

But there are many more freedoms eroded, or altogether lost, due to poverty. Housing is better for the rich than the poor. There is no homelessness among the rich. Neighborhoods are better for the rich than the poor. The ability to relocate or travel is far easier for the rich than the poor. Food is better for the rich than the poor. Social connections are better for the rich than the poor. Better jobs are available for the rich than the poor.

All of these are freedom issues: If you are homeless or cannot find a decent place to live for yourself and your family, you are oppressed and limited, you are not free. If you cannot relocate or travel when you need to, or want to, you are limited in your freedom. If you cannot eat properly, you are not free. If you are not able to connect with people, you are not free. If you are not free to find a job and work, you are not free.

In virtually every dimension of life, being in poverty without being able to escape it is a freedom issue.

Yet many people in poverty often vote for measures that make their lives worse, not better, because continual conservative framing has activated a conservative worldview even in those whose lives could be essentially ruined by it.

Conservatives see being poor as a personal failure, a failure of individual responsibility. But the reality is that poverty curtails freedom. There is a reason why people speak of being “trapped” in poverty. They are.

Again, in our democracy, the private depends on the public. Do we care about whether our fellow citizens are free, or not?

Discrimination: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

By now, our history has made clear that racism is a freedom issue. It can impose poverty, lack of education, ill-health, and worse. As we saw with Trayvon Martin, it can get you killed in some states.

Our recent history has made it clear that homophobia is a freedom issue. It is as normal to be gay as it is to be left-handed. Freedom to marry for people who happen to be gay is as much a matter of love and commitment as it is for people who happen to be straight, and a denial of marriage or other rights on