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Panel II: Reshaping EJ Law & Social Policy

Looking Back, Moving Forward

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Transcript

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WEBVTT

Giovanna Di Chiro: So. hello to everybody and welcome or welcome back to our one and a half day webinar looking back moving forward law policy and environmental justice. I hope that everybody has eaten there wheaties and you've got lots of energy and ready for another exciting panel this afternoon. My name is Giovanni mckerrow i'm professor of environmental studies and coordinator of the program on environmental justice and climate resilience here at swarthmore college. And, along with my two wonderful co organizers of this webinar mizzou lane mayfield and Dr Chris Miller i'm delighted to welcome you to the second panel. of our webinar titled reshaping environmental justice law and social policy.

For those of you who were unable to make it to the panel, this morning the recording will be available soon on the conference website, which I will ask zoo Nusseibeh to please drop that in the chat. And that, this morning, our panelists in addition to. sharing with us some of their ideas about the strengths and the limitations of environmental law, I think that they also very tangibly and very concretely. demonstrated the the emotional and the in the and the moral connections and stakes that are involved in communities like Chester demanding their rights to equal justice under the law and in this afternoon's panel.

we're going to be hearing about what's happening now, today in Chester and and other. Similar environmental justice communities as they continue and expand their fight for environmental justice and and the right to breed. So to start out, I want to extend our gratitude to our co sponsors who have generously supported this webinar. The length Center for civic and social responsibility, the environmental studies program and the office of sustainability at swarthmore college. And the baldy Center for law and social policy and the digital scholarship studio and network at university of buffalo we're also. deeply grateful to the College staff and students who've helped to design and construct our website and who have also helped to make this webinar run smoothly, so I want to. turn this over for a moment to Nusseibeh estis who's the civic and environmental engagement fellow at the link Center to give us some important information about the logistics and how to participate in the in the panel today.

Nusaybah (she/her): hey Thank you rhonda and to reiterate it was really nice to hear from everyone in the first part of the panel and definitely very excited to hear how the second session goes. So, as far as logistics go if you have any questions that you'd like to ask the panelists feel free to drop it into the Q amp a box. Really excited to be able to answer those questions either asynchronously directly onto the q&a or if we have time at the end of the session to answer it. In my turn, so the questions don't get answered will be populating them on to the forum on part of the conferences website which i'll pop into the chat later today i'll pass it back to you okay.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Thank you, Miss Eva so i'm going to introduce our panelists and and then Chris will lay out some of the overarching questions that we've asked you to serve share with us today.

Giovanna Di Chiro: So our panelists are miss d'alene mayfield the chairperson of Chester residents concerned for quality living. Mr will Jones Chester resident and activists and a board member of the Delaware county solid waste authority. Mr Tyler white a swarthmore college student and organizer and member of the student group campus coalition concerning Chester or see for. Miss chantelle Ray is also a swarthmore college student organizer and member of see for, as you can see from their their T shirts. Miss Maria Lopez nunez, who is the deputy director of the ironbound Community corporation in Newark New Jersey and Dr steph ty who's professor of law at the University of Wisconsin law school in Madison Wisconsin so Chris over to you. Great thanks kibana first introduce myself, my name is Chris melee i'm a professor of sociology at the University of buffalo.

Christopher Mele: On leave this year and working with the number of initiatives and Chester and i'm charged with introducing the set of questions that we're asking.

Christopher Mele: panelists to address in the next hour and a half, so this morning we had a session that look back on. Really organized around the case circle versus site, but really got into the discussion of the situation and. Certain circumstances surrounding the case, we also heard from some of the attorneys who worked on the case, and then we wrapped it up with folks talking about the present situation of Title six. In least within the legal ground now what we're doing is we're going to be addressing initiatives that are happening at present, so I had sent some prompts Giovanni and I have sent some prompts and through the Internet, I have. sent some props to folks ahead of time, I just want to review them for the purpose of the attendees as well, so in this session, what we're going to ask.

Each of the activists folks is to just briefly describe the mission and the objectives of your organization. Just tell us describe what your organization is doing at this current time. The second part is the current initiatives that have gained some traction some ideas that are either fully in place within the past few years or right now, or on. the brink of moving into a new phase that are that have great promise and are working and you see them as gaining again gaining traction. of some of the examples, for example, changes in waste management policy, some of the zero waste ordinances that we've been seeing policy and legislation at the local state or federal levels that have an impact. On what your group is working on your organization in your Community will then open up for discussion amongst yourselves about how these initiatives also have the added benefit. of not only moving the agenda forward but enhancing networking within the Community and.

Beyond and building solidarity and the importance of grassroots movement building in general, lastly, we'll ask Professor steph tie. To address how these combination of these initiatives and the more secondary aspects of movement building etc can be are actually as significant they amplify the momentum building that is necessary to keep these objectives, moving forward so we're going to start with.

Christopher Mele: locally, so to speak, with a circle and we're asking first will and saline to talk a bit about the current situation and strategies that play so i'll turn it over to to will first so given time constraints, so thank you. Yes, will will is. Is has generously come come on the panel, even though he's in the middle of work so and and will, as we discussed, you know. As a lifelong Chester Chester resident and activist, you know what what is, what are the what's what are you passionate about what's important to you, and that has made you stand up to fight for environmental justice in Chester.

Will Jones: Well, first of all thank you, Professor Giovanni and the first of May lay for having me and give me the own platform to suggest to them to express how I feel about what's going on currently in Chester and. Then beyond um well i've i've come to become an activist, because of quite frankly, because of missing, we may feel like she's the reason. Why i'm here because she's the one that raised my awareness um I was living my life i'm oblivious to what was going on in my own city in my own hometown and the place where I was born and raised. was completely oblivious to the plate that we were under and how really bad I circumstances really are when you know from a place and you make it home. things become normalized and you know you become I want to say almost no was blind so what's going on around you because it's all you know. So I was completely unaware of that Chester was one of the worst case around them, you know justice wherever you want to call it.

In the country until I saw the documentary on CNN that exposed it and misleading was was on the forefront and fighting for it for so long. And at that point, I was upset I was infuriated um and it gave me a place to use my passion i'm a very passionate person i'm i'm a son of a teacher in a in a principal. and also one of the most empathetic people I believe in the world and i'm biased, but from my mother, so I was I got a lot, a lot of juice me and. i'm I was searching for a place that directed after I came home from the military and when I say missing Lena kind of some kind of you know clicked and.

I wanted to be involved, and so I reached out and and got involved and ever since then it's been a long journey that. is taking me, you know places I never thought I would be i'm. environments in conversations with people I never thought I would have and was lovely to meet a lot of great people a lot of passionate people. about the environment, because from being from Chester personally we in a sports. um fun in an environment is really like we try to figure out how to make it through like when you live in such tough conditions, you got to find a way to. To put blinders on and so we've really oblivious to release going on, we just focus on the quality of life that we enjoy and that's mostly. Sports and entertainment so that's what I was kind of focused on, and I was kind of a lot of my energy was was was placed on, but once I became aware of where it needed to be I became tunnel tunnel vision and i've. Somehow became an activist for environmental justice which I never thought that I would ever it was it was wasn't on my radar like I say most people from Chester. circumstance that we live in, under the environment we don't really understand it to be a direct threat, so we don't consider a direct threat so that's the farthest thing from our minds.

Will Jones: And so I would never thought I would be involved anything of our mentally anything to do with the environment, because it was. To me that's that's for some other people that save the whales and all that stuff that's God bless them wish them the best but that's one on my radar until I found out that. Basically, myself and my family and everyone in Chester been been been praying at the bottom of an ecosystem for a very long time and we've basically been food for a lot of people to be eating eating off our misery and pain and suffering and just been benefit or fire. play, and you know that. that's not gonna fly from me that's not accepted for me and and miscellaneous is someone that once you get to know her yes, there is no option but to fight and go hard so they just help you know. help you help you help sustain the energy I had and pushed me to go further and by the grace of God and for some crazy reason I was appointed to the celebration 34 Delaware county, which is the first time person of color in person from Chester been. appointed to that position which I take it very seriously, and you know it's just a big entanglement of special interest lobbyists and in corporations that made this big ball of injustice that we have to fight and it's systemic and it's intentional and you know this thing I think the way that the way that to defeat it. Is we want to have to be grassroots in a raise awareness, with the people, the same reason why I got involved is the same reason other people will get involved, but they have to understand the threat. And they don't understand it at this point they got other stuff going on in their mind is a big threat, but once the people understand.

about the threat, then I believe they will react to it, but we have to somehow. put it in some kind of you know crystallized and put them in perspective for them, for them to realize that the silent killer that you were there it's been killing you all for years myself my family's been decimated by cancer. On my mother, my grandmother my uncle's a lot of my family's been been been killed by chance, and I believe anyone has anything to do with it business Corporation. they're going to pay for it nobody's getting away from it, you know nobody's going away unscathed as far as how I feel so i'm attacking i'm fighting anything or anyone has anything to do with. My pain and misery my family's definitely ineffective in the pain of death of everyone that. I call neighbors and friends family i'm not none of that I went I signed up to fight enemies foreign and domestic and I believe this is a. Domestic enemy that needs to be fought with the full force of everything we got because people literally dying people life is at stake people quality of living is at stake, the mindset of our youth and in the. Their their whole their whole mindset, as far as what they're worth and value is is impacted by the Environment what's around them. And it's the reason why chester's medium income and 17,000 and so far below the poverty.

under the poverty line and people still don't understand what's necessary to get it, because it's been systematic intentionally designed that way. And so we have to fight it that way, we have to raise awareness, to move move up the chain and make politics understand that this isn't a win, win for us it's a politically politically. Not in their best interest to support these kind of endeavors in these kind of dirty businesses and business practices. Until the politicians understand and get filter for fourth of it, and with this count the special interests and lobbyists is going to continue, so we have to raise awareness, to the people.

Will Jones: So they put pressure on the politicians, and then we can you know effect changing in hold people accountable, but until then. it's a school with uphill fight that we're going to have to fight because it's like a systemic situation that goes above all of us and been in place for a long time so. we're at the bottom of it so to get to the top it's going to be a whole lot of layers that have to get unpeeled. and spawning sick, a lot of people and a lot of you know, a strong willed when the termination and you know endurance because it's not going to be quick and easy fix there's no. As missing links that there's no magic pill, you know to fix that situation it's going to take determination and consistency. And the next generation, with the C four kids represent i've been spent time with these kids and work directly with them, and I can say. That they mean business now about the business, so I have confidence that the next generation is going to work with us and continue to fight that we've taken on.

To make sure that we get the results that we that we searching for and these. I can't be more impressed by you, they saw the most impressive people ever met in my life and i've been around the world in the military and these kids or. Miss Professor Giovanna she's she's an amazing person and amazing leader and i'm just so happy to be you know included involved with the situation, so I can. I can you know feel like I have some part to play in it and i'm just honored to be here and honored Thank you guys for giving the platform is speaking, you know share my story about you know my perspective, and not leave the panel, you know to continue on.

Zulene Mayfield: Thank you will.

Zulene Mayfield: I correct something that will fit um. It wasn't a coincidence dad he was appointed to the Delaware county solid waste authority board. That was a lot of. A lot of work. A lot of demands. A lot of arm twisting. And a lot I bet you bet and I put another white person on that board and have no representation from the city of Chester of which who are poisoning. You will give us a seat at the table, because the table belongs to us. So it was even better, not. And that's what God will, who is a young African American man it went to a forum that has never had a person of color period.

Ever ever 37 years they've been in existence 35 years wasn't even considered. That a Chester residence would have. a seat at the table, we not only got him, but we took the chairmanship. We have a circle ally, who is now the chairman of the Delaware county solid waste authority. Okay, so with that said i'll move along but will is the next. generation of circle, whether we're fighting an environmental front. of corporate greed and. Politicians that don't really care about our Community and our problem, our Community. Will is the next generation of leaders, and we appreciate him so much I don't want to take up too much time, but I want to say something that my co chair said in the first panel. That Chester is a community that has been pelted with lemons over and over and over repeatedly lemons of pollution of poverty of politics of violence and.

But when the pollution hit our Community. And that was the biggest one minute ball and we've had to learn how to take that lemon and make a mini. Now we're making sweetened variety lemonade.

Zulene Mayfield: Because we are serving it up to them, they man. Real man. Because we have not gone away in 30 years they've done everything possible and showed us every way that we can't win. But our when is what we define it today. Yes, it's 30 years that we've been on this battlefield but guess what we've been on a battlefield 30 years the name beat us. Name beat us, we had no money and no slower corporate lawyers, we don't have a PR machine. But we got determination and sobriety ballistic instincts. that are going to see us through this battle. So do you wanna. I can come back, I want to hear from shawn towel and Tyler.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Okay, so let's let's move on to Chantal and and Tyler and then come back and. hear about some some of the coalition's that have been built, including the zero waste resolutions. That have been successfully put into place, so there are some some positive wins that are amplifying now that we'd really like to hear about, but so. Tyler and shauntel to to have our amazing see for students and graduating seniors we're going to be sorry to see you go but you're not going to go far we're going to keep bringing you back.

Before you do that, can you all explain it show me your shirt and explain to them Lucy for is yes, but they're low letter and it's kind of small short tall. just talked about.

Chantal + Tyler: This before yeah okay so see for stands for the campus coalition concerning Chester and I was actually started by Mike you all, who was on the last panel earlier this morning. And when he was in college and he got a bunch of schools at the peak of C four there were about 15 campuses in the east coast area involved with circle in the fight against the command incinerator and whatnot. So we're continuing that legacy it's been unsworth most campus for quite a while now, the first ever see for reunion actually happened on swarthmore his campus. Someone on the call dug up a article about a like environmental Earth Day retreat in which see for was born out of.

So Luckily, we had an amazing artists on this better Korea, who made RC for logo, that we can now where on T shirts, that we will be wearing to the march tomorrow that also includes a circle logo in the back that you can't see so we're out here rapping see for and circle. So um yeah one other thing to just undermined here, too, is graduating seniors This is very full circle, and I think that it's like. quite astounding to think about where we're at like as freshmen and like having these kind of conversations. building relationships with Giovanni and building relationships with Julian and now building relationships with will and kearney and Carol and other Members. interest through but really like understanding that those relationships and that ability to have trust between people that have a shared vision and understand. Their roles and being accountable and transparent towards that is really fundamental to be able to move the workforce.

Chantal + Tyler: So just want to say, like this has been an amazing experience very thankful, this is both like bitter sweet, in the sense that we're like we're excited to be graduating the also side.

Chantal + Tyler: In the way that we've like built such relationships and contributed so much to this work, they it now feels a part of us and it's something that's going to continue us as we go on into other parts of our lives. So, just a quick acknowledgement it's always like the way that we like to start out and understanding that the relationship of colonization and disposition. is a fundamental way in which communities of color in vulnerable communities have built have built in antagonistic and oppressive relationships. To land and to being extracted and being exploited and also just being understanding of the histories of slavery, the histories of indigenous colonization and understanding that.

Especially in the last panel, we were talking about institutions that contribute to these processes that contribute to perpetuating extractive relationships and understanding that. Our institution, academia, is one that wasn't mentioned, this is obviously an example of how academia can be generative can be productive can be helpful. But that's not always the case, so we want to make sure that we're understanding that swarthmore currently occupies the ancestral and and literally, not the people. And the Chester residents are descendants of slaves, a robot here for a very particular reason and continue those those same relationships to slavery to white supremacy to extraction just in new legitimate forums. And we always like to make sure that we understand our connection to space Chester is right there in the middle, with the heart, our school is right here. At the top and we have the Covenant incinerator right down the road so total of six miles in get the life expectancy is a different sort of news. And that is just something that we really wanted to understand and we wanted to take on, to know that if we're going to be here for four years. Then it is our responsibility to to maximize our accountability and our relationship to the waste of regenerating not. Not only through what's being incinerated and burn but also through our actual like sewage waste it's also being burned and Dell Cora. and understanding that that we are responsible for how that impacts, the residence of Chester. And it's not all it's not the responsibility of tresor residents to be advocating for that, but it's our responsibility is that people that are continuing to perpetuate that and be complicit in that relationship. That fundamental understanding is what's really allowed us to kind of launch forward into building and understanding that we are assumed lead engagement.

With Chester we act as the arm of circle, we do the work that they tell us to do. And that is a very fundamental way that we want to undo extractive relationships and academia is not coming into places and prescribing what needs to be the solution. But instead of being the instruments and the tools, by which that work is done and we want to really reimagine. Waste processes and that's what a lot of the zero waste work has been has been in advocating for that and also establishing a coalition. Among Chester organizations as well, was saying. folks in Chester are inundated by a lot of issues and environmental justice at all, does not always come up in the common language is being that reason, so we also want to understand the ways in which education, the economic. situation, as well as violence are all intersecting around this code this holistic notion of what environmental justice is. But really harping on Chester residents concern for quality to living quality living is not only about what you're breathing but it's also were able to work, having

spaces, that you feel safe in and really kind of trying to work together to build the. capacity to knock that work, so we try to do that through student led programming and partnerships and which we will go into a whole list of the different ways we do that. And secondly, trying to think critically about how we build those new partnerships so so there were not also just a tool in arm for circle where we're at on an arm for trusted residents across a multitude of different issues that they're trying to address. So our vision number one is abolition, we do want to get rid of the incinerator and we also want to get rid of the relationships that exist between economic value. extractive practices and the idea that it is justified to pollute people of color and low income folks. And secondly to reimagine not only like what the relationships of academia and students are to to communities around them. But to also really begin to institutionalize that, in a way that this is something that just students on campuses not only here at swarthmore but some of our other.

See for our currency for Members at you pin weidner i'm in villanova that that's a way in which all students. Students at different campuses I really engaging with their communities is thinking like, how do we. really offer up ourselves and not really come in with our own agenda of objectives. And to move forward with committed relationships and understanding that relationship building showing up being accountable doing the work that we can do. Mr lean is always told us, I don't know how much time you have but give me however much you have and do the work, and that is what we try to do and really trying to move that as a philosophy in the way that we engage with other campuses and other college students as well. So some of the work that we have is we have three major groups within see for direct action they help a lot in organizing different direct active. Projects or that'd be showing up a county council meetings right that'd be leading in and and organizing protests, rather than be. engaging with with different stakeholders and other folks in the Community. We also have print materials which helps to like produce the actual material either for circle events or for see for events. We also have partnerships plus those are the folks are trying to think strategically about how we build partnerships on campus, how do we access resources. college campuses have abundant resources and they accumulate them.

Throughout years and have been accumulating them and really thinking about in an abolitionist framework is how do we disseminate that and not only democratize it but really put it in the hands of Community to decide how they want to use it. we're also co leaders of a course that that we've been teaching this semester, which is fulfilling and continue on continuing on a lot of that group work. That i'm Professor to cure Giovanna has has has created a framework for a sport and then the Chester road a collaborative is a very successful \$25,000 grant that we got through the link Center. In the project period, please, in which we're trying to. Not only use that money to access as a resource for circle, but also to think strategically about how we begin to bring different. different groups on campus together to really understand an actual is a holistic understanding of what environmental justice looks like and trust you but also another campus.

Thank you Tyler for that great setup now i'm going to get into the nitty gritty details of what see for does. I do want to give a quick shout out to both instagrams the circle instagram is at Chester underscore ej where you will see so much stuff put on my sondra and RC for. Chester is our own see for instagram where I actually stole this post from because I made it. So these are just some of the past events i'll tell already touched on this, but a lot of swarthmore see for students were able to make comment at a Bureau a meeting. To pass the zero waste resolutions and both of these are like symbolic resolutions that show that many burrows and municipalities within Delaware county. Like support this move towards zero waste so here's just a list of other boroughs and townships that also pause your waist resolutions but luckily, we have some spark more students able to make comment at this because we are a sophomore bro citizens. They were also a time and the spring of 2021 during coven were some tea for students came out to help the SAVE Chester water authority and where we got signed petitions and give out flyers.

So, even though there were very few students on campus at that time we still had a few come out for this event. And then, finally, the first ever ej day march in Chester. This is April of 2021 were literally breaking school rules to leave campus and go to this March and support circle and Chester where he marched from Chester City Hall, all the way down to Atlanta. and had a bunch of rallies there, so this is really huge it's momentous and was really great occasion to see a lot of things that we had been talking about over zoom actually come together in person on this day and we're having another one tomorrow which i'll get into later. See for we're partnered with university of Pennsylvania see for students, like Tyler side we partner with weidner and you pen and in the past villanova.

This was a really, really important event for us, because we were put on on a festival with musicians and artists and also a fundraiser that was on new pens campus and, like in the middle. Of downtown Philadelphia, so we got huge exposure that we got to raise money for the gofundme as well as like cash donations. And a lot of people learn about what was the event incinerator and that their trash was also being sent there, so this was a really huge successful event for us. We put on through Professor to curios course last semesters Tyler mentioned that we're co teaching a course this semester, but really that scaffolding was started last semester. Where Professor to Carol gave us opportunity to lead student groups, the students through these groups that Tyler mentioned. And one of these was actually a youth workshop that was put on last. Like winter in which students got to learn about environmental justice learned about the incinerator as a young children, which is really important, because Julian has emphasized that younger generations need to learn about so that they too can work against it.

The brunt of our work has really been showing up to County Council meetings, these happen bi weekly in media we're really fortunate in that we get to turn left and go to media and just. Like take a 10 minute ride take a bunch of students and show up this County Council meeting. I think we've definitely made a major impact in terms of that the county council members now recognize us as soon as we walked into the door and they know what we're going to say once comment arises. So this has happened,

actually also from last fall, all the way up until the spring where we've been showing up to these meetings. Talking about circles talking about the incinerator talking about our opposition to the contract being resigned that she was resigned, but i'll get more into details about that. And so that's been a lot of our work is going to these meetings going to the solid waste authority meetings and understanding our political power in these arenas.

Chantal + Tyler: And so, this is actually a video that I took at the Delaware county solid waste 30 meeting, which I think is super powerful it's just a minute long so i'm going to play it really quickly. So. Are there any other comments or questions i'll call the question and all in favor of supporting the motion as red. flags are any post. Chantal + Tyler: Any extensions. Motion passed Thank you all very much more than I started on each other. So in that you can see, well, this is a solid waste authority meeting this is who said, nay was will john to you heard speak earlier. That was the only person in opposition to the cabana contract with Delaware county, as you can see it's a full room of white men, besides Tyler will Carol and zooming.

And some other Members, and I think this is a really powerful moment because not only are they all saying yes, I agree with this new contract and it's only will saying no. But even the chairman said okay now let's move on to the next agenda item it's really just an agenda item to them, this is in media just cattery a circle ally spoke earlier in the meeting. Now you guys going to didn't get a chance to see, and she said, why is the meeting being held in media this contract is affecting people and trust her. For more than 20 minutes away and they couldn't even make it because the meeting time was changed. So, as you can see there's already some barriers to justice in terms of speaking up to these meetings showing up to these meetings. As well as who are the people sitting at the table, who are the people in power, so I just wanted to show this for everyone, because it's like.

So start it's so obvious it's almost like funny i'm like wow like this is crazy this happened a week ago, like this is not 20 years ago, this is not 30 years ago it's not 40 years ago this happened eight days ago, so I wanted to show that for you all. For any other comments okay. Another part of our see for work has been going against the subaru corporation, this is a little bit more covert in that the subaru stadium on the waterfront that's how those map showed. Was that the super stadium takes up the last publicly accessible area for Chester residents to access the Delaware river. On top of the fact that the subaru stadium boasts a zero landfill status. Normally reason at zero banjo is because they're getting their trash Center the incinerator that they can actually see from the stadium so we've been taxed tasked with.

flooring at the subaru stadium, and these are some see for students they're passing out flyers to attendees the stadium, so they may learn about the issue and. Now i'm going to move into are some of the things that are not pictured so with a lot of the grants and money that we've been able to get at swarthmore or paying students to do research or paying students for media and. and related projects really building up this capacity of people who are super busy, and who want to dedicate some

time to really important cause and the project Berkeley's funding. As well as weekly meetings and bonding activities, and this has been really crucial to us being able to continue hanging out with each other, spending time with each other and having fun with each other. attending zoom calls that are bi weekly and like I said, our connections with the pen and whitener. And I want to give a shout out to our very important big events coming up.

Chantal + Tyler: Tomorrow, if you can make it in person we're marching once again from Chester City Hall, to the Convention Center enter into the Subaru stadium who coincidentally is having a game so we're really excited to show up. And we're also going to the Camden headquarters of Subaru May Second, which is a Monday. So we're taking some students out there you'll see it on the website on Instagram do you guys all able to join, I was also asked to share this with. From Dre who spoke earlier, at the last meeting was another Chester as in it having a screening of the late to waste documentary which really shed light to this important issue. So thank you so much for your time and I'm really glad I got to speak and share all these amazing things with you all. Yeah, I just wanted like just harp on what Chantelle was saying you. Kind of like our long term effect has been really trying to hold stakeholders and folks of Delaware County accountable for their contributions to environmental racism and sending not only their. Their trash ways, but their sewage ways to Chester but also the zero waste resolutions.

This Cabana contract that even though it's not ideal situation that we want it does take away this like minimum amount of trash, it has to be sent there and the language that we're hearing from Delaware County arms of the Delaware County Salaries Authority is that it allows for them to begin the process of looking at alternatives and they're also the Delaware County Council has agreed to zero, a strategic plan. That really from one of our mentors from our own piece of projects, and they also have a Community Advisory Council, which tells a part of and some I think so there's other residents. Near also yeah that are from Chester that are part of it, so we are seeing some actual effects from the work that we're doing. And last thing that we also want to underscore is long term goals, we really want to expand see for his membership.

We know that at one point, there was 15 campuses so we want to move our current five up to that 15 and beyond. We also want to collaborate with other student groups on campus and really maximize our project period, please funding to be able to. engage more students on campus to be engaged in Chester and really facilitating that process. While also like equipping students with proper training on how to be engaged with Community members and really using that as an asset of understanding how to be engaged with Community throughout their lives. And also pursuing new avenues of sustainable funding a lot of funding that we've got that we have received. is like one time funding, so you want to be able to think critically about how do we like create avenues of sustainability and create sovereignty and autonomy for Chester residents, but also for a circle members. And then initiate new relationships with Chester innovations there's so much. stuff that's happening right now interesting we really want to capitalize on that and maximize our capacity to be assets to circle and to some of their allies, but other folks in the

Community, that are doing work that really. It kind of expands across the board, but our main goal is to really deepen our capacities and deepen our relationships, so that we can really kind of like transcend this rapid turnover. Also transcend the normative extractive miss of academia and really construct students, that are not just engaged scholars but.

Actually, like residents and like folks that have relationships and our neighbors and really understand their their role and activate their privilege to be able to to to to be a. A cavity like to to create new opportunities for for new relationships, so thank you all so much for the scene us and we're really glad to hear questions, but thank you all again.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Sorry sorry that thanks so much to shontelle and Tyler you can see why. zoo leanne and I are so are so proud and so amazed at our young people, our students. and I think what we want to do is to move on to our next speaker. mana yep.

Zulene Mayfield: We have to say this, it is, is not possible, or it is possible, but it's also. extremely helpful to engage students. Poor actually going to get some sort of credit for doing the work. So some inventive innovative professors at swarthmore college. have somehow are made it possible that they can get course credits. Which is important to groups like circle, it is important to students, you know. When they want to volunteer and help their time. And I think that it should be replicated in every community that has these. wealth of these institutions there to tap into them. These students do research, for us, they stand on lines for us. And their biggest cheerleader. De biggest one I got a whole fluid enough, the children. But they're not children have to stop saying it. i'm gonna cry like a baby when they graduate. shauntel because of the work that she's done with Chester has now determine if she wants to be an environmental lawyer. Tyler i'm not gonna cut him loose I don't know what he's going to he's going to Boston but.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Today tyler's going to graduate school also to. become a and an environmental justice informed URBAN. planner and designer so he'll he'll be back to. You well once you build these relationships sorry you just don't you're just don't leave you may be gone for a while, but you'll be back.

Zulene Mayfield: and And I just had some students. rough dark and Betsy they were students that were swapping them or college in 1995. graduated she became a pediatrician russ got into local government day came back last year. And we sat down and chatted. So these are lifelong. relationships and. We so appreciate. See for in the city of Chester and for circle, it was in stepped it just to help Chester residents considerable quality living. We don't mind them branching off and helping other people, but they belong to us. So y'all can stop there foolishness.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Well, and and zeleny your point about universities and colleges.

Zulene Mayfield: They have to get involved. You have to if they really want to cultivate minds and put these. The next generation of folks that have to inhabit this earth and put them in touch you know most campuses and colleges and universities and things of that nature are in sort of a bubble. date there in places that are unrealistic, everything is beautiful everything is quiet and serene, but if you go a couple of blocks in either direction off their campus you hit the real world. So why not teach students in a real world setting, why not. link them up with communities. Like Chester you know why not linked them and have that type of. holistic relationships. Because we all don't live in bubbles we leave out of our bubbles when we leave our homes and go into the world. So they have to be taught real time world things like I tell the students I tell them this all the time.

Zulene Mayfield: You will give practices in proper procedures and protocols in the classroom. But when you come to miss may fill in to come in the circle i'ma teach you real life shit okay. it's gonna be real life, I don't play no games we get right to the point, if you tell me delete this lane, I can give you an hour, a month I want my hour. And i'm gonna get my hour out of bed. If you couldn't get to it. Because i'm also giving you time my time. And I don't have a lot of it again, so if you couldn't miss i'm going to make that same commitment to you. I don't need you to tell me what to do, because you younger than me. Not saying you can teach me new technology and what you are learning because it's an invaluable road.

These students have access to technologies and research and images machinery and technology that a group, like Chester resonance does not have access to. Or we did and but they teach me that my is still ain't got a Twitter or an instagram account. But they're teaching me so these types of relationships are extremely important, and it also broaden your power be. I can't tell you how many times Delaware county council. Has at first initially when when they came in and fill the room of Council chambers was like every Council person was like oh my God oh my God, who are these students, where are these kids who have to jump up. And repeatedly well we're glad you're here. And, and we hope that you would stay in our Community when you're done school yeah you really don't know what you're asking for. These are progressive people, these are change the world people. But they are always acknowledged, whether it be hostile holly who or you know welcoming you know, but these are, this is our future and we're so grateful for them.

so grateful we've built some great relationships great relationships. Not only with decisions with both with the professors and the academics dead gear or or stare stare. Their students in our direction it's extremely important. So.

Giovanna Di Chiro: yeah Thank you Susan for those comments and really, the question is what is education for. And I think that our students are responding to that. So i'd like to invite Maria Lopez new. girl yeah to. me yeah we've never met you know face to face personally, but she is my kindred spirit, how are you. Okay, all right don't be quiet because you know, sometimes i'll lose Jerry.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Maria.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: Thank you, thank you and yeah i'm my name is a person, yes, and I haven't had the pleasure, I will soon enough of meeting meeting missy lean in person. um but the reason we met is because we have sister communities right of. i'm in tester it's just such an inspiration everything that Chester has done, and has been fighting so where I work, for I work for the irobot. corporation don't hold that against us being a corporation, it was founded in the 60s, it was a Community corporation, and we don't forget to take out take back the power right. So now in 2022 I find myself giving disclaimers about on name, but we were founded 53 years ago as a Community.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: Childcare Center because a lot of the women in our neighborhood just didn't have access to childcare right, so it came together and they were taking care of each other's children. Fast forward to the 70s and 80s, they were explosions in our neighborhood right because there were a lot of eagle dumping sites, some of them your schools that were catching on fire. Another thing about our neighborhood right where the ironbound section of Newark New Jersey For those of you that don't know Newark looks like a pork chop. You know I really think of it as a pork chop and we're on that fatty round piece and i'll neighborhoods actually surrounded by the longest superfund site in the country and that's the passaic river on the passaic river. during the Vietnam War iron bond was actually the largest producer of Agent Orange and a byproduct the region orange you know which is. docs and it's just white dust as incredibly cancer, causing it comes out of incinerators that was being dumped into the river and that white dust was being picked up and put all of our neighborhood. So, even in ground pools public pause there to be closed down because there was so much contaminations that a lot of my colleagues were swimming in right so.

During that time when we were having that our Agent Orange buckle there was a proposal to put an incinerator in every county New Jersey, you know because. Our incinerator was around the same time as most of the scenery because it was the wave. Of the future in the 80s people thought were just gonna burn trash and we'd never have to deal with trash again. And so the proposal would be that every single county would have their own incinerator, but of course immediately upon hearing the proposal wealthier colonies or immediately, saying they would pay Newark Essex County to take their incinerators. So what was headed for Newark with for readers before the bubbles always even best. So it is all great, even though we have an incinerator, we have to remind ourselves we'll be back three because I am volunteer with many organizations across the state to be back the proposal, unfortunately. We ended up with incinerator in New York and candy and ended up with incinerator there are two majority black cities in our state right, and of course we are the ones that ended up. With garbage incinerators so i'll garbage incinerator was never supposed to be built as big as it was right, it was supposed to be a municipal incinerator just dealing with this local trash. But instead right now 50% of our tracks is actually coming from New York City it's not our trash until the people's trash and I know chest up and really.

So that's where i'll fake stories started, you know um it wasn't even ej exactly at the time right, we were before environmental justice got its name, but I know environmental justice has been a. live in well in this country since indigenous people were forcefully removed, and people are forced into the. Forest to come to this country our sleeves, so I think he just goes back all the way back right. um and we've been fighting our incinerators, since the late 80s, when you fought for it not to be constructed and then we've been fighting ever since, which is i'll fight against call banter i'm. Maria Lopez-Nunez: In that process has been pretty bleak we haven't gotten much traction right because our incinerator just makes a ton of money for the county.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: There are no viable alternatives similarly know Red Bull says it's one on 100% renewable energy, and we could see it in the same line, we could see the incinerator but. Of course, most people don't know incineration is not renewable energy generation does get those subsidies so currently we are fighting and i'm so grateful for miscellaneous help. Stephen helps us design workshops in New Jersey, to find incendiary there's he has a wide wide REACH has cast along that i'm. In our Community, just to go get also a sense of other things when I find incineration, we also currently have three power plants in our foursquare amount neighborhood. And we're fighting against the fourth power plan, we also have the largest way through his treatment facility for the state. And all of this, that i'm mentioning is just unfortunately that four square miles we're also holster the port of Newark. and Elizabeth, which is the largest poor on the east coast, and it has, like most of the consumer goods that go through this area that come in, you know from other countries who are poor get on trucks. And we're called the iron bound because we're bound by iron bound by either you know. tracks on one side and a bunch of highways, on the other side, which makes our neighborhood our little foursquare models.

That we've been defending and so we've had many wins and we've been able to take this neighborhood level organization really to get it statewide and national arm. recognition for the work we do because ej really matters and I strongly believe that the future will be led from the ground up there's no way around that it has to come from the ground. think tanks universities there's a place for that, but really it's the people that live in the communities. that drives us solutions that fight back because the stakes are higher the stakes of different you know i'll folks we're fighting for our lives we're not fighting to make breakthroughs or for. Academic credit, you know, like I you know writing publishing is none of that it's actually just to have healthy lungs we you know we all have people with asthma with cancer in our lives. My mom got colby last year, and she still hasn't been covered, you know she's still on oxygen a year later, with.

Partly permanent lung damage and it all comes from where we live and how we grow up right, I myself have. A constant battle with my asthma, and so I think this work is just like deeply emotional and spiritual for our communities and that's where the real solutions are going to come from, and it will be to this country's you know. their minds or glory if it actually listens to the communities, especially the communities that it's

hurt and marginalized. And so, in that sense in spirit of environmental justice we're just all connected. You know, there are communities like ours, like Chester like i'm about to walk this country, and unfortunately we've turned double global South into that as well. And so I I went by just saying we can win right like with our bond committee corporation during the environment to justice line, including what action we actually. A year and a half ago passed the strongest environmental justice on the country, you know we're not national organizations we're not think tanks. were just neighborhood people who've been fighting for our lives and we got a law that says that in environmental justice communities, you can no longer build.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: New facilities that contribute to the burden of pollution on that Community so if we didn't say disproportional no fancy words it's just if you increase pollution in our neighborhood. it's a shower deny you know they'll show tonight, or like words they're my favorite words it's not amazing tonight it's not the discretion. of other people for our lives it's a mandy mandy to protect our communities to stop digging the hole that goddess here in the first place, you know so. I I hope i've shared about my community, and there are many examples you know throughout the country of how communities when and when communities, when we went big, and so I really hope on their phone keep listening to the front lines, and thank you so much, and missing anything you need. yeah. Thank you, fine I don't be. You, and of course i'll do anything so this lady right here.

Zulene Mayfield: So thank you okay listen. That i'm on my way if you need me, and I know you need me but, more importantly, we as leaders have to uplift in the sport each of the dish, it is not easy, it really is not, and I think it's harder for. In this world and it's still sexist is still racist Western a little bit as women leaders less than well no out but they try to qualify as the less than Okay, now we only play this shit but anyhow. We have got to like I have expressed to Maria and and others there we've been on some calls with. The corporate polluters meet constantly. They have symposium conferences and. They learn what to do in order to get over on us and the regular regulators and everybody else, and they form a sort of a business alliance. Maria and i've been talking about forming an alliance.

So far, right up in the in the tri state area we're all we all have communities that are impacted severely by co banta and we are going to get together and Alliance a you know, even though we all have our own little issues, we can support each other. However, we can send a bigger message, no you're just not dealing with new work. you're dealing with candy you're dealing with Chester you're dealing with Harrisburg. And we're gonna get we're gonna get this done we're all she's extremely busy I mixed dying that no sense, though, you know in between this conference I did a radio interview I got one at 530 I have no fence. I really don't that's why i'm homesick now, but we talked about self care for each other and about a supporting each other venting to each other, and we need to have that available for us, so we can continue this work. The day getting it done we getting it done and whatever they can do a weekend replicated and vice versa that's wonderful that's wonderful, but this is all about broadening your power base. People in the work, but I know when they

screw with iron bound they won't get emails and phone calls from people from utah. When you screw with some my interest to you won't get a call from Canada. And that's what's going to stop this crap. that's the one stop it. Oh, we just viewing with we just deal with the power power less people. A financially powerless, they have politically powerless. But now you got to do with somebody who knew your wife. And she got a phone call and your children are bringing it home because they've learned about it, this was more college campus. That is was going to bring some remedy to the situation. But I love you girl i'm so glad you came. yeah i've got friends everywhere Tyler.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Absolutely.

Zulene Mayfield: Not there, it was to Murray, he bad ass now. He a bad boy both awesome Well he won't be in between he won't be in Boston so i'll let you have a part of the way he wanna where i'm going to be kind of a stalker. So so lll question. muddy if. You you talked about. Your your your organization and allies and coalition's successfully getting the strongest environmental justice law in the country past. So just if you could say, maybe, just a few sentences about how that that happened and then secondly, I know that you are also on the White House and environmental justice about advisory council. which of course is. i'd be i'd be interested to know if you have a couple of sentences of the extent to which you think being part of that net you know federal space. is going to move forward and one of your colleagues kyle Palace white is going to be speaking tomorrow, and I know that he's also on the Council.

Zulene Mayfield: We have on i'm only one allowed to cush.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Did did I.

Zulene Mayfield: know you ever talk about the White House panel.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: yeah so about how we got to pass well first off like it took 12 years right, so I don't want to pretend it was easy. um, but I think I I just highlight to 12 years to talk about, we have to have our work ready when the political windows open political windows just open we can't always for some open, something we can, but not always. And so that there was a political moment we know during covert where everybody was trying to say black lives matter. and trying to figure out what to do in those moments you better be ready, because I call it the ratio merry go around like folks care about reach for, and then they start forgetting about racing. Something happened to care again, you know so. When the miracle go over comes your way you got to be ready to try to pass progressive legislation, I think our movement, sometimes we want everything perfect. And we wait too long, you know we keep crafting crafting sometimes we need to act right, especially when it comes to policy change, we need that we need to change the walls, because sort of a revolution that's that's what we got changing the walls to the policy.

And so, one thing we did that I thought was very important, is we let anybody speak for us, you know as a Community. Sometimes it's really tempting to team up with other people, because you think they're smarter

than you and you know something. Is up, but one thing i've learned in this work is everyone's kind of bluffing it, you know everyone's faking to make a they just create whole new vocabularies and academia, sometimes. They make them feel real self assured, but it doesn't mean much in the Community and the application of their policies we don't make a difference, for us, you know. And so that's why, when we were negotiating that those policies we didn't let other people negotiate for us because they might know better, we actually read the policy. ourselves and we're like this probably won't work we've seen this loophole us before you know, like, and so I think that that helped make it what it is the strongest policy right because we were closing loopholes that have strangled our communities in the past.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: And like I said we didn't let anybody speak for us, we we demanded from our Green partners and from our allies that they stand with us behind us right because oftentimes they want to bring you up as a token. Just organize you and say look we're hoping that more have the savior complex, we wanted to make sure that we were showing. communities across the country, we can win, and you can win by yourself, you know, like. New lead, and you can lead other forces and big resources to come behind you. And tomorrow night with kyle but actually i'm really close to most of the folks on the panel tomorrow right Jackie Patterson on about T stuff. that's the thing about having a Community and being accountable to a movement is that we all know each other, we have to will work well with integrity, with each other, right to me trouble always uplifting. and pushing environmental justice and then, when it comes to the we jack if I could real quick.

i'm not saying it's the end all be all right, like, I hope, no one things we made it just because now there's a White House environmental justice Advisory Council i'll be honest and i'm nervous because it's being recorded, but I feel like a glorified in turn right. Having to come back. into circle we're doing a lot of work on to try to just put some flags in the sand that then the movement can uplift identity, everything is still struggle and our communities need to continue fighting with different agencies for the. equitable the true application or justice 40 or otherwise these policies will end up being used against us and 10 years from now we'll do financial autopsies and realize it was just a PR moment. You know, but things will make it justice 40 just because it's written. it's not a promise or the panacea, we need to make it what we want it to be and that's always been the case in this country, you know that's what democracy really is. Is the people getting involved in participating in their governance so again, thank you all for the opportunity and i'll pass it back.

Zulene Mayfield: Thank you, Maria does that doesn't that sound familiar. They know that sound familiar with your talent with lemons make lemonade. yeah basically what Maria just said, so that is the overall consensus among Community folks we want us what we got.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Absolutely and don't be somebody else's PR strategy.

Zulene Mayfield: Like I said, there is no cow reboot off. yeah you wait, but account Ruby one, two, you will be have been to scout to bone we are at account three.

Giovanna Di Chiro: So thank you Thank you again, maybe this is fabulous so our final panelist for today, Dr stuff tie. And i'll turn it over to you.

Steph Tai: Thank you, I am humbled to come after all of you, especially as an outsider in the Midwest i'm assuming here in from Madison area where the original inhabitants for the whole trunk people and the joke was a name given to this area meeting many lakes. it's especially humbling to speak after you because you're doing so much amazing work on the ground it's really thrilling to hear about all these projects and to hear about everyone's passion, they bring to their activism.

Steph Tai: You know there's amazing work it sounds like that's being done by circle. moving towards zero waste abolishing incineration just the fact that some of these boats have changed over time that's that's at least somewhat of a positive thing. The fact that you've gotten on the board isn't a positive thing and it's going to be a fight forever as you've heard, I think, ready and you'll hear again some of the legal tools are extremely lacking and so that's what i'm going to be talking about a bit. Here today is, you know what do we do, given the sort of lacking strength of a lot of. legal tools well part of it is that too often lawyers, think of it as they're just you know they have a patriarchal kind of hierarchical nature lori coming in to be like the sort of. white knight and I don't mean that I do mean the white part of it, the white knight trying to save a community and that's not particularly effective as you guys are talking about, especially you know so.

So my work highlights some of the work of activists in Detroit again because i'm in the Midwest but how lawyers can sort of be more humble step back from trying to take the lead and instead. tailor their work to amplify the voices of Community members, rather than sort of trying to lead Community members, and so I worked with. A friend of mine to write this paper dash patel's street democracy Detroit, which is a Community justice nonprofit in Detroit. And what we looked at was some of the stuff in the Detroit water crisis which he worked with and water crisis for those of you who aren't familiar with it. was basically Detroit shutting off of all of these housings of housing. Projects water, so people didn't have access to clean water, which is essential right for both our lives and also central for environment. And so what we apply was the scaffolding approach analyzing what succeeded in Detroit what didn't and we saw that.

This really follows an approach that you guys are already talking about an approach that helps amplify voices rather than sort of. tried to take the voices, so the, this is the approach that strong from educational theory and designed to move students progressively charged stronger understanding and greater independence in the learning project. process and so we'll talk about that in terms of getting activated was part of the learning the learning process was important, and this awareness building process was important and so. The approach in Community justice lawyer and using scaffolding is using with litigation, as this scaffold. for local mobilization and empowerment, rather than as a direct method to achieve change this requires a totally different look at.

Quote unquote learning skills, a lot of times you know if you think of this sort of 16th kind of lawyer was known as impact lawyer, and that is finding some key case to make changes to the law. it's turned out to be very difficult in the ej space and so what's been more effective that we've seen and we've experienced is the idea that these types of. legal tools can be reversed to empower communities and Community members towards independence in their activism, rather than reliance upon lawyers. And so the three prongs involved, creating opportunities for storytelling and engagement of the political process.

Steph Tai: And that can be with the filing of lawsuits but the lawsuit the ultimate outcome is it the point of it. is to use that to bring things to the news to bring things to the Community to allow Community members to tell their stories about why say a lawsuit was raised or public comments were submitted, etc. And sort of engage them to further build up their own sort of empowerment and skills another focus is a focus on visible rallying and polarizing points for movements again, this can be in the form and, for example in the Detroit. case study that we talked about that my friend was involved in. We focused on how their letters submitted to the UN about sort of right to water and the UN Commissioners even came in, to visit and this provided a space.

For very visible rally people had something to march for this right to water, and then the use of structures and deadlines for galvanizing Mesa campaigns post litigation. And what does that mean it means it was even if something is not necessarily illegal tool that can be used successfully, it can be used to start the clockwork right if you haven't petition in many types of administrative areas. There has to be a response from an agency or from a committee within a certain number of days that starts a clock where you can start to sort of rally Community Members just sort of pound on their. doors and sort of respond to that clock ticking process, and so the idea is to use that. to motivate Community Members and to sort of further empower Community Members because they know there's a shorter timeline that governments. Politicians etc have to respond to, and so, in the interest of time we can keep this short but the idea of this is that in sort of what's reflected in what. i've heard in all of your talks is the idea is that the lawyer is not supposed to leave lawyers rather supposed to help give additional tools, the kind of tools that Community Members need to do their work so that's where i'll stop.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Thank you, thank you, we we um the this morning in this morning's panel, we heard from several lawyers and scholars who who said a similar thing that the. legal tools, including lawsuits should be seen as organizing tools as organizing strategies. And to sort of build a sense of of community and the sense of. A sense of empowerment really. So i'm. i'm curious if. Any of the panelists would like to ask questions of each other or share thoughts from what they've heard from from what people have spoken about today. shauntel as a future environmental justice lawyer, do you have any thoughts about. about your hopes for for. engaging the law. don't mean to put you on the spot.

Chantal + Tyler: Professor stuff like really noted in that the lawyers are behind the people and that they're not the forefront of whatever it is that the Community wants to do, unless, that is what the Community wants to do they want that lawyer to be that person there. So i'm hoping to fulfill that type of role in our space and really am like absorbing as many techniques and tools and skills as possible to be that type of attorney that I can be. My whole future is up in the air, I just know i'm going to law school and working very hard to graduate from law school, so that is.

Zulene Mayfield: he's gonna come back to chapter.

Chantal + Tyler: yeah exactly and if the zoo mean wants me to do something that I will do that is want me to do something that I will not do that, so I think stuff and money and lean and everyone, even the attorneys in the last panel really spoke to that it's really following what the Community wants.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Any other questions from the panelists or from the audience, I think we have.

Zulene Mayfield: A question, I have a question.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Yes.

Zulene Mayfield: So, and this, this question is for Tyler and for chantelle, how do you see what you've learned here, working with circle, how do you see you.

Zulene Mayfield: Advancing that, at whatever school that you're going to. I mean they can't have volleyball we will share. But you know. How do you see you advancing what you the things that you've learned here working on circle and how do you also passed the torch. or your underclassmen as well.

Chantal + Tyler: yeah i'd say definitely for in terms of informing the future I think when I began to connect the fact that a lot of the reasons that these sites showed up was because of zoning laws and the fact that I do. plan to be there, it made me much more interested in the process of how different things are cited, and like what are the policies and laws. But the processes by which these these businesses are these industries or or these systems kind of arise and i'm really interested in like exploring that further and that's a main reason that i'm. Pursuing a master's in planning. In terms of like carrying the torch I would say that, like just to offer ourselves out like in resource to some of the students that are already on the call, but I think. we've been like very transparent we've been very clear like we are very close to these folks to so we're also like friends so there's a level of comfort that I think is like for us to be honest and them, to be honest with us. And just making sure that we maintain that as much as possible and something that i've learned working with circle and see for the past like basically three years.

Is this like balance between wanting grassroots organization to overcome but also feeling like government should be doing something, and so i'm always battling between. Should I be forcing the government, the Delaware County Council the delaware's always it already to be doing these things when it feels time and time again that they don't want to do these do these things. And also being that, like a Community organizer that activists in those spaces to push for those actions so i'm like constantly battling in my head, even now, even as I go to law school, I question. Are these the right pathways to even be attempting to do these things, because it just feels so relentless sometimes and hopeless.

Chantal + Tyler: Especially at that sideways 30 meeting that I showed on the video that was like so disgusting to me how is it that I like can use government to even try doing the right thing when it feels like they don't want to do the right thing, so that's. Something i've learned throughout the process is I can't always like i'll be on like some sort of balance or skill, the rest of my life I imagine.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Do you think that there's. A zillion has spoken in the past about wanting to imagine. allies and and cities like Chester and Newark, for example, and flint or Detroit joining together to create a law to actually draft Julian what you called an endangered communities act. Absolutely so to actually think about. lawmaking from the ground up and and so i'm curious.

Zulene Mayfield: As.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Something that people would would see as as a possible strategy.

Zulene Mayfield: We understand that this is my logic behind it, we all know that no food you say anything about race. People go into their closets and shut themselves off Oh, here they go again talking about race race this race death is always about race and it's generally not people of color who do that, so I was thinking you know, we have an endangered species act. It says we're going to protect this net over here or this spotted owl or this or that or that or this. So if we make the criteria. About a Community with poor health. And we make two criteria. One of the things is poor access to good health care. If we make the criteria about poverty. And their inability and ratio, and I mean technological disparities and educational disparities.

Then you know, whatever the criteria is going to be this going to take that. That barrier or race that keeps environmental groups out of this fight or not say environmental groups, but the traditional. long standing environmental groups that don't want to touch this issue because a racism. Which is a racist in its own right, because a lot of the boards of these larger. More established environmental groups their whole board is Caucasian. Mostly men. So they would have no ties to communities like Chester or people of color or indigenous people. So we take out that that that handle a race and make the criteria strictly about saving endangered communities, what is an endangered community. Is it low. birth weight is it is it High infant mortality rates is it cancer clusters, we

can right into it whatever criteria, we need to. and call it the endanger communities that who the Fuck can vote against that. What politician would say oh i'm not for the endanger communities that.

I think that it's worth it. I mean they got some going on now and D, you know with the White House and by then administration. But. I think it needs to be explored.

Zulene Mayfield: Miss joy.

Giovanna Di Chiro: So do we have other other thoughts at pete people want to join up and start to draft and endangered communities communities X, led by circle and ironbound.

Zulene Mayfield: Well, we need staff we don't need this all her we need the lawyers in the room.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Absolutely, we we won't put them in another room and me and really.

Zulene Mayfield: yeah. Zulene Mayfield: yeah we won't be on the outside tell them what to do. All right, I think i've talked to Maria about our I don't know about, but it up yeah.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: No, but it certainly sounds like a good idea, you know, and I think even with DJ la we passionate were like symbolically at the city level first right because we knew we couldn't at the time we had our governor Christie i'm. off, I think that. No matter who's in charge. groups can still make a difference, you know at the local level, you just have to figure out strategy and sometimes when you get people in certain offices that aren't working for you won't have to figure out a different way. Well, you also have to figure out how to get them at all. Well that's for sure, yes.

Zulene Mayfield: It can be done.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: man.

Zulene Mayfield: be done, we had a Green Party candidate your brand last year. It straight out of the box five six month campaign no money, no real name recognition and guess what she got almost 20% of the vote.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: wow that's incredible yeah not speaks to people payment pushing up. With. us.

Giovanna Di Chiro: And she'll she'll be speaking at tomorrow's panel as well, so Kenny.

Zulene Mayfield: yeah.

Giovanna Di Chiro: So, Chris and any questions.

Christopher Mele: yeah actually one comment, one question so celine following what you were just saying with the act that you're proposing

the criteria that's been used before, unfortunately, on the other side of.

Christopher Mele: what's progressive and that is economic development, the keystone opportunity zones that built the stadium the casino. and yellow fingers for all premised on communities had to show certain levels of poverty level education scores, etc, so if it can be done for that. It can be done in a progressive way, so I think that there's if the argument is well why are you Jerry picking cherry picking certain things are not well it's been done before. So perfect n to no benefit of the Community, we should add.

Zulene Mayfield: Absolutely.

Christopher Mele: kind of the economic development has translated back into meaningful jobs or improvement whatsoever so that's something there, I guess, I wanted to put stuff on the spot, if I could, in that all of the things that we heard today, which kind of require. A practice of listening to communities, as opposed to speaking to has that filtered into law school instruction, as I guess is my question is is the culture of training lawyers moving in this direction of working alongside of or often even behind community, as opposed to out from.

Steph Tai: That is a great question and I think it has moved forward in terms of.

Steph Tai: immersive education, so the law school clinics have focused more and more on getting students to listen, because. As practitioners, they have to listen, and so the skills are being taught there, unfortunately, in the classroom that has not been the case so much we still teach in a very traditional kind of way about like you know.

Steph Tai: here's the key cases here's what they mean etc and it's not it's not really focused on practice and there's a there's a there's a. there's a disconnect there that is partly, I think, due to the way that people get. To be law professors right a lot of law professors now are people who had like great grades in law school, maybe have fantastic clerkships. Maybe wrote a whole bunch of good scholarly articles, but haven't done that kind of practice, especially not grassroots kind of practice, and so there is an absolute disconnect. I think that the there are more folks who realize that this is a concern, at least in Wisconsin we try to and so.

Steph Tai: We try to work closely with the clinical professors to integrate these skills into the classroom but it's hard because of as you observe this sort of long standing practice of. Disconnecting what's being taught, which is just appellate cases, etc, with what actual progressive lauren can be. But that said, like one of my clinic when I was in law school, I was in a clinic where we represented a State REP state recognized. tribal nation and a lot of that involved going on field trips listening to them about those sort of water rights they needed protected. helping them craft statements before water boards, not with us leading it but sort of taking it what they had to say about historical

fishing rights, so it was it was really eye opening for me and i'm glad I had that opportunity.

Zulene Mayfield: So in that forum. i'm not only just wall but. Since this is primarily dealing with our face. How can the Community have more access. Who those who asked both or how do we get on campus.

Steph Tai: um that's a great question a lot of. Law schools have what are called clinics and so these clinics are dedicated to usually representing Community members, either in.

Steph Tai: direct representation, for example, family law clinics might represent someone going through a divorce. or sometimes in Community types of cases, and so, if there are any and there's a lot of law schools in that area, so if any of them have clinics. That either do environmental representation Community representation that's some area of access and you can sort of there's a clinic intake kind of line, you can call them and sort of try to make your case that this would be both. really helpful for you, but also helpful for students learn how to be your lawyers. Does that answer your question.

Zulene Mayfield: yeah well, one of the answers. I think more has the question in the chat oh.

Giovanna Di Chiro: yeah so car. Cars question is drafting legislation and electing progressive candidate sounds great, but the democrats as terribly flawed, as they are. Maybe trounced in the midterm elections and we'll have a republican Congress and then what. Yes, we need progressive candidates, but pragmatically, it seems we need to support people who will vote for change, even in perfectly i'm a fan a fan of radical change, but Ruth Bader Ginsburg incremental strategy seems empirically to work better.

Giovanna Di Chiro: What is your theory of change. But that's a big question car. Does anyone want to take this on.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: The last minute. I mean I don't know why you don't do both right like this isn't an either or scenario, I will say that, obviously, the democratic party's not listening. To young voters to so many people it's like obsessed with trying to capture the middle of the road voters and doing so it continuously get to push more and more. towards the right into anti societal policies, so there does come a point where either they have to change their course or there is going to be a push for more. Radical candidate for more progressive candidates, I think that's going to happen, but I think divorce from the. show that is often Republicans versus democrats there's so much that happens at the municipal level where sometimes.

The elections aren't contestant you know where there aren't even parties to speak up, and I think. that we need to be focused on changing the ground because that informs the national level when we're changing who are the local elected officials were were pushing against school boards again zoning boards finding boards. You know where again communities can activate it and become democratic participants. I think that starts to

radically change the system in a way that might feel incremental at first, but I do think it's a profound and deep change I don't make all the difference we can't just wage war on the level of DC because we're all gone, then our money on that end. Very good, on the local level, we have people you know and people will make a difference when the local level changes it'll have overboard effect a deeper effect.

Maria Lopez-Nunez: So we can just plan or think about an active fear because of what's happening in momentum we need to think five and 10 years ahead of ourselves.

Steph Tai: The other thing I wanted to add is that you have to think about state elections to because. They are determining the whole voting disrupting right and that's how people get gerrymander that's how voices get lost and so during the elections were up for grabs is you know, whoever isn't because each state does it differently whoever's in charge of the district thing. Is up that really matters because that might lock out for 10 years right future elections for super progressive candidates so that's something also pay attention to.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Yes, absolutely. I think that this is a powerful and positive place to to stop for today, especially since precisely this strategy is what is what Chester is a progressive candidates and Chester are pushing for state state representative and local government, so I think. I think that that's something to be hopeful for and tend to think about tomorrow we'll hear from two of these candidates. But i'd like to.

Zulene Mayfield: I don't want to leave it on that note, this is what my spiel on it Okay, people do I policy people drive politics people tribal law. And if you mobilize the people and create stress and gravity on those processes. Ultimately, you can get something that works for the Community and for the benefit of all of us. There would be no change in Delaware county if circle did not exist circle has not existed, or the people of Chester have been viewed as being politically powerless.

Until we started pulling on the strings. In our county and our. Local Government needs to bomb food on it, but anyway we're pulling on that awesome. And you pull regular on on the regulator is awesome. It like I said earlier, it's like we've been a blanket. You can't pull one string and away with it, you got to pull on multiple things at one time and create stressed stress on those entities in the atmosphere. Until you know the Western people are is heard and that mobilizes to politicians, give a damn who do elect you nobody hire somebody for a job and leave them alone.

We in this country have that unique ability or we're going to we're going to vote for this person he'll take care of them, then we don't go and check and see what the bastards doing. We can't leave them to their own accord, because it ain't for our benefit. You hire some mind, and you have to manage that person. And we have not learned effectively how to manage the politicians that we put in place. They allow profits and corporations and money to manage them because we're not hurting enough. We don't create stress in their lives, you know. So, but it can be done. Every day long as you do it, it can be done so that's where we are. All right, Giovanni and now you can in your session.

Thanks.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Well, I, we want to thank everybody our panelists for speaking today for sharing your thoughts for giving us so much great energy and ideas. And as Nusseibeh has put in the in the chat the link to the conference forum where people can continue the conversation as well. But I look forward all of us look forward to seeing you tomorrow bright and early at 10am.

Zulene Mayfield: yeah Can somebody put the march flyer up again.

Giovanna Di Chiro: yeah Okay, can we post the flyer again for the March, which is going to be happening immediately after the end of the third panel tomorrow. We hope to see people who are local there.

Zulene Mayfield: And they come in fly in France tonight. I mean.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Literally come flying from France and. Thanks to everyone, and we will see you again tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

Giovanna Di Chiro: Thank you.

Zulene Mayfield: Tyler Maria get some rest.