



The Promise of Guaranteed Income: A New Tool to Improve Jobs and Empower Workers — Transcript

Hosted by the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

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Description

Guaranteed income is gaining increasing momentum across the US. The bipartisan idea, which has roots in the nation's founding, the New Deal, the Nixon Administration, and the Civil Rights Movement, is being piloted in more than 100 demonstration sites across the country. The expanded Child Tax Credit — a guaranteed income for children — and stimulus payments during the pandemic were the largest unrestricted cash payments to families ever on a federal scale. Research shows that guaranteed income can reduce poverty and help families cover basic expenses like food, housing, and childcare. Less well understood, however, is the impact guaranteed income can have on work.

Contrary to myths that cash transfers could disincentivize work, guaranteed income may in fact support work and workers. Data from recent pilots has provided strong evidence. In Stockton, CA, for example, recipients were more likely to work full time. What is the possible impact on the labor market more broadly, though, and especially on the quality of jobs? How might the security of a guaranteed income provide workers agency, strengthen competition, and raise the floor for all?

We were joined by a panel of experts to discuss how guaranteed income can be a tool to boost worker power and job quality. And read our latest brief on the topic, [The Potential of Guaranteed Income to Empower Workers and Improve Job Quality](#), discussing these possibilities.

Speakers



Roy Bahat

Head, Bloomberg Beta

Roy Bahat is the head of Bloomberg Beta, an early-stage venture capital firm that was the first to focus on the future of work and the first to focus on artificial intelligence. He also serves on the faculty at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business, where he teaches "[Unions and Otherwise: Leading an Organized Workforce](#)." Roy chairs the newly formed Aspen Business Roundtable on Organized Labor, convening "labor open" business leaders to explore [new ways of relating to organized labor](#). Roy was a commissioner on the California's Future of Work Commission, following work

he did with New America to understand the long-term effect of technology on work in America. He was named one of Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business, has served in government, and led a nonprofit in addition to his work at established corporations and starting a company.

He serves on the board or acts as an advisor to several nonprofits, including the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, the Economic Security Project, and the Center for Investigative Reporting. Roy graduated from Harvard College, where he ran the student public service nonprofit. He was a Rhodes Scholar.



Sumbul Siddiqui

Mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui is currently serving her third term on the Cambridge City Council and second as mayor of Cambridge. Mayor Siddiqui immigrated to the United States from Karachi, Pakistan, at the age of two, along with her parents and twin brother. She was raised in Cambridge affordable housing at the Rindge Towers and Roosevelt Towers and attended Cambridge Public Schools.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in public policy from Brown University, Mayor Siddiqui served as an AmeriCorps fellow at New Profit, a then-Cambridge-based organization dedicated to improving social mobility for families. Upon earning her law degree from Northwestern's Pritzker School of Law, she moved home to practice as a legal aid attorney with Northeast Legal Aid.

Her priorities as mayor include increasing affordable housing, supporting local businesses, improving Cambridge Public Schools, and leading Cambridge through the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Mayor Siddiqui launched the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, which has raised over \$5 million to help individuals, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations. She also started [Cambridge RISE](#), one of the first guaranteed income pilots in the country and is currently working on a \$22 million expansion to provide all families in poverty with a guaranteed income.

Mayor Siddiqui, who serves as chair of the school committee, has promoted equitable access to education for Cambridge families by increasing scholarship funding for low-income children to attend high-quality preschools and by implementing a children's savings account program. Mayor Siddiqui looks forward to continuing to make Cambridge a more equitable and civically engaged community.



Erica Smiley

Executive Director, Jobs With Justice

Erica is a longtime organizer and movement leader, Smiley has been spearheading strategic organizing and policy interventions for Jobs With Justice for nearly 15 years. Prior to taking up her current position with the organization, Smiley served as organizing director for Jobs With Justice, developing campaigns that resulted in transformative changes to how working people

organize and are civically engaged at their workplaces and in their communities. During her tenure at Jobs With Justice, Smiley has served in numerous leadership capacities, including as campaigns director and as senior field organizer for the Southern region.

Serving as one of the lead architects, Smiley has been instrumental in developing the strategic vision of Jobs With Justice to build power for impacted working people through expanding their collective bargaining power as one way to redefine and claim their democracy, while addressing issues of inequality and poverty. This includes founding the Advancing Black Strategists Initiative and co-convening a national strategy for essential workers.

Smiley co-authored “The Future We Need: Organizing for a Better Democracy in the 21st Century” with Sarita Gupta. She has authored several related articles in the New Labor Forum, Dissent Magazine, the Journal on Class, Race and Corporate Power, The Labor Education and Research Association, and other publications lifting strategic organizing, movement building, direct action, and discourse as core strategies for advancing work in this arena. As one of the few queer Black women leaders in the labor movement, Smiley has helped to seed numerous initiatives that position and prioritize the demands and voices of vulnerable working people in socioeconomic and political decisions that directly and indirectly impact their individual lives, families, and communities. As a seasoned organizer, she has been a vocal advocate for mobilizing our movements to be aligned around a common agenda for working families.

Prior to joining Jobs With Justice, Smiley organized with community groups and unions such as the Tenants and Workers Support Committee (now Tenants and Workers United) in Virginia and SEIU Local 500 in Baltimore. Her career in social and economic justice began in the reproductive justice field, serving as national field director for Choice USA (now United for Reproductive and Gender Equity—URGE), where she received the Young Women of Achievement Award in 2004.

Her passion for advancing innovations that prioritize the South is evident in the boards she serves on today and in the past, including the board of the Highlander Research and Education Center, based in Tennessee, a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the South, and the leadership council of the Workers Defense Project, based in Texas. She is on the board of the SEIU Education and Support Fund and the Workers Lab, and she participates in the Bargaining for the Common Good advisory committee. In 2019, Rutgers named Smiley a Women in Labor Leadership Empower Fellow.

Smiley is originally from Greensboro, North Carolina, where she is a proud product of public schools — ultimately graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She currently resides in New Jersey, alongside her partner Amanda and their daughter.



Dorian Warren

Co-President, Community Change

A progressive scholar, organizer, and media personality, Dorian Warren has worked to advance racial, economic, and social justice for more than two decades. Like the organizations he leads, Warren is driven by the innate conviction that only social movements — led by the people most affected by racial, economic, gender, and social injustice — can change their communities

and public policies for the better.

Warren is co-president of [Community Change](#), an organization founded in 1968 by civil rights, labor, and community leaders to honor the memory of Robert F. Kennedy’s fight to end poverty in America. He is also the co-founder and co-chair of the [Economic Security Project](#), an innovative social impact organization that has already shifted the national conversation around cash, economic power, and economic security. And he is the co-host of the “[Deep Dive](#)” podcast on “The Takeaway” with Melissa Harris-Perry.

Warren taught for over a decade at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, where he was co-director of the Columbia University Program on Labor Law and Policy. He’s the co-author of “[The Hidden Rules of Race](#),” co-editor of “[Race and American Political Development](#),” and author of numerous [academic articles](#). He also worked at MSNBC, where he was a contributor, fill-in host for “[Melissa Harris-Perry](#)” and “Now with Alex Wagner,” and host and co-executive producer of “[Nerding Out](#)” on MSNBC’s digital platform, now Peacock. He was previously a fellow at the [Roosevelt Institute](#)

and serves on the boards of Working Partnerships USA, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the National Employment Law Project, the Model Alliance, and the Nation magazine.

As a commentator on public affairs, Warren has appeared regularly on television and radio, including NBC Nightly News, ABC, MSNBC, CNN, CNBC, BET, BBC, NPR, Bloomberg, and NY1, among other outlets. He has also written for the Nation, the Huffington Post, Newsweek, Salon, the Washington Post, the New York Times, Medium, Ebony.com, and Boston Review.

Moderator



Natalie Foster

President, Economic Security Project; Senior Fellow, The Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative

Natalie Foster is the president and co-founder of the Economic Security Project, a network dedicated to advancing a guaranteed income in America and reining in the unprecedented concentration of corporate power, and she is a senior fellow at the Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative. Prior to that, she was the CEO and co-founder of Rebuild the Dream, a platform for people-driven economic change, with Van Jones.

Foster served as digital director for President Obama's Organizing for America and the Democratic National Committee. She built the first digital department at the Sierra Club and served as the deputy organizing director for MoveOn.org. She's been awarded fellowships at the Institute for the Future, Rockwood Leadership Institute, and New America California, and is a board member of the California Budget and Policy Center, the Change.org global foundation, and Liberation in a Generation, a project to close the racial wealth gap.

About

Opportunity in America

[Opportunity in America](#), an event series hosted by the Economic Opportunities Program, considers the changing landscape of economic opportunity in the US and implications for individuals, families, and communities across the country. The series highlights the ways in which issues of race, gender, and place exacerbate our economic divides, and ideas and innovations with potential to address these challenges and broaden access to quality opportunity. We are grateful to Prudential Financial, Walmart, the Surdna Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Bloomberg, and the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth for their support of this series. Learn more at as.pn/opportunityinamerica

Economic Opportunities Program

The Aspen Institute [Economic Opportunities Program](#) advances strategies, policies, and ideas to help low- and moderate-income people thrive in a changing economy. [Follow us on social media](#) and [join our mailing list](#) to stay up-to-date on publications, blog posts, events, and other announcements. Learn more at as.pn/eop

Transcript

Maureen Conway (00:00:01)

Good afternoon and welcome. I'm Maureen Conway, a vice president at the Aspen Institute and executive director of the Economic Opportunities Program. It's my pleasure to welcome you to today's conversation, The Promise of a Guaranteed Income: A New Tool to Improve Jobs and Empower Workers. This conversation is part of the Economic Opportunities Program's ongoing Opportunity in America discussion series in which we explore the state of economic opportunity in the US and ideas for change. We're grateful to Prudential Financial, the Surdna Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Bloomberg for their support of this series. Today's conversation marks a significant evolution in the discussion on guaranteed income. The idea of guaranteed income or universal basic income has been discussed recently as a solution to many different problems. It's been seen as a solution for the millions who might be left jobless by the ever-impending robot apocalypse, but this idea of a solution doesn't really address the real threat facing workers, because the real threat of the future of work is not robots, but the increasingly low quality, low wage and insecure jobs that make up a high proportion of our economy.

A guaranteed income or universal basic income has also been cast as a way to fix a fragmented and infringed social safety net. But again, this solution doesn't really get at the cause of the problem since the fraying of the social safety net is due less to how we spend money on social supports and more to a drive simply to spend less. Over 25 years ago, policymakers made a dramatic decision in welfare reform, which was our primary program to support for women and their children. There was the change from aid to families with dependent children, which gave a guaranteed income support to those who needed it, to temporary assistance to needy families, which gave those in need a very limited time in which they could have social supports. Now, I will just make a note. There were definitely issues with the way aid to families with dependent children was structured, but this was a very marked shift from a commitment to support those in need for as long as they needed it to a very time limited source of assistance.

And the expectation was that helping people get into work that over a limited period of years, people would work their way up to a family supporting job, and then they wouldn't need to rely on public benefits. But it really hasn't worked out that way. In the intervening decades, we've seen declining job quality and declining economic mobility, leaving more and more working people dependent on public benefits, but benefits that are only available to those who work, and that really don't lift them to a very dignified standard of living. So we need to find a way out of this situation in which more and more people work for private companies in order to qualify for public benefits. What system can we build that would honor not only the idea of people working, but also that work should support a dignified standard of living? And that's what we're here to discuss today.

How can guaranteed income give workers more resources to take care of their families, more freedom to leave bad jobs, more agency and power in the labor market so that they can move to good jobs? What can guaranteed income do to help improve job quality and promote racial and gender equity across our economy? And while we too often assume that what is good for workers is bad for business, we often get that one wrong too. So we'll also be tackling what a guaranteed income could mean for employers and businesses. We have a fabulous panel to talk about this today, and I'm super excited about it. I'm going to introduce in just a second, but first, a very quick review of our technology. All attendees are muted. We very much welcome your questions. Please send your questions, thank you to those of you who sent questions in advance.

There's a Q&A button at the bottom of your screen. You can put questions or up vote questions there. We know we have a great audience today and many of you are knowledgeable of this issue. Please share your comments and resources in the chat. We'd love to hear from you. We appreciate your

feedback. Please take a moment to respond to our feedback survey that will pop up at the end of this session. We'd love to try to make things better. We encourage you also to tweet about this conversation. Our hashtag is #talkopportunity. If you have any technical issues during the webinar, please message us in the chat or email us at eop.program@aspeinstitute.org. This webinar is being recorded, will be shared via email, and posted on our website. Closed captions are available. Click the CC button at the bottom of your screen to activate them.

That concludes my technical introduction. And now I am going to turn it over to Natalie Foster in just a minute. Natalie is president and co-founder along with Dorian Warren of the Economic Security Project. The Economic Security project is a network dedicated to advancing a guaranteed income in America and reining in corporate concentration. Natalie is also a senior fellow at the Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative, housed here at the Economic Opportunities Program. But more important for today is that Natalie has been one of our nation's leading voices and advocates for guaranteed income. Personal note, I have to say. And looking at some of the questions that were submitted in advance, I've had some skepticism about this guaranteed income idea. I have learned very much from Natalie, from Dorian, from my colleague, Shelly Steward. So, I'm really excited about this conversation that we're going to have today, because the reason we are even in a position to have today's conversation is due in no small part to Natalie's leadership on this issue. So, Natalie, so delighted you are here to run this and let me turn it over to you.

Natalie Foster (00:06:07)

Thank you so much, Maureen, for that warm introduction and your thought leadership has been very meaningful to this conversation as it's evolved over the last several years. So, thank you. I am so grateful to be in this virtual room with people who care so much about three things I care so much about, building worker power, ensuring good jobs, and how a guaranteed income can get us there. Thank you so much to The Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative. And to Shelly Steward who directs it and her former colleague Camryn Banks, for their fantastic work on this brief, which we will put in the chat, the potential of guaranteed income to empower workers and improve job quality, that really provides the basis for today's conversation. Over the past three years, we have seen the power of cash infusions firsthand. When COVID-19 and the pandemic shut down the economy, the government responded with cash directly to family's cash infusions that sat alongside wages people were earning.

Now, this was not the first time that stimulus checks had been provided and the Child Tax Credit had been in place supporting American families for more than 20 years. What was different this time, however, was that this support was not tied to a recipient's wage income. So what did that mean in practice? It meant that instead of 50% of African-American children being in a household whose earnings are too low to receive the entire Child Tax Credit, that 99% of African-American children and American children writ large, received the credit under the 2021 expansion of the Child Tax Credit. Now this has expired, and hopefully in today's conversation we'll get into what we need to do to bring it back. But it meant that everyone except the top earners received stimulus checks and you didn't have to prove your need, stand in a long line, and you weren't excluded because you didn't earn enough.

The cash came without strings and people put it to work. It was a lifeline and it changed things. It kept food on the table, it kept lights on, it kept houses warm in the winter. It kept families out of poverty, and then families were pushed back into poverty when the programs ended. But beyond that, it really...and this is what we're going to explore in today's conversation, helped rebalance power in the economy in a way that boosted worker agency over their own work lives, created more worker power, and helped shift the dial toward good jobs, because people had choices. It's no accident that during this time, after the cash infusions of the pandemic era, of the stimulus checks and the monthly expanded Child Tax Credit checks, that we saw the Great Renegotiation, initially dubbed the Great Resignation.

And I'm quoting my friend Derek Hamilton by calling it The Great Renegotiation, because a record number of workers quit their jobs and a large percentage of people quitting their jobs due to low pay and lack of opportunities for advancement, but most of these workers found new employment at record rates and evidence suggests they were in higher paying jobs with better working conditions. During this time. We also saw the hot labor summer, a period with more organizing activity than we've seen in my lifetime. People were taking more risks and they were investing in themselves when they had more cash in their pockets. Now, while the pandemic and the government's fiscal response was a natural experiment about the power of cash, my organization, the Economic Security Project, has also been supporting more intentional experiments to show how cash supports families directly, communities directly, and the entire economy as a whole.

In 2017, we took a big bet by supporting a guaranteed income demonstration in Stockton, California, in partnership with then Mayor Michael Tubbs and the Magnolia Mother's Trust led by Dr. Aisha Nyandoro in Jackson, Mississippi. Now, from these two demonstrations, nearly a hundred demonstrations across the country have since launched and are led by community leaders and elected leaders, by mayors, by county commissioners.

We have one of the pioneers today with us, Mayor Siddiqui from Cambridge, Massachusetts, who we'll hear from shortly. So, what have we learned in the past several years? We've actually learned a lot. One, we've learned that when people have cash, when families have cash, they buy things they need to survive and to thrive. We've learned that people use the cash to spend time with their kids by quitting a second or a third gig. They buy birthday cakes, they pay for after school activities, as well as keeping food on the table. And in the case of Stockton, the people who received \$500 a month, this is the demonstration in Stockton launched by Mayor Michael Tubbs, the people who received \$500 a month with no strings attached, they found full-time work at double the rate of the control group, the people who were receiving no cash other than the wages they had.

People then had more resilience to risk going in for a job interview, for a job they might not get, applying for jobs, buying a suit, the work it takes to find the job that you want. And now this is counter to the outdated narrative that investing in families is counter to work. We found an expanded definition of work, that the way people show up to make our society run, through elder care, through taking care of young children, caregiving writ large, care that is both paid and unpaid.

In short, people used unrestricted cash payments to build the life they wanted for themselves and their families. A life that is meaningful and a life that provides security and a life that is too often right now out of reach due to low wages and the high cost of living. So today we will look at how it supports workers, worker power, and what we can do together to ensure that workers have the wages and the economic safety that they need to create good jobs. But first, let's hear from a few workers themselves and run a video of people who've participated in guaranteed income pilots or received Child Tax Credit and what it meant in their lives.

KyungSun Lee (00:12:55)

Hi, my name is KyungSun and I'm the program manager at the Economic Security Project. Last year, I spoke with workers on how receiving recurring cash with no strings attached in the form of either guaranteed income and or the expanded Child Tax Credit impacted people's work and their families during the pandemic. I'm so thankful to the workers who took the time to share their stories with us and here is what some of them had to say.

Vee Tucker (00:13:23)

Well, as the union shop steward, I remember seeing these signs that they had up and the signs said one job should be enough, but it wasn't. Most people that work in hospitality, especially in banquets, usually works more than one job.

Gabriela Aguilar (00:13:41)

It's a total change. This program has helped us, and I'm pretty sure if it stays forever, it's going to help a lot of people. We're up to date on the bills, hopefully, if God willing, we will be debt free by the time the program's over.

Shanelle Wilson (00:14:07)

So, I feel like for me and my family, it helped us out a lot because to be honest, I felt like we were struggling at first and it really helped us to get through. And then it gave us even more leverage. I was able to start a business. I was like, "You know what? I'm not going to have all this money and I'm not going come out at least with my foot on the ground." So, I was like, "You know what? Before all this end, I'm going to start my business."

Contessa Allen-Starks (00:14:39)

But I started the business, because I felt it's something that put myself out there and get to working. What can I do with this money? This is a lot of money coming in at one time. What can I do with this to make it keep on coming?

Natalie Foster (00:15:02)

Thank you for that. I think it's so important to start with the workers themselves, so I'm really grateful for that. So, we're going to connect these dots today, guaranteed income, worker power and job quality. As Maureen said, it's a groundbreaking conversation. They are not dots that are usually connected, and I think we have the perfect group of people here today to do that with us. So let me introduce them to you. First, we have Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui. Mayor Siddiqui is serving her third term on the Cambridge City Council and second as mayor of Cambridge. Now that is one of the longest tenures in Cambridge history, so it is wonderful to have her with us today. She immigrated to the United States from Karachi, Pakistan at the age of two, along with her parents and her twin brother. She was raised in Cambridge affordable housing and went to Cambridge public schools.

Brown for her bachelor's, Northwestern for her law degree. She was a legal aid attorney with the Northeast Legal Aid, and we are so grateful to have her here today with us. After Mayor Siddiqui is Roy Bahat. Roy has a wonderfully varied career in nonprofit, professional services, city government, big media, video games, academia startups and investing. He started Bloomberg Beta, an early-stage venture capital fund in the Bay Area that's been focused on making work better. And he started it in 2013. It makes him one of the few people in Silicon Valley who have worked in the public sector and therefore a very important translator of ideas amongst different groups. So, it is great to have you here, Roy, as well. We have Erica Smiley. Erica is the executive director of Jobs With Justice, a longtime organizer and now a published author.

A long-time movement leader, Smiley has been spearheading strategic organizing and policy interventions for Jobs With Justice for nearly 15 years. Smiley's new book written alongside Sarita Gupta is out now. It's called *The Future We Need*. We're going to drop the link, and everybody should grab a copy today off your favorite indie bookseller. Great to have you with us, Smiley. And last but not least is Dorian Warren. Dorian is the president of Community Change and the co-founder of Economic Security Project and the co-host of System Check, his podcast with Melissa Harris Perry. Dorian is a progressive scholar, organizer, and media personality, and he's worked to advance racial, economic, and social justice for over two decades. He taught for a decade at the University of Chicago and Columbia. He's worked at MSNBC where he was a contributor and a host, and he was the executive producer of *Nerding Out*, a show I still miss on MSNBC's digital platform.

It is wonderful to have you here with us, Dorian. So, we're going to dive into the conversation and actually start with you, Dorian. I'd love it if you would give us any opening thoughts you have connecting these dots between worker power, job quality, and guaranteed income, as well as the history of how we arrived at this moment with guaranteed income. It is not necessarily something that is new. It started to rise in the sixties, thanks to the National Welfare Rights Organization and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, something I've learned a lot about from you, the historian. So, talk to us about that history and any opening thoughts you have.

Dorian Warren (00:18:46)

Sure. Thanks Natalie. And thanks to Maureen and the entire Economic Opportunities crew for hosting this really groundbreaking conversation, I think, to be talking about worker power in the same sentence as guaranteed income. So maybe the way to start, and I don't want to get in trouble with my historian friends, Natalie. I'm technically a political scientist, but I do read a lot of history. And here's what I know. Most ideas actually aren't new. Most ideas actually aren't new. So, we could actually trace this idea of guaranteed income or universal basic income to 1796, at least in the States, to Thomas Payne, who proposed a version of guaranteed income around 1796, 1797. But a common story we hear is that this idea of guaranteed income was thought up like 10, 15 years ago by a few Silicon Valley tech giants to deal with robots and automation. And that's meant as no disrespect whatsoever to my dear friend and colleague Roy.

But I want to start in a different place. I want to start with black woman and not just because I'm the son of one. Specifically, it was black women on welfare, particularly in the south in the 1960s, who organized at the grassroots level into something called the National Welfare Rights Organization. So, I want to name check, Johnny Tillman in particular was one of the key leaders of the National Welfare Rights Organization. And this was in the context of black women who had for decades been excluded or discriminated against from accessing welfare or the safety net. And so, they came up with this idea of trying not just to access welfare to which white women have had access since the thirties, but they came up with this idea around a guaranteed annual income and started organizing around it in the sixties.

So much so, they were the ones, it was black women on welfare in the South that pushed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to adopt the idea around 1966, 1967. Lots of people want to quote Dr. King these days as saying, "Oh, he was there for guaranteed income." He had to be pushed, he had to be organized around the idea. And in fact, when he actually met with the women of the National Welfare Rights Organization, a few months before the launch of the Poor People's Campaign, he actually didn't really know what they were experiencing on the ground. They had to educate him and push him. And in some ways, that is how the Poor People's campaign emerged. This is all in the context, and I'll wrap up here. This is all in the context of the height of President

Johnson's war on poverty, when the goal at the time was that we were going to abolish absolute poverty by 1976, the bicentennial of this country.

And so out of that context comes Dr. King, pushed by the National Welfare Rights Organization. We also see the Black Panther Party include both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income in the 10 point platform. And I just want to say this has been a little bit of lost history, particularly of the black women who had this idea decades ago and organized around it in a real way. So, I just want to lift that up. I'll also put a link in the chat to give you a little bit more of that history.

Natalie Foster (00:21:53)

Wait, but Dorian, don't leave off there like what happened? So, there was a big surge in the sixties, and then what?

Dorian Warren (00:22:00)

So much so if you think about this, and it's going to shock some people, even President Richard Nixon had a version of an idea around a guaranteed annual income called a negative income tax, which ultimately failed in the early seventies. And so, from that point on through the seventies, eighties, and of course we know the rise in the eighties, there was a rise of attacks, racialized and gendered attacks, in particular on welfare and welfare as we knew it.

As soon as black women started getting access to welfare, then it was a bad idea. Not a coincidence. And so there was a decline in the notion of the idea around guaranteed income. And frankly, Natalie, there wasn't much organized labor support at the time. I think we're in a different place today in terms of the relationship of how to think about guaranteed income to the notion of worker power. I think you know I think of it as, in many ways, and Smiley, you and I have written about this, as a universal strike fund that would empower workers to basically have the freedom to make choices around their conditions of work in their time. So, I think we're at a different place given the last 40, 50, 60 years around this conversation.

Natalie Foster (00:23:10)

Thank you. And you know, I think one of the reasons we're in a different place is because mayors across the country have picked up this idea and have demonstrated it in their cities and have articulated it as important to the very localist of economies, much less the national economy. And so, I'm going to turn to you, Mayor Siddiqui, as one of those pioneers. There have been programs like the dividend in Alaska for the past 40 years that has given unrestricted cash to Alaskans. We have social security that is extremely popular across the country, that eliminated poverty amongst the oldest Americans. But it's just in recent years that guaranteed income has really started to increase in the U.S. conversation that we're having this conversation today. And you and the local mayors have led the charge. So, what is behind all of this action? Why did you and your community feel like it was time to try it out?

Sumbul Siddiqui (00:24:08)

Yes, thank you, and thank you so much for having me here today. It's such an honor to be here with all of you. I really love what you just said, Dorian. I think these ideas aren't new, but on the local level, it's all about the local action that can lead to implementation of these ideas. And we often hear that cities

are these laboratories of democracy, and I think for me personally, I know for a fact that mayors, they're closest to the ground. They see the real everyday effects of economic insecurity.

And so, for me personally, I think back at that period when the pandemic hit, we have something called the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, and we usually have used it in the past for fires, and providing relief and money towards that, but we restarted it to just focus on COVID, and we were able to raise over \$5 million in private donations to distribute as direct cash assistance to residents in need. And the feedback from people at that time was, "This was truly a lifeline, and it really helped during this time," but then I kept hearing, "Is there more? I'm still struggling. This is what's happening," and we were hearing these stories, and this is also the same time I heard about Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, and the amazing work of Mayor Tubbs, and you, Natalie, and the Economic Security Project.

And I thought, wow, this is such an opportunity to be able to do something that can be impactful. And so, we started RISE, which is Recurring Income for Success and Empowerment, and we raised the money, there was lot of coalition building. There was so much involved, and through the support of MGI and others, we were able to launch this pilot. And it was really amazing to then hear from residents who said, "We feel seen by the government. You've recognized that we can use this assistance, and you're trusting us to figure out how to best use the money." And so, I think it was just a really, really important thing for us to do on a level and try it out. So, it's just been an amazing experience to be part of it.

Natalie Foster (00:26:48)

So, Smiley, I'll turn to you. You heard the history, you've heard the living history from Mayor Siddiqui as to what's happening right now, making the history books in the future, and how labor and the struggle for worker power are intertwined. Tell us more about that, and why workers in security today are growing and prevalent, even in the richest country on earth?

Erica Smiley (00:27:16)

Well, that's a much longer question than we got time for, but I'll at least take an initial stab, especially given Dorian's opening, which I really appreciate, and of course, the pilots that Mayor Siddiqui is working on. I mean, there's a saying, right? Like, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." One of the first questions that we have to really think about when tackling this from a perspective of the labor movement is who does it benefit to not give working people a guaranteed income? The stimulus move during COVID actually clarified this for those who weren't already clear, low wage employers throughout the country blamed the stimulus package for making it difficult for them to find workers, leading to a labor shortage where market pressures force them to compete for workers by offering higher wages. The horror of offering higher wages. How dare they not be allowed to pay super low wages? And so, instead of seeing the stimulus as a good thing, keeping the majority of Americans afloat during a difficult time, they began to claim that federal dollars were making people lazy.

And so, going back to some of Dorian's history, which I really appreciate, just as Ronald Reagan and his supporters painted this picture of the welfare queen, kind of falsely implying that Black women, who were not even the majority of people receiving welfare, were taking advantage of the government, and not working, having more babies on the government's dime. Similarly, low wage employers have tried to paint a similar picture of lazy workers, lazy people collecting unemployment and not working despite the availability of jobs, low wage jobs. I think it was one of the executives at the National Restaurant Association went so far as to hope that high gas prices would actually send people back to work, right? Of course, we know from actual data that most workers did not sit at home. They were

simply able to get better jobs, or God forbid, sustain themselves on one job, instead of three jobs, leading to more time to, I don't know, live, if I could say that. Is that fair to say, and have some joy?

Sumbul Siddiqui (00:29:11)

And just one other reflection, Natalie, is that it's for us to not simply think about a guaranteed income in general, but a guaranteed income for who? And Dorian laid out a little bit around what the implications were when it came to guaranteed income for people who were not Black, being more positive and hopeful when Black women began to demand it, but there's also this question of a guaranteed income for everyday people, versus corporations. So, one of the things that we took on at Jobs With Justice early in 2020, when trying to pause rent payments from large scale corporate landlords who could afford it, on behalf of workers in hospitality and service industry who had been laid off, right? And so, we took on this fight to try to pause their rents, and the association of some of these large corporations actually responded to our request by suggesting that the federal government pay rent on workers' behalf with our tax dollars.

So, when it benefited them to profit off the crisis to have a guaranteed income from our tax dollars, if we couldn't pay it with our wages, they were all for it, and while these corporations may not outright oppose guaranteed income for individuals, they certainly seem more interested in finding ways to have it benefit them, more than the working families who need it most. So again, when we think about the crisis that workers are facing, it's kind of a double pressure, this question of, "Are you going to actually be able to give me the income through wage-based income in a way that can sustain me, that would allow me to have one job, that would allow me to work to live, as opposed to live to work? Or are you going to insist on basically mooching or acting as a parasite on all of our tax dollars, to make sure that you're your bottom line still means the same while I struggle?"

Natalie Foster (00:31:01)

That's great. Thank you. Roy, we'll turn to you. You've been an early thinker in these connections between guaranteed income, worker power, job quality, and businesses. How have you seen this conversation evolve, and what do you see as the rationale for guaranteed income as a tool to advance workers' interests?

Roy Bahat (00:31:22)

Thank you, Natalie, and thank you everybody. All these dimensions around race, culture, the economy, and I guess I'd just say I was trying to think of how to simplify this very complex conversation, and the word that came to me is surprised. And what I mean by that is this is the kind of policy where... And I'll describe what changed over time, including for me. Where people come to it, and because it sounds so deceptively simple, many people think they know exactly what will happen. If their model is a neoliberal model of homo economicus and incentives, they know what's going to happen. If they have more awareness about how different communities struggle day to day, they think they know what's going to happen.

And almost everyone I know who's been involved in this has been deeply surprised by one or more elements of how this plays out, either how it plays out, Smiley, I love that word, joy, in the joy of the

recipients, as opposed to when you ask somebody, "How will you feel about this?" And Natalie, we did those focus groups asking people about a guaranteed income. I think we were talking to truckers at the time, and they said they described shame, many of them. They described a violation of basic principles of how they thought the government worked. "Well, I don't want to get something for nothing," is how they perceived it, but in the right context, it's not perceived as something for nothing, it's perceived as something you've earned by being a member of the society, and just that.

So, I think surprise to me is the one word, and curiosity is prompted by that, and I'd say for my own evolution on it, working now almost 10 years, and for the last couple of years being actively involved in the conversation about organized labor, including some work we do at The Aspen Institute, which I'll share more about, I think the conversation, three changes in the conversation really quickly. One you already mentioned, is it went from theory to reality. Oh, here's this thing Thomas Paine talked about, but now we have some data, and even in the Q&A, I can see people saying, "What about this other data?" It's like, yeah, great, let's go get all that, all the stories, all the data, all of that.

The second thing is that the conversation went from being very future oriented, at least among business people where they said, "Well, automation's going to come and take all the jobs, so this is the defense mechanism we need," and we had done this study five years ago that many of you were involved with, with New America, the SHIFT Commission, to try to anticipate the future of work in America, and what we realized is, nah, you don't need to think about the future. All the issues it addresses are already here right now. And so, I heard Van Jones earlier today saying, "Acting on the present needed to happen yesterday," something like that. I'm paraphrasing, and I really feel that in the case of guaranteed income.

The third thing is it went from simple to, I think the right word is rich, and I don't mean rich in a wealth sense. I meant rich in a layered, nuanced sense of how do people feel about this? How does it interact with commuting, religion, the choice to work? I mean, I have this op-ed I wrote years ago in The Washington Post about how I thought a guaranteed income might be a trampoline, instead of a floor that would spring people to be more entrepreneurial, innovative. And I'm a VC, but I don't mean to start a tech company. It could mean that. I mean, start your small business, as one of the workers referred to, I mean, write your novel. I mean, sing your song, whatever it is. Be with your kids, whatever gives you joy.

And I guess the hunch we had years ago, I think for me is hardening into something supported by data, which is this might be good for everybody. It might be good for business, and make businesses run better. It might be good for workers in terms of the power they can have, the society, people who don't work and still deserve to have joy and life, that we as a society can provide. So, surprise is the theme, although some of the kind of core beliefs have hardened over time for me.

Natalie Foster (00:35:15)

Thank you, Roy. I was reflecting good for workers, good for society, good for democracy, which is I hope something we'll dig into later, particularly with you, Smiley. Roy, we're going to stay with you for a moment. Before we drill down into more worker power and job quality, let's talk about businesses and employers. Why do you think they should care, and how could they benefit too from a guaranteed income, or an expanded Child Tax Credit, which I think of as a guaranteed income for families with children, sort of the stepping stone that's in the political conversation today?

Roy Bahat (00:35:52)

Yeah, what I see when I talk to CEOs and investors is generally speaking, one symptom I see of inequality in our society is an epidemic of cluelessness, where many leaders just can't imagine what it's like to be their own frontline workers, and I don't know, maybe this is just nostalgia, but I don't know if it was quite like that in the past. As the gap has grown, it's really hard to imagine. And so, the thing that I'd say that's counterintuitive for business leaders is weak workers are bad for business, and a society where working people suffer, is also bad for business.

And I'll just give a few examples of that, and there are plenty of other cases. One is workers who are less scared are more productive. They can think about how to innovate, they can take a chance. You want workers to act without fear of losing their job at every moment, because that enables them to be creative and healthy, and in general as a business person, you want to do deals and have partnerships with strong counterparties, not weak ones. And so, it's almost like business got kind of too much of what it had been advocating for. So, more productivity.

The second thing is more consumer spending. I mean, right now, a lot of spending in the economy is concentrated in businesses, and in people at the top of the income ladder, and the wealth ladder. That changes what kinds of things companies invent. Third thing is just less turnover, a healthier relationship with your workforce, less of the kind of sense of that society is fraying, and it might play out on the terrain of your workforce's anger about some policy you have about your dress code.

And it's very similar to, I'd say for businesses, things like the conversation we're having now in our country about non-competes. If you say to a business leader, "Would you like to be able to make your workers be unable to work for their competitors?" Intuitively, they'd say, "Yeah, that'd be a great thing to do," but it turns out when workers are free to move, there's this vitality to the economy as a whole, that that freedom benefits businesses. It's one of the reasons why we have a startup ecosystem that's so healthy in California. And so, I think like that, having a more stable world, having a more stable society, but also having workers have more power at this moment in time is a thing that would be good for companies.

Natalie Foster (00:38:13)

Roy, in the past, you've talked about the Affordable Care Act as a type of technology that helped worker mobility. It strikes me that that is something similar to how you're describing guaranteed income, toward the end of your conversation.

Roy Bahat (00:38:27)

100%. I mean, we in the startup world saw that the Affordable Care Act was really good for innovation, because founders and their employees were less scared about being unable to access healthcare. And so, in general, I think it goes back to the four freedoms. Fear, if it exists in the society, is just bad for everybody, and one of the reasons I think a guaranteed income is so powerful is because it can reduce the incidence of fear, which seems, from what I can tell, unacceptably widespread, to the point where that fear is the soil in which many of our national crises around extremism and all kinds of other issues are grown.

Natalie Foster (00:39:06)

Thank you for that. Dorian, critics of guaranteed income argue that it could subsidize poverty wages, while proponents argue that it increases wages in workplace standards, and some would argue we need a universal basic income, right? It goes to everyone in society, versus a guaranteed income, which can be means tested. Will you talk about some of the ongoing debates in this conversation, what evidence and research suggests is most effective, and ways we can ensure that guaranteed income improves and doesn't harm job quality?

Dorian Warren (00:39:44)

Okay, Natalie, am I the only one you're giving 18 different questions to at the same time? All right, I'm going to try to walk through all of these, but I want to start with the very fact that when COVID-19 hit and we had to shut down the country and the economy, and the economy crashed, we didn't say to people, "Oh, just go out and find a job." We didn't say that. We sent cash, and we sent cash multiple times, round after round of cash payments directly to people, and then we expanded the Child Tax Credit, and we didn't hear the exact noise around welfare or welfare queens in the midst of the pandemic. And so, it's not lost on me that it took a once in a generation, a once in a hundred-year black swan event to get clarity in this country about the role of cash and guaranteed income, and what it could do.

Okay, so that was my little rant. To answer your question, I think the conception that many people have of universal basic income is that it would replace other safety net programs, if not the entire safety net, and many of us believe that that would definitely undermine whatever power that workers derive from a range of cash programs that we have right now. By the way, we are in a fight around the SNAP or food stamps program right now, and there's going to be a decline in benefits, which would immediately lead to an increase in food insecurity for millions of folks, and yes, what you've already said, Natalie, the richest country in the history of the planet. And I hope that our colleagues who like the idea of UBI will raise their voices around this issue around food stamps, and the suffering that many people, families, individuals, children, are going to experience by the cut in one of our critical, critical safety net programs and cash programs.

Okay. So, no strings attached cash, here's what we know, gives workers leverage to turn down a bad job, to quit a job for a better job, to ask for a raise without fear, as Roy was just mentioning, and then you might think of these as sort of small things, like to be able to turn down a bad job, or to quit a bad job, or to ask for a raise, but talk to any worker who's working multiple jobs right now, if that's a small thing, and I guarantee you, they will tell you it's not a small thing in terms of their livelihoods. Guaranteed income, what we're learning, pushes up wages and improves working conditions, and even more, it raises the expectations of workers that then puts even more upward pressure on wages and working conditions. So, as Roy mentioned, guaranteed income also increases spending in the economy. Why do you think we sent cash in the midst of a pandemic to people, right? Because we need it to create more demand for workers, and a tighter labor market, as any labor economist will tell you, drives up wages and working conditions.

Last but not least, I want to talk a little bit about the data and the evidence. We are accumulating an incredible body of evidence, of social science evidence on cash, on guaranteed income, on worker power, on job quality. Someone already posted in the chat this great paper by Jake Rosenfeld and Ioana Marinescu, I think is her name, where they explore this relationship around worker voice, worker exit, the role of cash and guaranteed income, and how to grow worker power. We have an amazing amount of accumulating evidence on many of the guaranteed income pilots around the country, and what people actually do with the money and what it means for local economies.

Dorian Warren (00:43:19)

So, I want to encourage that. The social scientist in me says, "Yes, let's keep getting the evidence," but by the way, last point, just having data and evidence, isn't going to get us to the North Star of good jobs, or strong worker power, or guaranteed income. I know we're going to talk later about political will, but we also at some point have to have a conversation of what it would take to bend the political will. Given all the evidence and data that we have at our disposal, and what we're learning in real time, how do we think about bending the political will around advancing these set of North Star issues?

Natalie Foster (00:43:54)

Thank you, Dorian. Smiley, let's turn to some concrete examples of how non-labor income, and I say that to distinguish it from wages, both of which are very important to the overall economic security of workers, how non-labor income, like a guaranteed income, or expanded Child Tax Credit checks, could benefit workers. Now, you've partnered with coworker.org on the Solidarity Fund, which gives cash transfers to people who are organizing their workplace or want to organize their workplace. Tell us about that, and other examples and ways you have seen that cash can benefit workers, economic security, power, and dignity.

Erica Smiley (00:44:37)

Yeah. I mean, there's so many ways. You know mentioned the Coworker Solidarity Fund, which is fantastic in how it raises resources from higher paid workers or workers in higher paid sectors, to distribute and support activism amongst workers in low wage sectors. Even before that, in the earliest days of the pandemic, there was the UndocuFund out of North California, which generated crowdsourced resources for workers who were left behind in the early stimulus, who did not get included. And of course, this later inspired not only additional worker solidarity funds and UndocuFunds around the country, but of course, major victories in states like New York, and in cities like DC, where they were able to win resources for workers who had been excluded by that, clearly understanding what it meant to have access to a guaranteed source of income and to resources in such a time of crisis.

And what we've seen that people did with this newly won free time, is that people were more active, and felt that they deserved more. We saw workers that were categorized as essential, take to the streets demanding better from their existing jobs, from Amazon, to Starbucks, to Apple, and beyond, noting that, "If we're going to be defined as essential in the economy, then you actually have to treat us like we're essential to the economy," not surprisingly. And many of us attempted to continue to support this through providing rapid response funds via the Worker Solidarity Fund, and Coworker Solidarity Fund, and these are activist grants and fellowships that not only provide immediate relief, but were actually very intentional about supporting workers' economic security in the face of retaliation from angry employers, for organizing their coworkers, right? And similar results were found in other stimulus efforts, you mentioned the Child Tax Credit.

But I wanted to speak specifically to this, because what we're talking about with some of these additional resources is the equivalent of a strike fund for workers who aren't yet in unions, and of course, we'd like to raise some of that from unions and existing movement partners as well, to give workers a level of security to continue to be active. And I want to speak to this point of active, because it was in the chat, someone said, "Oh, do we not have to work hard anymore?" And of course not, we have to keep working hard, but this time, we can work hard to innovate. Like Roy said, we can work hard to vote, and participate, and contribute to civil society. We can work hard to set standards together. We

can basically work hard at contributing to our shared society and our shared prosperity, as opposed to working hard to fill the pockets of a small group of people, to benefit from our own exploitation.

Which leads to, I think the last point that I wanted to make, and you mentioned democracy earlier, I think one of the key things about workers who've been in motion over the last couple of years is that many have seen this as their contribution to building democracy, and this is often the case. I mean, when you saw a Big Mike from Bessemer, Alabama in the first Amazon election, say, "This is our Black Lives Matter movement on camera," when you saw the motivating factor for many of the workers in Staten Island was how Black workers had been arrested after asking for PPE, the number of women who stood up at Starbucks and said, "This is our Me Too movement." Even in the book, and thanks for putting our link in the chat, but we talked to workers like Sanchioni Butler who was organizing in auto manufacturing in the '70s, and mentioned one of her favorite victories was winning a bathroom for women on the shop floor with her coworkers, and she said, without even thinking very much, she's like, yeah, that was our women's liberation movement. The idea that we separate these things as if the work that people are doing in order to organize each other and contribute to standard setting, it's critical to see those as the work that we actually need to save democracy. It's critical to see those workers as being on the front lines to the fight to save, preserve, or even expand for the first time our democracy. And so the last thing I want to say to this point, right, because we talk a lot about the great renegotiation. I much prefer that to the great resignations. I've heard some people say the great awakening. Well, it also refers back to another great period in our history, the great reconstruction period, which is the last time that arguably our nation was pointed in the direction of trying to build a multiracial democracy, albeit imperfectly.

But this was a moment when if you look at the constitutional amendments that came out of that period, you see that the first one was the abolition of slavery and forced labor. So this notion that labor is actually central, and worker participation is central, to maintaining and building a healthy and strong democracy in this country. Just to build on some of the comments that Roy made, that getting beyond what the immediate implication may be for one given company to our overall salvation, especially as we're watching wars around the country where people who have lost democracy and have perhaps right before that also had significant years of labor repression, that we want to be cognizant of what's at stake here, because it's far beyond your bottom line for this particular quarter.

Natalie Foster (00:49:41)

Roy, I think you want in on this, please.

Roy Bahat (00:49:44)

Yeah. I mean, just to say, I think a temptation in this conversation, which this group is not falling into, is what I call the capitalism is inevitable temptation. Meaning that, well, our economy's going to be fine no matter what. The system's going to work the way it does no matter what. And one of the flaws that I think guaranteed income can address, and it gets to job quality and choices for people, is in our system, one of the ways it's supposed to work is that if I'm a business trying to employ people, there's supposed to be competitive pressure on me to compete with other businesses for giving workers a good experience, a higher wage, et cetera. And the evidence base is rich that the degree of competitive pressure on most businesses in America continues to decline with time. The number of new businesses being created declines with time, et cetera.

And so, the question to me is what pressure do we need on employers to provide the kind of work that people want to do? Because I think most people really want to be productive. They want to fit into the

society. We've done this work researching what workers want out of work, and below 150K a year of income, they say what they want is more stability and security in their income. So obviously guaranteed income can do that. And meaning, as many people who are on this call probably might define it doesn't kick in until more than 150K of income.

Erica Smiley (00:51:23)

But dignity, which is a related but separate concept, everybody wants. And one of the roots of the word dignity is fitting in, is the feeling of being part of something. And I think that what businesses are offering many frontline, in particular, employees who of course tend to be disproportionately women, disproportionately black and brown, et cetera, is what David Graver, the anthropologist, would've called a bullshit job. A job that they know doesn't need doing, and therefore isn't a rewarding human experience. So in a way, the competitive pressure the market is failing to provide, has to be, or can be, provided by the society that gives workers more leverage so that employers are forced to compete on providing a work experience that's worth doing.

Natalie Foster (00:52:07)

Yeah, yeah, that's really helpful. Let's take this to Cambridge and Mayor Siddiqui, how are you connecting some of these dots? And then what are you hearing from people in the Cambridge Rise program? What are you hearing from families, families with children, and how it can support working people's choices, freedom, and upward mobility?

Sumbul Siddiqui (00:52:30)

Yeah, we're hearing a lot about what Roy just said, dignity, right? We're hearing from the storytelling component and the narratives that this is giving individuals choices. We have examples. There's a single parent who used the cash assistance to catch up on her monthly expenses. She then paid for transportation and a babysitter, and she was able to then go to school at night and get her medical assistant degree that she'd been wanting to do. She was cutting hair, but this is what she actually wanted to do. And that this guaranteed income created that freedom to do that. We have other recipients who, have said, I've used the money to pay back loans and I've used the money to pay back tuition that I owed and now I can finally graduate from this program. So there's a lot of those types of examples through Cambridge Rise.

And then there is, as Dorian mentioned, we have a lot of evidence that this is helping people and supporting working people's choices, their freedom, and upward mobility. It's individuals who are able to now buy a car so they can get to a job. They're able to take the commercial driver's license test and now earn more money. And so there's all these examples. And one example, we were doing a recent event and one of the recipients said, "I have some extra cash and I can go buy things locally at my favorite businesses. And before I just didn't, at the end of the month, I didn't have an ability to do that." And so it's another example of showing that we are able to support people's choices on the local level that have such a broader impact. So there's countless examples I have.

Natalie Foster (00:54:39)

I had the great honor of going to Jackson, Mississippi, to sit with Dr. Nyandoro at the Magnolia Mother's Trust. And we sat across from a woman very similar to this story who was working retail because her

dream was to be a phlebotomist, which she had understood as a job that would give her security, the security she wanted to raise her children, but she was \$400 in the hole at the local community college on tuition. And there was no way to pay that back, right? No way to amass \$400 to pay back her tuition. And so her first Magnolia Mother's check she took to the community college, she paid off her debt, she was able to re-enroll in classes, because you cannot re-enroll until you are in the black on the ledger, and was able to complete her degree and have the job she wanted. And your stories really remind me of that experience.

I want to talk about care work here because I think it is going to be the largest occupation by 2040. We know it is the work that does not stand at risk of any automation. Humans want human beings to take care of them. And we know that it has long been, there's an unpaid history of care in America. So this is to both Smiley and Dorian, and anyone else who wants to weigh in. Talk to us about how guaranteed income and care work connect. Smiley, we'll go first to you. You

Erica Smiley (00:56:05)

You want me to go first? Okay. All right. Look, I always like going after Dorian. It's not a problem. Look, I think the first thing I want to remind us is what Dorian opened with at the very beginning of the panel, this idea that he wanted to start with black women being the first to demand a guaranteed income. Well, it's also black women who were excluded from our first kind of codified labor law on the National Labor Relations Act. I shouldn't say the first right? There was the Industrial Relations Act, but it was total crap. Don't read that. Anyway. But they were the first to be, they were excluded, and it was mainly they were in care sectors. That was why. They excluded care work, agricultural work sectors where black women and migrant dominated the workforce. And so there is a very direct line around the necessity of guaranteed income and care work through the lens of black women.

I think the other question we have to really think about is this question of the value of work, which Roy brought up, I think really eloquently. It's not a matter of helping people be lazy. Again, that feels like it's falling into some real right wing narrative building that's not actually based in reality for the overwhelming majority of people. But this question that people really want to contribute, and that people find meaning in work, it's why I often get in trouble and why many on the left get in trouble just for generically referring to people as workers. Actually people are, they'll say that I'm the caretaker, I'm an electrician, I'm a chef. There's value in the things that people do to make society work. And like Kimberly Mitchell said in her book, if all you see me as is a worker, you're missing so much, not just of me, but of what's possible in the world that we live in together.

And so that's the other through line I want to draw. And then maybe the last thing that I'll share here, which is similar but a little off, is that we got the luxury of working with a set of care workers. They were wage workers, but they were low wage, in the low wage care sector in Connecticut, back in 2014 where they said, "You know what? All of these companies are taking advantage of us, and taking advantage of our sisters, our siblings, our allies," in companies like the Walmarts and McDonald's, where so many employees were dependent on public assistance in order to live, even though they were working sometimes multiple jobs in order to make ends meet, still living out of their cars.

And so they got together and said, "Well, what if we proposed a bad business fee, or a low wage employer fee that would build a pot, would find people for however many dollars they paid under \$15 for however many worker hours, that we could then negotiate how that gets used, whether we put it back into a forum that could lead to a guaranteed income or other specific services. That we are not going to let these large low wage corporations off the hook in taking care of everyday people."

And so this was a real interesting experiment. We did not win, but one of the fail forwards that I like to lift up was that one of the largest companies in the state did raise its bottom wage to \$16 an hour just in case to avoid the fee. And that's one of the things that ultimately ended up helping people say, get their kids back into childcare, or provide some of basic needs, or even just work halftime so that they could take care of a senior or a relative at home. That is, of course, continues to be unpaid labor for most people. So that would be my opening volley. But super curious what Dorian has to add too.

Dorian Warren (00:59:44)

Smiley, I don't have much to add. You just said all the words, so I'll just repeat some of what you said. Just number one, care is also work. Care is also work. It is often emotional work and labor that, as you mentioned, Smiley, has been historically unpaid or vastly underpaid. Whether you're a childcare worker or a domestic worker or home care worker or long-term care worker today, very, very low wages, very, very underinvestment. And again, when you start to unpack that and ask the question why, it does take us back to our long history in this country around who we valued and who we didn't, who was included and who was not. And so there's, from the founding, there's a whole history of black women taking care of other people's babies instead of their own, right? And that's how the whole tradition of care work has been organized and designed in this country.

So where does guaranteed income come in here? I think guaranteed income allows people to take time to provide care to their loved ones, whether paid or unpaid. I believe people have a fundamental urge to take care of one another. And we hear over and over and over again that people are frustrated in their jobs and the rules of the economy because they do not have the freedom to care for kids, or elders, or their broader community, in ways that they want to. And so there is an argument to be made that guaranteed income responds to that fundamental desire to care. I do want to put a price tag on this. Unpaid care work is valued at something like \$2 trillion a year.

Natalie Foster (01:01:21)

Wow.

Dorian Warren (01:01:21)

Unpaid care work is valued at something like \$2 trillion a year, performed overwhelmingly by women, and especially black, brown and immigrant women. And so one way I think about guaranteed income, it's kind of like a dividend for the value that is created by unpaid care work. It is a gender justice issue, I would argue, in addition to racial justice, in addition to disability justice, in addition to economic justice. So, can we imagine a way in which guaranteed income provides essential cash for families that they can use to pay caregivers, or they can use to give care themselves? Can we imagine it also as a mechanism to drive up pay for paid caregivers to drive up pay and working conditions?

I'm the son of a public school teacher, so I have a lot of feelings about the low pay in the education sector, but especially in the early childcare sector and early education sector. Last but not least, it's not lost on me as we were talking about care, just yesterday, the Department of Commerce made a really big announcement basically saying, for those of you following federal legislation, the Chips Act that was passed last year, the Department of Commerce is saying that as a condition to receive Chips

investment money for new plants or manufacturing places to create Chips, that those companies would have to figure out a way to provide for childcare to access any federal money. It's a pretty significant, I think, announcement. I think all of us are trying to figure out how it's going to be implemented. But that's a really big deal.

And the question I would say is, well, why is that? Why would the Department of Commerce or the federal government say if you actually want taxpayer money to build a new plant, you've got to actually provide childcare. It's because workers who are also parents or caregivers can't go to work without having childcare. It's not rocket science. And so this is a form of actually interesting industrial policy to say we're actually going to mandate that if you want government money to build something and to hire workers, how do you actually allow those workers, enable those workers to either build the thing, or to get hired to build the chips later on, you need care. And so I think this movement, I do feel it around the broader care economy. And it's interesting for us, I think, Natalie, to have this conversation of where care work intersects with guaranteed income, and how guaranteed income could actually help elevate the trillions in unpaid care work that mostly women do in this country every single day.

Natalie Foster (01:03:55)

Yeah, I think that's right. And as I hear us talking, I'm reminded this, to me, is a moment at the beginning of a great renegotiation of our social contract. And when I think about Ai-Jen Poo's work around a universal family care social insurance program that would ensure that care is accessible for people at any point in their life, how much that would complement a guaranteed income. Because when I know that care is taken care of, the money can go to pay for other pieces of my life, adding to my agency and my choice. And that these things are not in competition, but in fact I hope are really the future of the social contract in that way. Both and, as Smiley is putting in the chat. Absolutely.

All right, I have one more question for each of you and then we're going to turn it to audience Q and A. And Roy, we're going to go to you first, because we have not spent time, as we've discussed, as you pointed out in the beginning, how much the conversation has changed from a futuristic one to one about the here and now. I want to go to the future for one moment, or it might be the here and now. Who knows? We haven't been talking about technological change as much in today's discussion. And some would argue that it is actually back in the conversation due to generative AI, artificial intelligence chat, GPT, which has captivated journalists around the world and others, and other technology that's advancing rapidly, potentially displacing a different swath of workers than many were than many were worried about five, six years ago. So how are you thinking about the role of cash in supporting the displacement of workers, and how do you think broadly about technological change in the workforce today?

Roy Bahat (01:05:43)

I resist the easy narrative of robots are taking all the jobs. And at the same time, I think there's a chance that what mass displacement looks like is what we are experiencing right now, that it shows up in quality of jobs instead of availability. And I'll just say, just speaking of chat GPT, your question earlier about how might business leaders benefit from a guaranteed income. I read my answer from chat GPT. I mean, I happen to agree with it, and I may have changed a couple words here and there, but it is happening now. And so I think that a stable floor, or trampoline, depending on how you want to look at it, is essential for helping our society weather that. And that's both the society in terms of the experience of individuals and the economy. I mean, the way I think about it is we need a more just capitalism, that's clear, but we also need a more vital capitalism, one that invents more things that have greater benefit for people, that competes better against other countries.

I don't think we get to choose between those two, and I don't think they necessarily trade off, and creating a stable floor that allows for workers to handle not just displacement, but I think the important word to me here that goes with surprise is unpredictability. Five years ago, we thought it was the truck drivers who were going to be at risk. Now we're worried about the illustrators and the accountants. And the reality is, and our firm has been focused on investing in AI since 2014, longer I think, than any other venture capital firm. And we don't know what's going to happen. And so, anybody who tells you that it's linear or easy is just shining you on. And so, a stable floor for everybody is the best way to handle an unpredictable pressure. It's not something we can calculate. It's something we just need to prepare everybody for.

Natalie Foster (01:07:36)

Well, I had not thought about chat GPT and deep fakes displacing the future of the panelists, but here we are.

Roy Bahat (01:07:45)

I mean, wouldn't it be great? I'll just do the work. Happy to be here, but let's just do the work.

Natalie Foster (01:07:50)

Yeah, that's really helpful. Thank you. Mayor Siddiqui, Cambridge Rise, your pioneering program is reaching its end. What does the future of guaranteed income look like in Cambridge? And what advice or thoughts do you have for other cities or regions exploring this as a strategy? Now, there have been a lot of people in the chat talking about how they are locally involved with either a pilot or a group of people who are looking to do a pilot. So, what advice do you have for them?

Sumbul Siddiqui (01:08:24)

Sure. And Cambridge Rise actually ended yesterday. February was the last month of disbursements. So, with that said, I think we have a promising future in Cambridge. I can't get into too specific of details because we've been working nonstop on the expansion, but broadly, we will be using ARPA money, we're using about \$22 million of our ARPA money to expand the pilot. So, it would be going from about 130 to over 2000 families. And we're also, the approach we're taking is it's going to be a non-lottery program. We really want anyone eligible to receive the money. And so, we've been really working on the expansion using lessons learned from what we did with Cambridge Rise. And I think that gets to some of my advice to other cities and regions is really to focus on some of the coalition building with organizations within your city.

And what I mean by that is I think some of them, I'm trying to incorporate some of the things that have come up in the chat about benefit cliffs and so forth. And so, one of the things we did early on was we partnered with our local housing authority and our different affordable housing developers. And we wanted to make sure, because the number one question we got was, okay, I get this money and then my rent's going up. And so, we really intentionally focused on having all the key stakeholders at the

table, helping us figure out a program, and benefit mitigation, and getting benefit waivers was a key part of it. And I think another thing that helped in our first pilot was that we had some funding from the Mayors for Guaranteed Income, but the rest was up to the local city.

And we really looked at other partners. We looked at our universities, we looked at all the institutions, we looked at our tech companies, Harvard, MIT, everyone donated. We said, let's get involved. And so, we were able to get sizable donations from various entities who really were excited about this. Again, for some of them, they're like, "Oh, this is a new idea." And actually, to Dorian's point, you have to say, actually, it's not new, but we do have a chance to be a model and actually implement it. And so, I think it was a lot of those relationships with key organizations.

We also did focus groups with recipients and community partners to understand what worked with Cambridge Rise, what didn't, and how we could improve this expansion. And I think we really have been able to build that momentum, so it just doesn't end with this pilot. I get that question a lot, where do we go from here? And I think we wanted to at least expand it beyond the 130 recipients with Cambridge Rise. And luckily we've been able to do that. We are in the process of being able to do that with the ARPA money that the city received. So, it's exciting. And I think there's a lot of things that need to come together on the local end, and I think each city could look different, but I'm happy to... If any cities want to reach out to me, I'm happy to share more insights.

Natalie Foster (01:12:09)

Before we turn off this question, Mayor Siddiqui, I would love to hear you talk a little about how you hope it informs a federal policy. I thought you within that answer, give a very eloquent explanation of the benefits cliff, which I don't think... I think there's a lot of people who do not understand that impact in America, that when you make a certain amount of income or you are able to save up a certain amount in your bank account, that it can adversely impact your housing vouchers or other parts of the safety net that you rely on. That has been a really important and very difficult part of accessing the safety net today. Thank you for that. But help me, say one bit more about how you hope the Cambridge Rise program influences the federal conversation.

Sumbul Siddiqui (01:12:55)

I think going back to Dorian, again, I think we have these examples that we have the childcare tax credit, we have the stimulus checks, we have these local pilots that are happening. We have a great body of research that kind of shows what people are spending money on and what it's actually doing. I think the federal government is the most challenging part. How do we change policy? I think that is a new, I think the next frontier in this movement and how are we actually impacting those who have the power to make decisions. I've been in close contact with my Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, who's so supportive. She's been helping me with this expansion.

Speaking of benefit waivers, I think I wish there was a more streamlined ways for cities to be able to get some just easy kind of how to navigate. "This is who you talk to in social security if you want to do guaranteed income. This is who you talk to at this department." There's a lot of bureaucracy and I think we just need more partners at the federal level who understand and get the history, and the why, and the what, and then can help us navigate some of these structures to make sure that we can have more pilots, but then set more... Most importantly also convince others who will be actually making the decision. But it's a challenge.

Natalie Foster (01:14:37)

Well, let's take that challenge, team, and dig into it. Dorian, I'm going to turn to you next with a question around political will. What will it take to get there? There are lots of in the chat people saying, "We need the critics of UBI." Well, the critics of UBI are not hard to find of a guaranteed income are not hard to find. "It'll create laziness. It's socialism." How are those arguments rebutted and how will we build political will to get it across the finish line?

Dorian Warren (01:15:10)

Okay, so let me just start with the top line here, Natalie. That is what we know is that guaranteed income is a crucial tool for shifting the balance of power from wealthy businesses and corporations to ordinary families and workers. That's just the top line here. What we also know is that those wealthy corporations and businesses, they, I think know that guaranteed income actually do empower workers to shape the terms and conditions under which they work. I think it's a bit scary. I think it's a bit scary for some of our opponents, not all. We have, Roy's sort of representing the high road of business and corporations here, because there is a path to the high road. I just want to say that, as well. But the underlying fear here is that guaranteed income could take power away from companies and businesses and give it to workers and families.

That's the fear. What do we need to do to build the political will to keep moving forward? I think there's a lot we can do. Obviously, we have to mobilize the folks that are already with us and we also have to broaden the base of support. It's not an either/or. It's a both/and. This is where I think the notion of labor freedom or power comes in and that storytelling we can do the idea that guaranteed income can actually shore up people's freedom to do that kind of work they want to do. I think that can actually resonate with a much broader audience as we also maintain our core values around racial justice, gender justice, disability justice, in addition to economic justice and security. I do think the pandemic crisis has changed people's expectations around their lives and their work lives.

I think we're in a moment of flux, frankly, where we have learned some things and people are wondering, "Okay, well government intervention actually did show us that it can materially improve people's lives, especially in a crisis." I think people's expectations got raised. At the same time, we're already filling the push of austerity, whether it's from the Federal Reserve, whether it's from at least half of Congress. There is a backlash to rising expectations and the shift in balance of power to workers. I think we have to stay focused on what is the battle against austerity that's ahead of us. Frankly, how do we think about inoculating people around the same tired arguments that we have heard throughout history that we will continue to hear. You named some of them, Natalie. "Oh, this is socialism. Oh, this disincentivizes work. Oh, this rewards laziness."

We also know who we think those lazy people look like, by the way. We're going to hear those things, so how do we inoculate people? "This is what you're going to hear. We've heard this for generations and not hundreds of years. By the way, here's the evidence and here's the storytelling that tells a different story." Two final points, I think Mayor Siddiqui mentioned this, we have to at the state and local level, push and organize states and cities to go from pilots to policy. I'm very, very pleased that in my great hometown of Chicago, the Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle has said publicly that she is looking at permanent revenue options for Cook County's current pilot. I think that would be a huge innovation and leapfrog from going from pilots to policy to permanent policy, what she might be able to innovate there in Cook County.

Last but not least, I do think the power necessary and particularly the political power to pass and sustain guaranteed income in this country, it will require organized workers. It will require organized labor in the

labor movement. I don't think there's any... In the course of most, I think, democracies with strong safety nets in social welfare states, they never happen without a strong labor movement. You just don't get it without a strong labor movement. I think we have some organizing work to try to align the movement around guaranteed income. Again, there's that long lineage that comes from poor black women in the south. How does that lineage and the movement around guaranteed income, there's lots of folks in the movement now, how does that align with the labor movement? What's the argument and the persuasion and the organizing work that we can do with our labor allies around why this is also in a union's best interest in addition to workers and families?

Natalie Foster (01:19:50)

Smiley I'll turn to you. What do you think it'll take to generate the political will to rebuild the social contract in this direction?

Erica Smiley (01:19:58)

Man, I tell you, Dorian had me. I was in the church with him like "Yes, he's saying it." Then he said, "Our labor allies," and I was like, "We're not your allies. We are your base. We are right here. We are the same people." Some may call them voters; some may call us tenants and some may call us workers. We're the same people. You need us, if there's going to be any kind of democratic political movement anywhere on the globe, it requires workers to be organized. We need workers to be organized in order to win, not as allies, but as our base. They are us. The last thing I want to share, and I want to lift this up because I feel like Mayor Siddiqui and you too, Natalie, at some point had mentioned how people had used the resources they got to pay off debt.

I want to lift this up for one reason, and I don't want to call this guaranteed income because it's different, but there are many ways that we can provide economic security for working people so that they can do these things that we aspire for all of us to be able to do, to have joy, to do the work we love, to contribute to society. That the social safety net actually requires a whole of these things. One of the things I wanted to lift up with my last remarks is just really thinking about one of the campaigns we ran years ago, almost 10 years ago. It was a debt-free future campaign where we were able to win an expansion of public service loan forgiveness. I'll never forget it, there was just a meeting, nothing major with Massachusetts caregivers and teachers who had just heard of the victory... Or had experienced the victory I should say, it was a couple weeks afterwards.

One of the workers said with just such joy that this was the biggest raise she'd ever received. It wasn't a raise, it was just debt. When we think about the cliff and what it means, her wage rates, everything stayed the same and yet all of a sudden there was more money in her pocket. For workers still saddled with five and six figures of student debt, they're unable to save for retirement and buying a house. Yet for these who actually received debt relief or use their guaranteed income towards debt relief, actually provided a set of stability that allowed them opportunities to build wealth, to build small businesses to do the work that they love.

Again, if we're ever confused about what it takes and what are the different pieces that we need to be organizing around to provide that basic level of economic security, this is why I love the name of your organization, the Economic Securities Projects, it's not just the guaranteed income projects, it's the Economic Securities Project. We want people to feel stable enough to do the things that they need to do in order to, like I say, work to live as opposed to live to work.

Natalie Foster (01:22:41)

Roy?

Roy Bahat (01:22:44)

Amen to all of that. I want to name two constituencies that I think are essential here, one Dorian already alluded to. The one that I can speak for a little more directly is business leaders. If you read historians on the New Deal and other moments of great progress, Kim Phillips-Fein, who's a Columbia historian, I've been learning more about the line is something like "We only make progress when business is divided." I think there's some truth to that, that we need to stop looking at business as a monolith and business leaders were involved in a lot of the early funding for these explorations of guaranteed income. I think that's a wonderful thing. That's kind of one.

The second is organized labor, which I can't speak for. I'm an AFT member because I teach at Berkeley, but I spend a lot of time with organized labor at the project I do with The Aspen Institute, it's called the Business Roundtable on Organized Labor, where we have business leaders who, again speaking to divisions among business leaders, are labor open and want to figure out a new way of collaborating.

But organized labor, it's in the "We are us," comment has an invitation to be more than a special interest group saying, "We need our seat at the table," but a general interest group that can call for broad sweeping reform. I see the Fight for 15 and the role that unions and organized labor played in that as a prelude to this. That was, there was a lot of conflict in labor over that. The conflict was are we advocating for something for everybody, or just for union members, or the people who work with us? The answer for all of us is we all got to be for everybody or else nothing's going to happen for any of us. Business plus organized labor, I think is part of the constituency.

Natalie Foster (01:24:24)

Yeah. Right. We asked for questions when people signed up for this gathering and we got a lot of questions. There have been a lot of questions in this chat, which I just think is so important. One of the questions that came up is the connection between guaranteed income and the Child Tax Credit, and what it will take to get the expanded Child Tax Credit over the finish line. Dorian, I'm going to hand that to you first.

Dorian Warren (01:24:46)

What is it going to take to get the Child Tax Credit over the finish line, the expanded-

Natalie Foster (01:24:51)

The expanded Child Tax Credit and its connection to guaranteed income? How are these two things in the same conversation here today?

Dorian Warren (01:24:59)

Let me start. Let me just take a moment of privilege, excuse me, and say I've been asking all the political scientists and social scientists I can the question of the speed of the impact that the expanded Child Tax Credit in 2021. Here is the answer I've been getting from everybody. They can't find a policy that has had such lightning speed impact as they expanded Child Tax Credit, reducing child poverty by almost 50% in six months. That is pretty, dare I say it, revolutionary for a policy to actually be implemented so fast and to have that effect so fast. I would say it's therefore been surprising. I think a lot of us thought, "Oh, there's this theory of loss aversion. If people get a benefit and they lose it, they'll be willing to fight for it." Well, that takes organizing. It takes organizing people willing to fight for something.

It takes mobilizing people willing to fight for something. I do think from where I sit and I think there's a lot of strategies we have to put on the table, but from where I sit, I think this is one of the biggest organizing challenges we face in this moment of millions of people, millions of parents who receive the expanded Child Tax Credit, the monthly cash payments, another innovation by the way, from the once a year tax return that people would file to get the Child Tax Credit going to monthly, also big innovation. What is our task to organize people and to actually put this back on the agenda at the federal level, and then bend political will to actually get it over the finish line.

What I also do know, and I'll stop here, Natalie, is that I think there's something between 10 and 20 campaigned at the state level to move Child Tax Credit policies at the state level. This is a common thing in our American Federalist system of politics. When you're blocked at the federal level, often there's innovation at the state and local level. Let's keep on pushing, and pushing, and pushing, at the state level. Yes, states can enact child tax credits on their own. For states that already have them, they can expand them. I do think that organizing, that mobilizing and some of those policy wins will enable us to ladder up to a federal victory soon.

Natalie Foster (01:27:16)

There are so many more questions I want to ask, team, because there are excellent questions in the chat, but we are going to have to go to last thoughts, sadly. I am going to do a round of last thoughts. Mayor Siddiqui, we will start with you. What wisdom do you want to leave this group with?

Sumbul Siddiqui (01:27:36)

Sure. Just to follow up on what Dorian was saying, I think when we think about Congress, it matters who we put into Congress. All right? I think folks who are saying, "My vote, I'm not going to go to the polls." It does start from putting in more people in government who understand and are willing to push. I think that's a long-term approach. We have a lot to do in that area around the country, but that's something that is really, really important. The second is, I think I just wanted to highlight a resource that I think I've been sending around to folks who've asked about just what the data looks like and from the different pilots that [inaudible 01:28:25] for guaranteed income has been involved in. Well, I'll put that link in the chat, but it's a dashboard to really great data and information. Again, it's evidence that we've talked about in this panel today, and I think it's really important to highlight. I'll put that in the chat.

Natalie Foster (01:28:46)

Thank you so much. Smiley, let's go to you.

Erica Smiley (01:28:52)

Well, first of all, I just love this crew of people. I could be on a Zoom all day, we should just do a happy hour. I'm just going to organize it. Don't worry about it. Anyway, I just really appreciate it and appreciate those like Mayor Siddiqui who are leaning in and trying to figure it out on a practical level, and so much gratitude. I think if I had to leave us with anything, it's this one point. On this question of industrial policy, I feel like Dorian was beginning to lean into a little bit and I was really appreciative of it.

It said, this is a moment, it's not just about changing the balance of power in terms of workers and employers, but actually then using that to position workers to govern, whatever that needs to look like. When I think about governing versus government, there are opportunities through the current investments, the \$4 trillion investments in very key industries where workers could actually be a part of setting industry standards, where when we think about organizing collective bargaining, we have to think about it as workers being able to set standards in their employment and in their economic relationships.

Erica Smiley (01:29:58)

I just want to emphasize that, because we'd like to talk about power a lot in general, but the question is power towards what and how do we then position that power in a way that democratizes governance, where more and more people are part of those decision-making bodies or there're just frankly more decision-making bodies to even be a part of. To me, that's what we are defining when we talk about democracy. That's why guaranteed income is so critical to it.

Natalie Foster (01:30:22)

Roy?

Roy Bahat (01:30:26)

If we want this to work, be prepared for making some strange bedfellows. Even just think about the range of occupations on this call. It's rare that we are all together, as much as we've collaborated before. If the way that you think about this is where the battle lines are drawn, then you're going to get the battle you expect and you're probably going to lose. I think we all need to be aware of all the issues like as soon as black women start benefiting, there's a community that's going to turn against that immediately, who are the unexpected allies? Ideological lines I think are kind of our enemy here. If we can find a way, and I'll just say I'll include everybody watching this right now, if you think you're an audience watching the experts, we're all figuring it out as we go. You're part of this with us. The "We are us," I think Darly said that, that means a very expanded version of we, and it means you're going to have to collaborate with some people you currently may think of as an enemy. Let's look for the chance to do that so we can actually win on this issue.

Natalie Foster (01:31:27)

Dorian, final word?

Dorian Warren (01:31:28)

For 30 seconds I'll put on my organizer hat. Everybody here is embedded in a social network of friends, families, coworkers, everybody here is a trusted messenger in your own networks. Choose five people that you're going to have a conversation with about this issue of guaranteed income and worker power in the next month or two months. Then go do it. Go do it. Then make a pledge to show up in some way for workers organizing or community members who are fighting for a Child Tax Credit at the state level. But choose five people to have conversations with, become organizers and ambassadors and trusted messengers in your own right. That is what it will take to get us to the north star of guaranteed income.

Maureen Conway (01:32:16)

Wow, that was amazing. Thank you all so much. Thank you, Dorian, Mayor Siddiqui, Roy, Smiley, Natalie, you guys were fabulous. Obviously, we could talk about this much longer. There's a lot more to say. Thanks to everybody for all the questions. I know we didn't get to as many as we wanted. We'll have another conversation. Join us again. Our next conversation is going to be on March 30th for a book talk and panel discussion about Rick Wartzman's latest book *Still Broke: Walmart's Remarkable Transformation and the Limits of Socially Conscious Capitalism*. Please join us for that.

I want to thank my colleagues, Shelly Steward, Matt Helmer, Colleen Cunningham, Amanda Fins, Tony Mastria, Merrit Stüven, Victoria Prince and Sinin Young. Really, it takes a lot of people to put these things together. They're an amazing team. Huge thanks to them. Many thanks to everybody on social media who's been tweeting about today's events. Great to hear how you respond to things. Thanks to the audience for joining and sharing so many thoughts and questions. Please join us again. Please do send us some feedback. Use the form that'll pop up when you leave or send us a note at eop.program@AspenInstitute.org. There we are. Thanks so much everybody, and hope you join us again.