ACTIVISTS ORGANIZE RESPONSE TO THE STATE OF THE UNION; PROMINENT FIGURES TO INTRODUCE ACTIVISTS IN SOLIDARITY

#PeoplesSOTUResponse to Air Responses from Renown Grassroots Activists, Featuring Special Celebrity Guests

Activists are staging a response to the President’s State of the Union Address on Tues., Jan 30, in response to a petition to CNN requesting equal time for those working on resistance efforts. In 2011, CNN aired an online response to the SOTU from the Tea Party after the official Republican SOTU response. The petition for a people’s response now has over 40,000 signatures.

The #PeoplesSOTUResponse, which will be live streamed on NowThis (@NowThisNews) after the Democratic response by Rep. Joseph Kennedy, will be hosted by activist, educator and writer, Brittany Packnett.

Other responders include Executive Director of United We Dream, Cristina Jimenez; Fatima Goss Graves, President and CEO of the National Women’s Law Center; Ilyse Hogue, President of NARAL; Sarah McBride, National Press Secretary for Human Rights Campaign; Co-Founder of Campaign Zero, Samuel Sinyangwe; Co-Founder of People For Bernie and Strategic Advisor to the National Women’s March, Winnie Wong; healthcare activist Ady Barkan; Vanita Gupta, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; Amanda Litman, Executive Director of Run for Something; and Sasha Stashwick, Senior Advocate at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

In addition, a prominent celebrity, figure, or online influencer will join the beginning of each video to introduce each activist. The introducers include Patton Oswalt, Wil Wheaton, Debra Messing, Piper Perabo, Javier Munoz, Jason Kander, Kendrick Sampson, W. Kamau Bell, Misha Collins, Sarah Silverman, and more.

“Democracy is fueled by the power of the people. Therefore, this is the people’s response,” said Packnett, who is also a Rise to Run Board member. “Grassroots activists and organizations doing the work to support American communities day in and day out will be the focus. If past is prologue, amplifying the needs of marginalized communities will be ever more important on Tuesday, when our country’s ears are tuned into policy and our governments eyes must be turned toward the truth of its people.”

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Fatima Goss Graves, who will provide a response that ties together the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements that have emerged since the election, said, “I’m excited to join with activists across the progressive movement in the People’s SOTU Response. I’ll be naming the many ways men and women are rising up to combat the Trump Administration’s policies that push sexual violence into the shadows. This important moment calls all of us to engage and fight for change.”

Cristina Jiminez will focus on immigrant rights given the Trump administration’s attack on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the Trump administration’s racist policies: “Trump is a pitch man for racism. From his ad campaign to kill a group of wrongly convicted Black teenagers in the 1980s to his campaign to end immigration from Black and Brown nations today. As Trump sells his sick vision to Congress and the nation, we the people in #PeopleSOTUResponse will share the truth about the dangers we all face and of the resilient freedom fighters who are ensuring that we not only survive Trump, but emerge stronger than ever.”

The petition was started by Rise to Run Board Chair and gun violence prevention activist Shannon Watts, and has garnered over 40,000 signatures since it was posted on Tuesday. The petition calls on CNN to provide on-air time to The Resistance, which she said, “...is a bigger and more influential than the Tea Party ever was.” CNN has not yet responded to the petition.

“I’m thrilled at the response to my petition and my tweet to Brittany Packnett asking her to lead this effort. Women of color, who have been at the forefront of social change throughout history, are continuing to play a key role in the resistance to Trump’s harmful policies, providing leadership and organizing their communities,” said Watts. “The resistance is not slowing down: millions of women and caring allies marched the day after the President’s inauguration in 2017, and record numbers marched across the country again this month.”

The activists are also encouraging everyone to respond to the SOTU with their own videos or tweet responses using the hashtag #PeoplesSOTUResponse.

Actor and activist Piper Perabo who is helping organize the #PeoplesSOTUResponse said, “I realized it’s important that I use my voice and I am fortunate to have a platform to do so. All I want to do - every day - is celebrate and amplify those who are on working on the ground to protect the American dream. It’s a great honor to stand beside these incredible citizens. They’re the best of us.”

The activists’ videos will be live streamed on NowThis, which generates 2.5 billion monthly video views and is the number one news publisher on Facebook and Snapchat. Their platform provides an opportunity to showcase activists who have been resisting injustice, from long before the Trump administration until now.