where I'm going. I have had my mind spun around in space and yet I've watched it growing.

God please don't make it hard to know if we should believe the things that we see. Tell

us should we run away, should we try and stay or is it better just to let things be? Living here in this brand-new world might be a fantasy. But it's taught me to love so it's real to me. And I've learned that we must look inside our hearts to find a world full of love like yours, like mine, like.

I'm going to do one more song for you all today. And this next one is one of my original songs that I wrote while I was there in New Orleans. I was inspired by thinking about really young black boys, black boys and young black men, and just the constant dangers that they faced being out on the streets. And general song of healing for anyone who feels that they are in need of healing. And affirming the fact that that healing space exists no matter where we live, no matter where we find ourselves, there is a space inside where we can access healing.

So the hook is pretty easy. I don't know if everyone is muted. If you are on mute and pick up the chorus, feel free to sing along. This is the healing room.

Come inside, come inside, come inside the healing room.



Come inside, come inside, come  
inside the healing room.

Your stay with the memory of  
devastation. Whether your mind knows your history  
or not. And though there are those who would love  
to see your elimination baby your rise to the tree  
of life is one thing you've got.

So come inside, come inside, come  
inside the healing room. Come inside, come  
inside, come inside the healing room.

You something along the path of self  
destruction. A few addictions never afflictions  
are your -- but remember your DNA's a spiral that  
has been coded with survival and your future lies  
inside the healing room. So come inside, come  
inside, come inside the healing room. Come  
inside, come inside, come inside the healing room.

From glory to the slave ship from the  
action block to master's whip, those who made you  
those who made you knew that if hair yet could that  
train to freedom again and again there's no limit  
to the wonders you can do.

Come inside, come inside, come  
inside the healing room. Come inside, come

inside, come inside the healing room.

There's no door there's no line and there's no key. No combination oh no, and no pass code to crack. And if your demons you there will be strong-arms to embrace you, just remember that your ancestors got your back.

So come inside, come inside, come inside the healing room. Come inside, come inside, come inside the healing room. Come inside, come inside, come inside the healing room. Come inside, come inside, come inside the healing room.

Thanks so much for having me, you all.

>>: Beautiful. Thank you so much. Thank you for the healing and the inspiration. I wish that you could hear the applause that I'm sure everyone is applauding you in their homes. It is hard being virtual, but you brought some sweetness and humanity to this virtual platform. So thank you so much.

At this time, I want to introduce Michelle Morgan who is coordinator of investigations with the Louisiana fair housing act

center. She is going to present annual award for courage award.

>>: Thanks. The award for courage honors those for the bravery and tenacity in the -- tell stories to prevent injustice to harm others. I am honored to present this award to one of our investigators. Testers are community members who pose as home seekers for the purpose of a fair housing investigation. Testing allows housing transactions to be monitored. How people are treated and is a valuable tool for helping to determine when discrimination occurs. To protect the anonymity of this year's reward recipient, we are using the pseudonym tester T. Tester T has worked to advance fair housing as a tester since 2016. In that time tester T has worked on numerous housing investigations across the New Orleans area. Tester T has faced discrimination head on and has had a positive impact on the community to create more fair and equitable housing for everyone.

During one particular investigation, tester T was -- evidence collected during that investigation has led to a federal

lawsuit. Fair housing investigations would not occur without the work of people like tester T who sacrificed their personal time to help ban housing discrimination.

Now I will read some remarks from tester T.

I always knew racism and prejudice existed but I was sure that it almost always happened in the dark, undercover, and disguised as something else, something no one could prove. Over the last few years, the light has been turned on, the covers pulled back, and we have seen people's most inner thoughts and feelings. And it hasn't always been pretty. I've always heard that history repeats itself but I never expected it to be like this. To be compared to caged animals based strictly on how I show up in the world is incomprehensible. Question every loss, every application that didn't result in a call back and the real reason race needs to be identified when applying to college.

As hard as it has been to digest, I'm glad it is no longer undercover. I'm glad to confront it so those responsible can be exposed,

held accountable. I'm glad to confront it so that my children may not have to. I am glad I have the courage to stand against them as a reminder that hate will never win.

To everyone who has been a victim of racism, you are not your experience. You are courageous, you are valuable, and you belong.

I appreciate LAFHAC for your great work. Where we are not judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character.

If you are interested in helping root out discrimination and want to become a fair housing tester, you can visit our web site at [LAFairhousing.org](http://LAFairhousing.org) and click on the link to become a tester. Thank you.

>>: Thank you so much. And thank you so much tester T.

Next on our program, I'm honored to introduce our keynote speaker. Collette Pichon Battle. Welcome. We are so excited to have you. I don't know how much of an introduction Collette needs.

She is a generational native of buy you liberty, Louisiana. Founder and executive

director for Gulf Coast center.

Law and policy. Global migration, community economic development, climate justice and energy democracy. She has worked with a whole lot of people and a whole lot of places. She was an Obama fellow. She has an honorary doctorate from Kenyan college. She has done a lot of work for green new deal.

I'm not going to spend any more time talking. Just like for the panel, if you think of any questions you would like to ask, request them in the Q and A box.

>>: Thank you so much. It is an honor to be here. I just want to start off with deep gratitude for both Renee, the whole crew at Louisiana fair housing action center. Always good allies in this fight for justice. And it is always an honor to be asked to come and speak.

I also love coming to speak here because I get the green light to say what the spirit allows me to say. For those of you who -- I'm still me, so here it comes. For those of you who I am a new voice, I hope that you'll receive what I have to say with the love in which I'm intending it and

I hope you can hear the truth of what I would like to offer based in my own experiences here in South Louisiana in the place I love the most with the people I love the most.

With that, to get started, I want to acknowledge that I'm calling in from Slidell, St. Tammany parish, the land of the Choctaw people. It is an honor to be on this land. I'm on the land of my mother, her mother, her mother before her, and my family has been in this place since the 1770s, even before the United States had its claims to this place. So it is an honor to be calling you -- to be speaking from my rooted place and to offer some words today.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the courage of transformation. And for me, this courage of transformation is coming amidst is global climate crisis. You know climate is what I am always going to talk about and climate encompasses so many things. And in order for us to make it through this current climate reality, we are going to have to address our housing issues in a fair and equitable way.

But the broader picture on climate is

one that I think more and more Americans especially are starting to let into their minds and into their hearts. And I am here to say you are right in the nick of time. This is an important conversation for everyone to understand. This is not a political discussion. This is a discussion about the reality of what is happening to our great state of Louisiana, what is happening across our beautiful nation. And what is happening to communities around the globe as they address this climate crisis.

So I was thinking about courage. And I was thinking about courage mostly yesterday watching the impeachment, the second impeachment of this nation's president. My nation's president. And I was waiting to see who was going to have the courage to speak the truth. And in fact, I was reminded of the first impeachment where I wondered the same thing after hearing beautiful, legal summaries and or rations, who was going to be moved to act out of courage, not self-interest, not fear, but courage.

And then I've been thinking about 2020, a year when I think all of us had to find a



deeper courage within ourselves. To get through the daily grind of being in a pandemic. To get through uprisings that were catalyzed by brutal murders of black people in our streets. And in South Louisiana, the courage to handle all of that in the midst of being in the cone of uncertainty over 11 times. In a year where hurricanes topped the number of hurricanes ever recorded.

So it was a year of courage. And clearly 2021 has shown that courage is going to be a major element of the work this year as well.

But how do we get this courage? Yes, we should be very excited ant the 10 people who had the courage to speak out yesterday, even having a republican affiliation to speak out against an attack on our capitol. But there were over 100 who didn't speak against it. And that brings me deep concern.

And I've just been thinking, what is my courage in this moment? What am I willing to do? I ask you about yours. What are you willing to do in this moment? Where is your courage level? I know each of you can see what is happening in our nation, what is happening in our community. It

must have dawned on you once or twice what your role is in this moment. I wonder how we will all show our courage.

I began to really think about it and understand courage not as a destination but a process. And even more specifically, a practice. How do we begin to practice our courage? And understand that we are going to have to have the courage to transform ourselves, our individual selves, our state, our nation, our economy, our society, the courage to transform that for a climate reality that if we do not do something about very quickly, we will not make it out of as a human race, not just as Louisianians, but as a human race.

So it is a practice. We have to practice like we practice anything else. It definitely means the first few tries; we won't probably get right. But courage actually requires the commitment to the practice of us showing that when the time comes, we can and we will do the right thing. So it will take you all the courage you have to admit that this one thing that I'm going to say is more important than your comfort, your time, your ability to pay your bills, your ability to save

your money, your ability to grow your family. But I want you to try to find the courage to hear this truth and it is a truth that you'll feel in your body.

Nobody survives without this planet. This air, this water, this sun, none of us survive without it. We all lose. And some of us lose first and some of us lose hard, but at the end, we all lose if we don't have this planet. And climate change is about this planet. But it is also about our deeper societal traditions. It is about what we do every day. It is about who we are as a people, as a state, as a region. This climate change conversation is about the core of us. And climate change to be clear is not a topic. It is not an agenda item. It is not a debate. This is our humanity. It is our human existence we are talking about when we talk about climate change. We are not talking about will you be able to do the things you love. We are talking about everything around you not being able to exist because of the actions that humans are taking and doing on this planet right now.

Climate change is not a debate. It

is not a wedge issue. It is not a dissertation. The science, the math, the statistics all conclusively state not only is the climate changing, but humans are responsible for this ridiculous acceleration of change that is warming our entire planet. And we are seeing the effects of this, some places worse than others, but we see the effects of this everywhere. And no more clearly than in South Louisiana.

Climate change is not about the right or the left or the independents. Everybody across the political spectrum understands that this is a real issue. It is the money that has been pumped into your commercials and your radio commercials, your TV commercials, all of these places where you get your information that make you question whether this is real, make you question whether this is your issue, and make you question how this connects to your everyday life. But let me be clear, this is your issue. If you are a person who lives in Louisiana, this is your issue. We are losing land at the rate of a football field every 45 minutes or so. We are losing land at one of the fastest rates on the planet. We are losing land not just

because we are extracting oil and gas from delta created soil that will then submerge, but we are losing land because the sea around the globe is rising due to global warming. This is a reality. People are already moving. The housing issues that we see now are about to explode because people have to get out of harm's way. It is already here. It is already happening. It is time for you to come into this fight.

And for those of who are a little more skeptical. Let me be clear, the department of defense has a plan for climate change. The oil companies have a plan for climate change. The fortune 500 companies have a plan for climate change. Do you have a plan? What are you doing in your community? How are you addressing this issue?

This is where our courage comes into play. Climate change is real. It is happening now. There were more than 26 storms. If you are from this area, they went through the alphabet and into another alphabet just to name the number of storms that formed in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. It was the largest number of

hurricanes ever on record. 2020. And it is when they clocked the warmest temperatures in the gulf ever. This is our new reality. It is real, it is hear. It is happening. And the courage to shift, the courage to address climate change is really the courage to shift how you think about and how you move every day.

It is really difficult to have this conversation in South Louisiana, in particular, because now I'm going to say something that will really make you pause. Our fossil fuel industry, the one that so many of us have depended on so long. I have benefited from; my family has benefited from. Everyone I know has been in oil and gas. It is responsible for the harms to this planet. And so we are feeling right now the impacts of what our industry has given to this globe. Not only did it give us a house and a place to live and the ability to go to college, but also giving us an accelerated climate shift. We have to be honest about that. The conversations now turn into wait, waits, wait, we have to choose jobs or environment. No. We don't have to choose. We can actually choose ourselves. We can choose our community. We can

choose our land. And we can choose our state.

And there is nothing that the people of Louisiana cannot do when they put their minds to it. We don't have to choose between jobs and the environment we have to create jobs that protect our environment. We have to create housing that can withstand a new climate reality. We have to start treating people with the level of human dignity that has never been seen in this country. But we all know is required and necessary to shift our community to shift our economy, and to shift the way that we deal with each other.

This is what we have to have the courage to do. And that practice is going to start with a little step. And it is going to grow into something much larger. And when a moment comes where someone tries to take our freedom, where someone tries to challenge our values, we will all have practiced courage enough to not go silent like we have seen in this country for the last week. We can't sit in shock and fear as attacks come against our humanity and our dignity and our survival. This is the issue for which we can get over ourselves, we can get past our ego and come

together. Survival is big enough and good enough for us to see each other to deal with each other and get through the challenges of living together. Because we don't have a choice. We have to do it now. There is an international panel that put out a report that says we have 9 years, 9 years. Write down 9 years. And write down how old you will be in 9 years. We have 9 years before we reach a point of no return with this climate crisis. At that point, we will be in a feedback loop that we cannot get out of.

The warming that is happening will create warming, melting, rises. We will not be able to get out of it. It is going to create more and quicker challenges. Faster moving challenges. We have to address this now. And addressing this now doesn't mean that you just throw a punch before you get into the struggle you have to practice what courage is. You have to practice what courage means.

So now I want to ask how is your courage showing up? How can you practice your courage today? Protecting our humanity, protecting our society, addressing this climate



eye sis? I think it is going to be difficult. You are going to have to have a conversation with someone that you love about a topic that maybe they don't want to hear about because it is necessary right now. We don't get to climate justice. We don't get to real climate solutions without addressing past harms of this country.

We don't get to real solutions and real agreement without acknowledging the past harms to the people of this nation. We don't get anywhere that we need to be without being courageous enough to tell the truth about the fact that this country is rooted in principles and values that are harmful to our existence as a humanity, as a human race, and to the existence of this planet and everything that is on it.

This is not about black or white, but this is about supremacy and oppression. And we have to examine and have the courage to examine the role of white supremacy and the role of oppression in the creation of our nation. And we have to examine how these same principles are being used to extract oil and gas out of our land, to extract coal out of our mountains and blow up mountains to

get it out, to extract water from places where people need water. We have to examine the comfort that we get every day as Americans and the impact of those privileges and that comfort on our other fellow Americans as well as the globe. It is important to understand that when you really get to the climate crisis, what is happening is that there is a whole bunch of greenhouse gases going into the air and it is causing a blanket effect and warming our planet. Where these greenhouse gases coming from? From these refineries, from oil and gas drilling, from petrol chemical infrastructure and export terminals and pipelines. It is coming from these places where the front lines are fighting today and they are wondering who is going to have the courage to stand with them.

In order for us to transform our society, we are going to have to practice courage every day. And we are going to have to start demanding what the front lines are demanding, not because you just want to be down with who is cool to be down with right now. That is cute for a second. But that is not the fight. The struggle, the long-term struggle is for you to understand

that it is going to take all of us to save all of us. And the front lines are wondering when we are going to have the courage to show up and stand up. If you don't go to that protest line, if you don't go to the place fiscally, then you have to engage by calling some of these decision makers and calling them out. It is your turn. People have put their bodies on the line. People have died to stop these emissions from going into the air so the planet is okay. We cannot sit back comfortable while someone else fights our battle for us.

In fact, I think all of us need to ignite that little fire of courage, start practicing it now, and when necessary, we need to come together and stave off the attacks on our humanity and our human dignity.

If we want to survive, we are going to have to have the courage to tell this Biden administration to immediately stop the process of line 3 pipeline in Minnesota. If we want to survive, we are going to have to have the courage to call our federal representation and say we want no new leases in the Gulf of Mexico. We want no new drilling in Louisiana. We want no more of this

stuff that is destroying our planet. If we want to survive, we are going to have to fight in the state of Louisiana to say no to the Formosa plant, to say no to any more of these refineries, to say no to any more of these things next to these communities that are mostly black and mostly poor and are being poisoned so we can be comfortable.

If we want to survive, we are going to have to understand that this climate fight is tied to the housing fight, that it is tied to the jobs fight and livable wage fight. That this climate fight is tied to the fight for queer liberation, for all of our liberation. This permeates everything. If we leave this fight to the courageous few, we will lose. We win only if we can ignite the courage in each of us. And learn how to stay and stand together. This will not, friends, it will not be easy. I know it won't be easy. It's not easy now. It is not easy to just say tease words. But you know the truth of what I'm saying. And I know you can feel the truth of what I'm saying. The only thing lacking now is our real understanding of the gravity of this climate crisis.

This climate crisis is not contrived. It will not look like just hurricanes. It will not look like just fires. It will not look like just floods. But that is what happened in 2020. Peace to the people in the west coast who lost everything to those 127, 27 fires. Piece to the people in the Midwest who lost everything to these floods that stopped planting from happening. And peace to the people in South Louisiana, South Texas, South Florida who got hit by these storms in a year with a record number of storms. It is happening. It is here. But it is not just that.

In South Louisiana, we are going to have to worry about our people in heat stress. Who would have thought that the people who choose to live in the hot sunshine of Louisiana now have to worry about it getting too hot? The temperatures are rising. Our people are going to be left in their homes. And if you look at what happened in lake Charles when the hurricanes came through, they were out of electricity. They are out of water. And then there is an explosion of a chemical plant with toxic gas in the air. They say shelter in place. So you have no water, no electricity,

nobody around. People have evacuated exception you if you don't have money or you can't just leave. And you can't go outside because we have so many toxic things around us that when the sea levels rise and the storm and the winds hit these facilities, they kill us. They kill us. They open things up. Pipelines break. Refineries break. Explosions happen. This is what we have sold out our state to be. We can do better.

We can do better. We must do better. And it turns out now is the best opportunity for us to do better.

Why not? Why not a Louisiana where everybody has livable wage jobs? Why not a Louisiana where the jobs that we provide for folks don't have to kill you? Why not a Louisiana where we can be proud of our politicians? Where we can be proud of our leaders saying they are bringing something good to their people? Why are we fighting? Sacrificing our very people, our income, our resources for 3 oil companies? Why are we sacrificing this for an industry that is on the decline? And let me be clear, if you paid attention to what happened to the earth as COVID

made its wrap around this globe, the sadist thing to be as a climate advocate was to see that if humanity was slowed or stopped, that nature, in fact, could recover herself. The waters of Venice in Italy, they say, were never so clear. The air in Mumbai, India they say have never been clear in a generation. Things got better because humans top stopped putting all of their mess into the air. It is the hardest juxtaposition to live with as you listen to the number of people who are dying in order for us to just get to a place where we stopped harming our planet.

We are back to the average numbers now. We are back to driving everywhere and flying everywhere. We are back to turning our lights on and not caring where our energy comes from. We are back to looking at the waters and not caring what the chemicals are in there. But there was a moment in there like every hurricane moment I know. I know some of you know what I'm talking about. Right after that storm where we all become human to each other. Not black, not white, not woman, not man, just human, where we can actually ask and care about whether or not people are okay. That

moment is possible after every storm. That moment is possible in amidst of crisis. That moment is necessary and that moment is here. All we need now are those of us who are paying attention to have the courage not just to change the world, but to change ourselves. This little bit of courage that is a practice, this little step that you can take, if we all take it together, we can become a mighty force. And I think that now is the time for us to do it. We have to have courage as a practice. And we have to understand that transformation is a lifelong commitment. We must transform how we live our lives every day. It is important for you to understand that the people who are representing you on the Public Service Commission who manage your energy, your electricity, it is important to understand that they have a role in mitigating the effects of climate change, not just getting your bills to be a particular amount every month. It is important for you to understand that these lawmakers who are representing us in DC, they have a role to play in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Not just their own personal gain and not their own personal belief. A demand from the



people they represent to handle this. And we have what we need to handle it. That is the saddest part of it all. What we have are all of the technologies needed to move us from this coal and gas and to move us from these antiquated systems into renewable energy systems. We have the technology, the ability. What we don't have is public will and political will to push for federal investment into that transition from fossil fuel-based economies to renewable energy economies. But that's where we have to go. If your courage doesn't bring you to the front lines, let it allow you to pick up your telephone and call your representative and say it is time to handle this.

This climate conversation is broader than just what it can do for you. Because the climate conversation is rooted in a historical philosophy of this country which is extraction. And we have to confront this. We do not want economies rooted in extraction or taking or theft. It is not ours to take. And if you believe in God, you know what I'm saying is true. It is not ours to take. It is not even ours to own. Peace to the indigenous nations who haven't risen up and kicked

us all out. We don't have the right to own any of this stuff. If we are going to be here, if we are going to stay here, then let us at least be the stewards that we are to be to this earth, to this land, and be the brothers and sisters that we are to be to each other. This starts by telling the truth, that starts with a little bit of courage. And that little bit of courage, it doesn't just come to you in the moment. It is a practice. You have to start today. Today, I hope you have the courage to honor the Louisiana fair housing action center. I hope you tell somebody about this program. But I hope you tell somebody about the work they do. I hope today you have the courage to look around your community and see who is out there on the front lines on behalf of a broader community. But they are usually by themselves waiting on people to care and show up.

I hope that you will have the courage today to engage in one small way to advance human dignity in Louisiana, in the United States, and across the globe. But it is going to take us moving now. We are out of time. We have no more time to waste. It is going to take you lighting that fire

today. And it is going to take the work of all of us to save all of us.

I'll just close by saying we've been fed some lies. We've been fed some untruths. And one of those lies is that our independence is the same thing as individualism. That is not true, my friends. Our independence requires us to be able to rely on each other. This individualistic thing we've got going on, I'll take care of myself. Good luck to you over there, I'll do what I need to do. I hope you make it. Good luck. It is not going to work. The only way we all make it out is if we all care about each other. And I'm asking you to care even about communities and people that you might have been trained to not care about.

It is important for us to understand that we've been fed lies. And if there is one lie bigger than individualism, it is that somehow, because of your education or your race or your income or your ZIP code, you have been told a lie that your life might be worth more than mine. Or your life might be worth more than someone else's. But the truth of it is, your life is worth just the same as mine. No matter our mental health, our

physical health, our abilities, accomplishments, we are all equal. And I think that is the message of Dr. Martin Luther king. We cannot lose sight that we are all humans and equal. And if we start that courage, if we light that fire of courage, we'll get to that place we understand we must value each other equally. And if we begin to value each other equally, we'll begin to transform our society into the place, into the society that we know we always deserved. I have faith. The gloom and the doom of the climate conversation has not broken my faith. It has made me have deeper faith in what humanity can do, especially what Louisiana can do.

I hope you will join me and a number of other climate activists and advocates across the nation and globe in understanding that what we need from you all, what we need from everyone, is the courage to engage in this conversation. The courage to engage in this struggle, the courage to understand that there is something bigger and greater than ourselves. The courage to debunk the lies and the courage to stand together. This is what I'm hopeful for in 20121 despite all that we've seen just 14 days in. This is what I'm hopeful for,

that we have the courage to transform our society amidst this climate change reality. I think we can do it.

We are out of time. No more wishy-washy. Time to come in. And if we do it together, I believe we will win. Thank you.

>>: Thanks so much. We had a great question come in which I think is a perfect segue to what you are saying we need to do. What are some strategies? How can we engage with people who don't believe in climate change or people who oppose clean and renewable energy because of their connection to the oil and gas industry? We know there are a lot of people in the community in one of those camps.

>>: It is a great question. And it is the right question.

I don't walk into most communities speaking the word climate change. I walk out speaking about change. Usually, especially in Louisiana, I walk in talking about what is blooming or what is growing. And I ask folks, how are your tomatoes? How are your azaleas? What have you noticed out in your yard? And folks say, it is

really hot or it is too much rain or is azaleas are blooming too early. Or the tomatoes aren't coming in right. There are things that folks can observe on their own. And it takes the politics out of the conversation. That is really what you are up against. And it is hard. It is hard because industry has spent millions of dollars and they spend millions of dollars a year making sure that they at least bring a question into your mind. They don't need to convince you that climate change isn't real but they work to bring a question into your mind. That is all is needed. A little debt. A little question. Something to challenge. Don't start with politics. Start with what we love and how are those things changing? How are we seeing changes in our community? How many people in Louisiana would deny that this hurricane season was a bit crazy? It was a lot of hurricanes. Let's start there.

I think the next step out of that is why? Most people are just repeating what they were told. They don't have an analysis of the thing yet. Why do you not believe in climate change? What do you -- do you believe it is raining more?

Do you believe your azaleas are blooming at a different time? And then the third step I think, when they start admitting things, because they will. People know what they know. Sometimes people just get to, well, that is what I've heard. At that point, we all have an opportunity to acknowledge that we've learned some things that we need to unlearn.

That it is time for us to take responsibility in really finding out the truth. So this is not about me convincing you. But it is a journey of truth together. I want to maybe offer that as a way to engage.

And with regard to oil and gas. We are not going to convince the billionaires or millionaires of oil and gas that this industry is a problem. That -- I wouldn't waste my time there. But there are oil and gas workers, many of whom are unemployed and were pre-COVID because the oil and gas industry is on the decline. By the way, the oil and gas industry is investing in renewable energy, too, because they understand the products on the decline. They just don't want you to know. They want you to stick with their product.

I say let's go straight to the workers. Ask them what it is to work on these rigs. Ask them how much fear they have of an accident. How many of their friends they've lost to something blowing up to something coming off, to something not being connected right. Peace to the folks that we lost on deep water horizon. Ask folks who really oil and gas has given us other than money. Is there anything more than money? Is there anything greater to you than money? If the answer is your life and your family and your place, then you are in. That means you are on my side. That means you are on my team.

We don't have to be so ginger about -- we don't have to touch it so softly. I think we can start telling the truth with some boldness. But boldness doesn't mean we have to be disrespectful.

I think that is where we get a little lost. It is frustrating to have someone not agree with us especially when there is a deeper truth. But respect is not negotiable. We should all be respectful in this process. And understand that it took time for people to get to where they are



and it will take time for people to move away.

One piece of advice is to stay persistent. People see me coming and they're like, here comes climate again. Yeah, every time. Everywhere I go, we can be drinking, dancing, and or about to go to sleep and I'm talking about climate change because that is my commitment to this fight. I want to encourage you to take that on. That is how big this problem is.

>>: It looks like another question came in.

We have time for one more.

How does the average citizen take average against large corporations? I think it feels like a big struggle. What are some small steps someone can do?

>>: What a great question.

If you are one of those people who recycle and buy in bulk and doesn't use plastic and -- thank you. Good job. Good job. Time to turn it up. If you are an individual person, it is time for you to understand that our collective voices is what will bring change. Is there are a number of groups in Louisiana asking people to join

them in a collective voice around this climate crisis.

Some of them are working on energy. Some are working on water. Some are working on food. It doesn't matter to me which group you show up for, but it is time for regular folks -- yes, the folks who are working the 9 to 5 jobs. Yes, the folks who have kids every day. Yes, it is time for you to show up to the meetings, to the conversations, to the actions that are being collectively created by many of the groups that are on the front lines and are fighting. They are fighting your battle. It is time for you to join. You by yourself, not so effective. All of us together, we can make the transformation. We can create the transformation that we need. And we need you. I want to encourage you to look up the Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy. You can find us on the web. We are advancing gulf south for a green new deal. A 5-state initiative looks at how we center workers and jobs as we address the climate crisis.

We are looking across the south for southern communities for a green new deal. Folks

are everywhere. We are waiting for you to show up. If we are not the right place for you, I know where to send you to. Look us up.

How to make your difference alone? The answer is, we have to do this together.

>>: What keeps your passion for activism and organizing going strong?

>>: Well, shrimp. Shrimp, gumbo, conversations under the oak tree, zydeco music, Creole language, Mardi Gras Indians. All of the things that we love, all of the things that we love are threatened right now. Everything that we love about this great state is being threatened by climate change right now. It is easy for me to stay impassioned about this because what I love is on the line. If what I love is on the line, that means that I'm willing to put myself on the line. That means I am willing to do this every day for the rest of my life. That means I want to dedicate my life to saving not just this planet and not just the nation but saving my home. And saving the people who are from my home. Louisiana are the best people in the world. I put my money on Louisiana people because at the end of the day, even in

tension and conflict, we can laugh, smile, eat together, dance together, figure it out. My passion is rooted in the potential of humanity that I find in Louisiana.

>>: Thank you so much.

A few more questions came in. We are out of time.

Could somebody put the Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy in the chat there? If anyone wants to follow up, she can help make those connections.

I want to give a huge thank you. I'm sure, again, if you could hear applause from the audience, they would be sending it your way.

I want to thank our panelists. We so appreciate your work and time and expertise with us.

I want to thank tester T, not just for the work that you've done recently, but for your years of commitment to the fair housing action center. We admire your courage in completing the work that you've done. I want to thank all of our attendees for logging in today. Thank you so much for being willing to experiment with us. We miss

seeing your faces but we feel you as a part of our network and appreciate you very much.

When we stop the webinar, you are going to get a pop up to complete the evaluation for today. Please take just a minute to complete the evaluation. We pay close attention to what people say and use your feedback every year to try and improve our summit. We'll also send it out by e-mail.

If you are participating in Spanish, there is a link at the top of the survey to complete it in Spanish.

We want to ask that everybody out there in our network consider coming a recurring the donor. This year has shown us that we have to be able and respond to the needs of our community as they change. When things happen, we are in a really challenging climate. Your support helps to make that possible.

We want to make sure that you don't miss the rest of Fit for a King. This was just the first day. Next Thursday, January 21st at 11:00. Log in using the same link. Our program is going to be about the connections between policing and

gentrification.

Our keynote speaker -- you can read all about her at [fitforaking.org](http://fitforaking.org).

The last day is January 28th. We'll be talking about the eviction crisis. We need you to be involved to protect our neighbors. You can go to [fitforaking.org](http://fitforaking.org) to get that information. We'll see you next week.