

Title: We can imagine it - and we can build it.

A few weeks ago I visited Buffalo, NY to canvas for India Walton and stand in picket lines with nurses striking against Catholic Health Care. It was an emotional weekend, but I drove home feeling invigorated and inspired! Though engaging in electoral work and talking with health care workers are often very different experiences, I found something similar from both that weekend: a vision for a better tomorrow. It was a breath of fresh air to look past day-to-day challenges and engage with people fighting for a healthy future.

Yet the pathway to that beautiful future is filled with struggle. India Walton didn't win her election this time around. Today we are still struggling with the systemic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Atmospheric pollution is changing the global climate system—irrevocably in some ways. Utility debt in New York State has mounted to over \$2 billion and the moratorium on utility shut-offs ends in December. In a world where progress is a constant uphill battle, it can feel like the only thing to do is buckle down and put ourselves on the defensive - as individuals we self-isolate, and as communities we lose sight of our long-term goals. In the face of these challenges, sometimes we forget to use our imagination about what kind of a world we actually want to create for ourselves, our children, and future generations.

In no area is this more challenging or important than when it comes to climate change and the crisis we face today.

Human activity has become the dominant driver of global climate change as the result of centuries of activity and it will continue beyond our lifetime. We are all impacted by these changes, though on different timescales and to different extents, depending on relative positions of privilege and access to adaptation measures. One thing is true for all of us: this crisis cannot be fixed by individual action, but must be addressed through social and systemic change. Changing our social systems requires creative and visionary thinking where the health of our environment is prioritized by lawmakers and constituents alike.

Corporate interests often take priority over the concerns of citizens, making it difficult to imagine what that change might look like. A better world is possible if we work together, but not if multinational corporations and for-profit monopolies line the pockets of a system that is democratic only by name. Yet, 40% of Americans don't have an extra \$400 in their bank account to cover an emergency expense. In the day-to-day struggle of simply surviving, it can be easy to lose sight of anything beyond what is right in front of us. But together we are strong. We need to lift our gaze and dream together. The dream is out there, to be seen through the eyes of our children and to the horizon of our imagination. We need, now more than ever, to collect our thoughts and consider that a better world really might be possible.

Imagine a world of fresh air and pure water regardless of locale, where there's no need for "lungs at play" signs. A world where financial resources are allocated to meet our needs. A world where every person can not only survive, but thrive. Believe in a well-trained, unionized workforce building the renewable energy infrastructure necessary to meet the basic energy needs of all New Yorkers at an affordable price. This sustainable generation would be guided by values of environmental justice, and the right to clean air and water, recently affirmed by

over 68% of New York voters on November 2nd. According to the recent data for progress poll, 68% of New Yorkers support the NY Build Public Renewables Act, which would materialize that bold vision of a pro-labor, pro-climate, and pro-democracy future for ourselves, our children, and all future generations.

Passing this law would move us closer to a world where power is by and for the people. Public power is about we the people having ownership and control over all aspects of our energy system and taking power back from for-profit monopolies who are killing us. In a modern, wealthy society, lights and electricity should be human rights. Together we are strong enough to address the greatest of challenges. We can continue through the struggles of today and to build a brighter, greener future together. Let's roll up our sleeves and build the world we aspire to live in.

On November 27th, the Public Power NY coalition will be hosting an orientation to build a team for public power to pass the NY Build Public Renewables Act this upcoming legislative session. Join us by registering here: <https://bit.ly/ppnyNovOrientation>

To find out more, go to publicpowerny.org.