



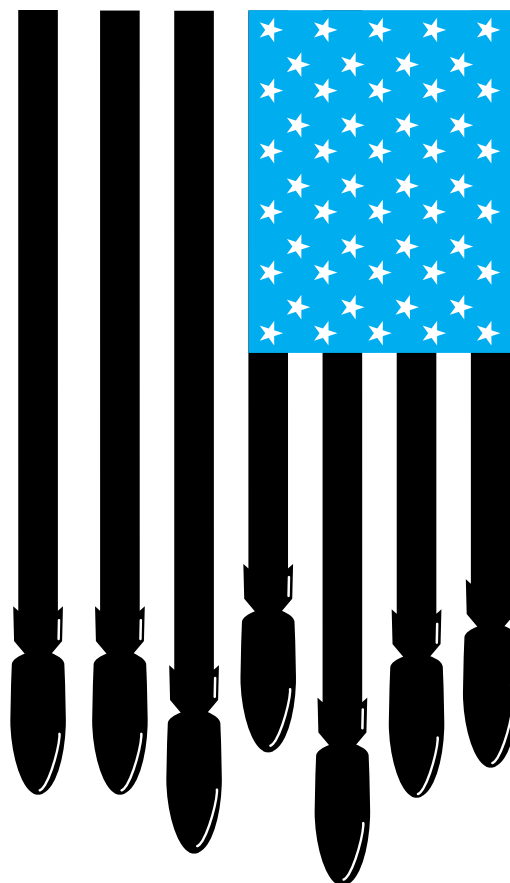
NO WAR WITH IRAN

RALPH NADER

The same neocons who persuaded George W. Bush and crew to, in Ron Paul's inimitable words, "lie their way into invading Iraq" in 2003, are beating the drums of war more loudly these days to attack Iran. It is remarkable how many of these war-mongers are former draft dodgers who wanted other Americans to fight the war in Vietnam. With the exception of Ron Paul, who actually knows the history of U.S.-Iranian relations, the Republican presidential contenders have declared their belligerency toward Iranian officials they accuse of moving toward nuclear weapons. The Iranian regime disputes that charge, claiming they are developing the technology for nuclear power and nuclear medicine.

The inspection teams of the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) that monitor compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which Iran belongs, have entered Iran numerous times and, while remaining suspicious, have not been able to find that country on the direct road to the Bomb.

While many western and some Arab countries in the Gulf region have condemned Iran's alleged nuclear arms quest, Israel maintains some 200 ready nuclear weapons



and has refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty, thereby avoiding the IAEA inspectors.

Israelis in the know have much to say. Defense minister, Ehud Barak, responded to PBS's Charlie Rose's question "If you were Iran wouldn't you want a nuclear weapon?" with these words: "Probably, probably. I don't delude myself that they are doing it just because of Israel. They have their history of 4,000 years. They look around and they see the Indians are nuclear. The Chinese are nuclear, Pakistan is nuclear as well as North Korea, not to mention the Russians."

The Iranian regime, with a national GDP smaller than Massachusetts, is terrified. It is surrounded by powerful adversaries, including the U.S. military on three of its borders. President George W. Bush labeled Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, one of the three "axis of evil," and Teheran knows what happened to Iraq after that White House assertion. They also know that North Korea inoculated itself from invasion by testing nuclear bombs. And all Iranians remember that the U.S. overthrew their popular elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 and installed the dictatorial Shah who ruled tyrannically for the next 27 years.

Recently, Iran has experienced mysterious cyber sabotage, drone violations of its air space, the slaying of its nuclear scientists and the blowing up of its military sites, including a major missile installation. Israeli and American officials are not trying too hard to conceal this low level warfare.

PJN annual potluck & meeting
Sunday, February 27
Peace & Justice Center, 231
Bedford Road, Stockton.

Time to connect, plan and look forward...Bring a dish to share, enjoy a good meal with great company. We will start at 4:00 p.m. and wrap up the gathering with a Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

It's always a great time - you'll be welcome.



Israel military historian-strategist Martin van Creveld said in 2004, that Iranians "would be crazy not to build nuclear weapons considering the security threats they face." Three years later he stated that "the world must now learn to live with a nuclear Iran the way we learned to live with a nuclear Soviet Union and a nuclear China...We Israelis have what it takes to deter an Iranian attack. We are in no danger at all of having an Iranian nuclear weapon dropped on us... thanks to the Iranian threat, we are getting weapons from the U.S. and Germany." U.S. General John Abizaid is one of numerous military people who say that the world can tolerate a nuclear Iran-which, like other countries, does not wish to commit suicide.

Using the "Iranian threat," served Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who on his first tour of duty back in 1996, speaking to a joint session of Congress, made a big point of the forthcoming Iranian bomb. Somehow the Iranians, who were invaded in 1980 by a U.S.-backed Saddam Hussein, resulting in a million casualties, and who have not invaded anybody for 250 years, are taking a very long time to build a capability for atomic bomb production, much less the actual weapons. In mid-2011, Meir Dagan, recently retired head of Israel's "CIA," repeated his opposition to a military attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, adding it would engulf the region in a conventional war. He further took the Israeli government to task for failing "to put forth a vision," noting that "Israel must present an initiative to the Palestinians and adopt the 2002 Saudi Arabia peace proposal, reiterated since, that would open full diplomatic relations with some two dozen Arab and Islamic countries in return for an Israeli pullback to the 1967 borders and recognition of a Palestinian state."

The war-mongers against Iran have often distorted Iranian statements to suit their purpose and kept in the shadows several friendly Iranian initiatives offered to the George W. Bush Administration. Flynt L. Leverett, now with Brookings and before a State Department and CIA official,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Nonprofit Org. U.S.
Postage
PAID
Permit No. 488
Stockton, CA

Peace & Justice Network
of San Joaquin County
P.O. Box 4123
Stockton, CA 95204
209/467-4455

SAVE THE DATES

FEB 26
PJN ANNUAL MEETING P.1
APR 22
EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

CONTENTS

STOP DOMESTIC POWER GRAB P3
IGNORING FORECLOSURE CRISIS P4
SUPREME ETHICS CHALLENGE P5

DOOMSDAY CLOCK MOVES P6
GOVT PROGRAM AT RISK P10-11
FUKUSHIMA CONTINUES P15

Back from India



BRUCE GIUDICI

The air is thick, the water diseased. Litter gathers around the feet of the many poor by-standers. Dogs and children defecate in piles of garbage at a nearby street corner. People eagerly sell anything they deem saleable. The market economy booms.

I have just spent a 2 weeks in a globalized future that market competition will bring us, if we only allow it. India is a miraculous country full of diverse potential. It's people are smart and innovative; the resource base is plentiful; the hunger for something better is palpable. From the vantage point of

the well-heeled Westerner, it is difficult to deny that these people deserve a better present—and future. The path they—and the Chinese—take will determine our planet's future.

India has 1,200 million people—with huge urban centers, but holding most of its population in the

countryside. Outside the main cities, cultivated fields of mustard are interrupted every few miles by small “towns,” where clusters of shops with roll-up doors offer any manner of items purely a function of too many people crowded in too small a space. Throw in a stray dog, pig or cow and you have a picturesque scene. Yet, within this picture is an underlying poverty that begs for relief. The too-numerous-to-count brick-making kilns constantly spewing dung-fueled particulates into the heavy sky defies regulation—and provides work for many. Slow-moving “rivers” are not to drink, their fish not to eat. Much more than the begging, the constant sales offers are what remain our most memorable interactions with Indians.

Our very well-educated tour guides all spoke wistfully of a time when their skills would be better used than for the entertainment of jet-setting tourists. Frustrated, yet



proud of their country, they wanted to do more. With the minimum daily wage is 80 rupees (about \$1.60), markets are filled with inexpensive goods—yet families cooking in urban median strips are remain hungry. Their children look as do ours: bright and inquisitive—yet their opportunities are limited. This is the majority of our world—the market equilibrium: a hopeful opportunity or pending catastrophe?

And how will our leaders respond? Clinging to old privilege is unaffordable and immoral; fairness, honesty and kindness may be our best hope. And as to our earth in 100 years? The answer may be blowing in the wind.

Our differences are much exaggerated—let's commit to a future that emphasizes our common humanity. Go forth and empathize.

Feb 2 meeting

CSPA action alert: Striped bass regulation proposal letters needed now

It is time to write that letter to the California State Fish and Game Commission. Why is this important? If we don't turn back this cynical and spiteful effort by San Joaquin Valley agribusiness, we stand to lose an outstanding striped bass fishery and its Delta protecting constituency. Furthermore, leading fisheries biologists believe that the proposed regulation changes will increase the threat to listed species in the Delta.

The California Department of Fish and Game is presenting a proposal to the Commission to dramatically increase the take of striped bass in order to reduce the striped bass population. This action is the result of a legal settlement between the Department of Fish and Game and a coalition of agricultural interests who sued with allegations that the striped bass were impacting the population of endangered species in the Delta, including

salmon and delta smelt.

The settlement requires the Department to present the regulation change for the Commission to approve or reject. If the Commission rejects the recommendation, the striped bass regulations will remain unchanged. Please write a reasoned and considerate letter to the Fish and Game Commission and urge them to reject the proposed regulation changes.

The basic proposed changes are as follows:

- Raising the daily bag limit for striped bass from two to six fish.
- Raising the possession limit for striped bass from two to 12 fish.
- Lowering the minimum size for striped bass from 18 to 12 inches.
- Establishing a hot spot for striped bass fishing at Clifton Court Forebay and specified adjacent waterways at which the daily bag limit will be 20 fish, the possession limit will be 40 fish and there will be no size limit. Anglers

fishing at the hot spot would be required to fill out a report card and deposit it in an iron ranger or similar receptacle.

- Changes to the sport fishing regulations for the Carmel, Pajaro and Salinas Rivers to allow harvest of striped bass when the fishery would otherwise be closed.

- DFG is also recommending an adaptive management plan that will help assess how the new regulations influence the fishery.

Please write your letter today. The issue will be addressed at the February 2 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission. You may address the Commission as follows:

Mr. Jim Kellogg,
President, California
Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, California
94244-2090

Via fax to (916) 653-5040 / via e-mail to fgc@

fgc.ca.gov and include a Proposed Striped Bass Sport Fishing Regulations in the fax / e-mail or mail subject line.

Here are some suggested points to make in your letter. Your letter will have more impact if you re-phrase and make the points your own:

- Striped bass have coexisted with the listed species for over a century. It is clear that the same stressors that have decimated the striped bass population are to blame for listed species decline. Scapegoating the striped bass will not eliminate the impacts of water export, habitat destruction, and poor water quality on listed species.
- Most of striped bass prey are other introduced species that compete with and/or prey upon listed species. Leading fisheries scientists warn that reducing striped bass numbers could have the unintended consequence of increasing overall predation on listed species.

•The proposed

regulations conflict with provisions of the Cental Valley Project Improvement Act which requires the doubling of mid nineteen nineties populations of all anadromous fish species in the estuary, including striped bass.

- The proposed regulations encourage consumption of striped bass beyond levels considered safe by the State of California Office of Environmental Health.

- The proposed regulation changes apply to San Luis Reservoir and O'Neil Forebay. This does not follow the stated rationale for the changes – protecting endangered species in the Delta.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RELEVANT LINKS, GO TO [HTTP://WWW.DANBLANTON.COM/BLOG/CATEGORY/CONSERVATION/](http://WWW.DANBLANTON.COM/BLOG/CATEGORY/CONSERVATION/)

Source: California Sportfishing Protection Alliance release 1/9/12 <http://calsport.org/news/csfa-alert-action>



CONNECTIONS

Editor: Bruce Giudici,
786—3109; bgiudici@caltel.com

Layout: Luis Gonzalez

Proofreader: Debbie Cousyn

Ad Rep: Vacant

Distribution Coordinators:
Dean and Marcia Savage,
209—339—1599

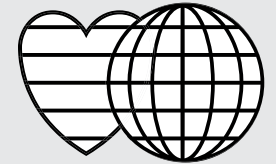
Distribution Site: Green's
Nutrition, 1906 Pacific Ave,
Stockton

Distributors: Suzy Arnett,
Rosemary Atkinson, Antoinette
Celle, Jerry Croskrey,
Clarence Edwards, Daniel
Fong, Catherine Mathis, John
Morearty, Heather Ryan, Dean
and Marcia Savage, Julie
Vaughn, Susan von Sosten,
Stan Thomas, Patrick Wall, Jim
Walsh, Bill Witz

Deadline: 7th of each month
(except Aug & Dec)

Circulation: 9,000

CONNECTIONS is a monthly publication of the Peace & Justice Network of San Joaquin County. The views expressed in CONNECTIONS are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Network. News, articles, letters and calendar items should be sent to the Peace & Justice Network, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton, CA 95204. The editor reserves the right of final decision on copy. Call (209) 467—4455 for more information. PJN is on the internet: <http://www.pjnsjc.org>



Peace & Justice Network Board of Directors

Co—Chairs: Christie Kelley
Vice—Chairperson: John
Morearty

Treasurer: Bruce Giudici

Secretary: Paula LeVeck

Members—at—large:

Luis Gonzalez, Gary Barrington

Organizational members:
89.5 Stone Soup Radio (Tony
Kiser), Fathers & Families (Jim
Walsh), Hispanics for Political
Action (Daniel Fong), MoveOn
(Mario D'Angeli), National
Youth Rights Association
(Alyssa Palomares), Puentes
(John Morearty), Single Payer
San Joaquin (Paula LeVeck),
United Nations (Larry Pippin)

“The Peace and Justice Network is a nonprofit educational organization committed to the vision of a world in which the equality of all persons is achieved, basic needs are met, conflict is resolved nonviolently, and the earth's resources are shared responsibly for the well—being of all her inhabitants and all future generations.”



Suing Barack Obama over domestic military power

CHRIS HEDGES

Attorneys Carl J. Mayer and Bruce I. Afran filed a complaint Friday in the Southern U.S. District Court in New York City on my behalf as a plaintiff against Barack Obama and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to challenge the legality of the Authorization for Use of Military Force as embedded in the latest version of the National Defense Authorization Act, signed by the president Dec. 31.

For the first time in more than 200 years, the act authorizes the military in Title X, Subtitle D, entitled Counter-Terrorism, to carry out domestic policing. With this bill, which will take effect March 3, the military can indefinitely detain without trial any U.S. citizen deemed to be a terrorist or an accessory to terrorism. And suspects can be shipped by the military to our offshore penal colony in Guantanamo Bay and kept there until “the end of hostilities.” It is a catastrophic blow to civil liberties.

I spent many years in countries where the military had the power to arrest and detain citizens without charge. I have been in some of these jails. I have friends and colleagues who have “disappeared” into military gulags. I know the consequences of granting sweeping and unrestricted policing power to the armed forces of any nation. And while my battle may be quixotic, it is one that has to be fought if we are to have any hope of pulling this country back from corporate fascism.

Section 1031 of the bill defines a “covered person”—one subject to detention—as “a person who was a part of or substantially supported al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners, including any person who has committed a belligerent act or has directly supported such hostilities in aid of such enemy forces.” The bill, however, does not define the terms “substantially supported,” “directly supported” or “associated forces.”

I met regularly with

leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza. I used to visit Palestine Liberation Organization leaders, including Yasser Arafat and Abu Jihad, in Tunis when they were branded international terrorists. I have spent time with the Revolutionary Guard in Iran and was in northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey with fighters from the Kurdistan Workers Party. All these entities were or are labeled as terrorist organizations by the U.S. government. What would this bill have meant if it had been in place when I and other Americans traveled in the 1980s with armed units of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua or the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front guerrillas in El Salvador? What would it have meant for those of us who were with the southern insurgents during the civil war in Yemen or the rebels in the southern Sudan? I have had dinner more times than I can count with people whom this country brands as terrorists. But that does not make me one.

Once a group is deemed to be a terrorist organization, whether it is a Palestinian charity or an element of the Uighur independence movement, the military can under this bill pick up a U.S. citizen who supported

charities associated with the group or unwittingly sent money or medical supplies to front groups. We have already seen the persecution and closure of Islamic charity organizations in the United States that supported the Palestinians. Now the members of these organizations can be treated like card-carrying “terrorists” and sent to Guantanamo.

But I suspect the real purpose of this bill is to thwart internal, domestic movements that threaten the corporate state. The definition of a terrorist is already so amorphous under the Patriot Act that there are probably a few million Americans who qualify to be investigated if not locked up. Consider the arcane criteria that can make you a suspect in our new military-corporate state. The Department of Justice considers you worth investigating if you are missing a few fingers, if you have weatherproof ammunition, if you own guns

or if you have hoarded more than seven days of food in your house. Adding a few of the obstructionist tactics of the Occupy movement to this list would be a seamless process. On the whim of the military, a suspected terrorist who also happens to be a U.S. citizen can suffer extraordinary rendition being kidnapped and then left to rot in one of our black sites until the end of hostilities. Since this is an endless war that will be a very long stay.

This demented war on terror is as undefined and vague as such a conflict is in any totalitarian state. Dissent is increasingly equated in this country with treason. Enemies supposedly lurk in every organization that does not chant the patriotic mantras provided to it by the state. And this bill feeds a mounting state paranoia. It expands our permanent war to every spot on the globe. It erases fundamental constitutional liberties. It means we can no longer use the word “democracy” to describe our political system.

The supine and gutless Democratic Party, which would have feigned outrage if George W. Bush had put this into law, appears willing, once again, to grant Obama a pass. But I won’t. What he has done is unforgivable, unconstitutional and exceedingly dangerous. The threat and reach of al-Qaida—which I spent a year covering for The New York Times in Europe and the Middle East—are marginal,



despite the attacks of 9/11. The terrorist group poses no existential threat to the nation. It has been so disrupted and broken that it can barely function. Osama bin Laden was gunned down by commandos and his body dumped into the sea.

Even the Pentagon says the organization is crippled. So why, a decade after the start of the so-called war on terror, do these draconian measures need to be implemented? Why do U.S. citizens now need to be specifically singled out for military detention and denial of due process when under the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force the president can apparently find the legal cover to serve as judge, jury and executioner to assassinate U.S. citizens, as he did in the killing of the cleric Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen? Why is this bill necessary when the government routinely ignores our Fifth Amendment rights? No person shall be deprived of life without due process of law” as well as our First Amendment right of free speech? How much more power do they need to fight terrorism.

Fear is the psychological weapon of choice for totalitarian systems of power. Make the people afraid. Get them to surrender their rights in the name of national security. And then finish off the few who aren’t afraid enough. If this law is not revoked we will be no different from any sordid

military dictatorship. Its implementation will be a huge leap forward for the corporate oligarchs who plan to continue to plunder the nation and use state and military security to cow the population into submission.

The oddest part of this legislation is that the FBI, the CIA, the director of national intelligence, the Pentagon and the attorney general didn’t support it. FBI Director Robert Mueller said he feared the bill would actually impede the bureau’s ability to investigate terrorism because it would be harder to win cooperation from suspects held by the military. “The possibility looms that we will lose opportunities to obtain cooperation from the persons in the past that we’ve been fairly successful in gaining,” he told Congress.

But it passed anyway. And I suspect it passed because the corporations, seeing the unrest in the

streets, knowing that things are about to get much worse, worrying that the Occupy movement will expand, do not trust the police to protect them. They want to be able to call in the Army. And now they can.

CHRIS HEDGES WRITES A REGULAR COLUMN FOR TRUTHDIG.COM <HTTP://WWW.TRUTHDIG.COM>. HEDGES GRADUATED FROM HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL AND WAS FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF MANY BOOKS, INCLUDING: WAR IS A FORCE THAT GIVES US MEANING, WHAT EVERY PERSON SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WAR, AND AMERICAN FASCISTS: THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT AND THE WAR ON AMERICA. HIS MOST RECENT BOOK IS EMPIRE OF ILLUSION: THE END OF LITERACY AND THE TRIUMPH OF SPECTACLE.

Source: Truthdig.com 1/16/12
<http://www.truthdig.com/>

NO WAR WITH IRAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

listed three initiatives that were rejected. Right after the Sept. 11 attacks, Iran offered to help Washington overthrow the Taliban. The U.S. declined the offer. Second, in the spring of 2003, top Iranian officials sent the White House a detailed proposal for comprehensive negotiations to resolve questions regarding its weapons programs, relations with Hezbollah and Hamas and a Palestinian peace agreement with Israel. This proposal was rebuffed and ignored.

Third, in October 2003, European officials secured an agreement from Iran to suspend Iranian uranium enrichment and to pursue talks that Mr. Leverett said “might lead to an economic, nuclear and strategic deal.” The Bush administration “refused to join the European initiative, ensuring that the talks failed,” he added.

A few days ago, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Iran was developing a capability for making nuclear weapons someday but was not yet building a bomb. So why is the Obama Administration talking about a western boycott of Iran’s oil exports, so crucial to its faltering, sanctions-ridden economy? Is this latest sanction designed to squeeze Iranian civilians and lead to the overthrow of the regime? Arguably it may backfire and produce more support for the government.

Backing the Iranian regime into such a fateful corner risks counter-measures that may disrupt the gigantic flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. Should that occur, watch the prices of your gasoline, heating bill and other related products go through the roof among other consequences.

Isn’t it about time for the abdicator Congress to reassert its constitutional responsibilities? It owes the American people comprehensive, public House and Senate hearings that produce knowledgeable testimony about these issues and all relevant history for wide media coverage. The drums of war should not move our country into a propagandized media frenzy that preceded and helped cause the Iraq invasion with all the socio-cide in that country and all the costly blowbacks against U.S. national interests. It is past time for the American citizenry to wake up and declare: Iran will not be an Iraq Redux.

Source: Reader Supported News 1/12/12, <http://www.readersupportednews.org/>



The foreclosure crisis: a government in denial

BRUCE JUDSON

As we start the New Year, the executive branch and Congress continue to pretend the gravest risk to our economy and social stability does not exist: the ongoing foreclosure crisis. The financial crisis began with the housing crisis and it will not end until we resolve housing. Government policy makers who seemingly ignore this basic fact are leading the nation to another potential catastrophe.

This past week, a number of important events occurred in Washington, including important recess appointments by President Obama. However, the most noteworthy event did not make front page news: the Federal Reserve's (apparently) unsolicited memo to the committees of Congress that oversee financial services warning of the dangers the current housing market poses for the economy.

This represents an extraordinary action and underscores both the seriousness of the continuing crisis and the absence of meaningful discussion of the problem in Washington. Bernanke's memo reviewed federal actions to date and effectively concluded that they were unlikely to solve this national tragedy. The memo concluded, in part:

"The challenges faced by the U.S. housing market today reflect, in part, a persistent excess supply of homes on the market; and losses arising from an often costly and inefficient foreclosure process (and from problems in the current servicing model more generally). Absent any policies to help bridge this gap, the adjustment process will take longer, pushing house prices lower and thereby prolonging the downward pressure on the wealth of current homeowners and the resultant drag on the economy at large."

This memo is notable for several reasons. First, it's important to remember that when the Fed speaks, it does so in sober, limited terms. So an unprompted Fed warning suggesting "a persistent excess of supply" and a "resultant drag on the economy" is comparable to the Secretary of Homeland Security holding a press conference to warn of the risk of an imminent national emergency. Second, an unprompted memo from Bernanke to the House means that he is so deeply worried he felt the need to speak out in as strong a voice as his position permits. Third, the Fed rarely speaks on issues unrelated to its direct activities. Indeed, *The Wall Street Journal* subsequently wrote, "For an institution that jealously guards its independence, the Federal Reserve is wading into treacherous political waters."

Finally, co-ordinated speeches by three top Fed officials further indicate the depth of the Fed's concerns. On Friday, the presidents of the New York and Boston Fed banks and Betsy Duke, a Fed Governor, all gave speeches detailing the need for aggressive action to spur a housing recovery. For example, William Dudley, President of the New York Fed, told a group, "The ongoing weakness in housing has made

it more difficult to achieve a vigorous economic recovery."

There are a multitude of other indicators that our current treatment of the housing sector will at minimum prevent an economic recovery and at worst have disastrous consequences for the stability of the financial sector as well as the health of the middle class. These include the reportedly poor health of our financial institutions (zombie banks), the administration's seeming efforts to cover this fact up, and the inevitable failure of federal homeowner assistance programs that rely on the cooperation of financial institutions whose profit incentives are in the reverse direction.

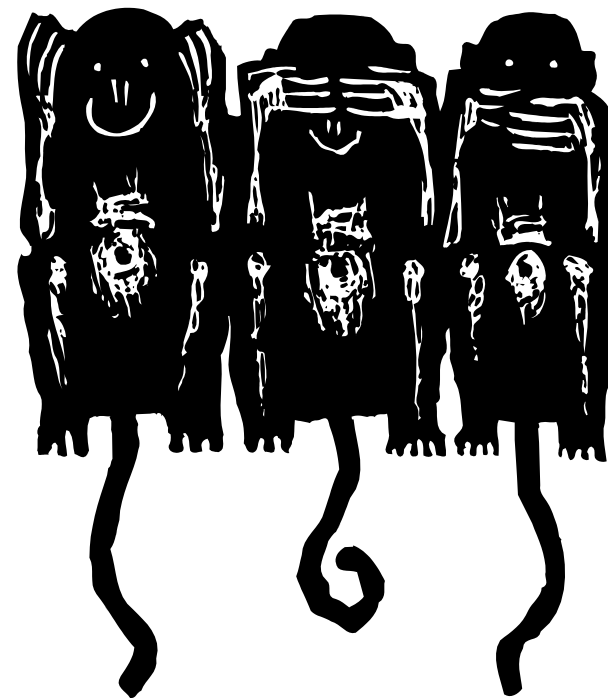
Consumer spending represents 70 percent of the nation's economy and is central to any economic recovery. To achieve sufficient aggregate demand (i.e. total spending on goods and services), this will require spending by middle-income individuals, in addition to what we now call the 1%. The Fed report suggests that the housing crisis makes such a recovery unlikely.

The report found that, in the aggregate, more than \$7 trillion in home equity – more than half of the aggregate home equity that existed in early 2006 – has now been lost, noting, "This substantial blow to household wealth has significantly weakened household spending and consumer confidence." Moreover, "Middle-income households, as a group, have been particularly hard hit because home equity is a larger share of their wealth in the aggregate than it is for low-income households (who are less likely to be homeowners) or upper-income households (who own other forms of wealth such as financial assets and businesses)." These households have seen their home equity decline by an estimated 66 percent.

Moreover, the fear of a continuing loss of wealth (which is a cushion against job loss or other economic emergencies), the fear of job loss itself, the negative effects of underwater homes, lack of forbearance for unemployment (a point the Fed particularly emphasizes), and consumers struggling to meet mortgage payments in a far more difficult environment are all dragging the economy down.

There is also a far worse possibility. Today, an estimated 29 percent of all homes with mortgages are underwater. In addition, at least one respected analyst estimates that a total of 14 million homes will be foreclosed on from 2007 to the end of the crisis. This represents a hard-to-imagine one in every four mortgages. With foreclosures increasing, there is now such a looming imbalance of supply and demand that, as the Fed notes, further decreases in home prices are likely. Some believe home price reductions of another 20 percent are likely. This would, in all likelihood, have disastrous consequences on at least three fronts – and ripple effects that are impossible to predict.

First, so many homeowners would be so far underwater that massive walkaways would be likely. The negative impact on consumer spending of such price declines would almost



certainly lead to a vicious cycle of more job losses, leading to further walkaways by struggling consumers.

Second, the mortgage securities market would be in chaos. Non-performing loans would lead to the forced recognition that bank capital (based on the value of mortgages in bank portfolios) is weak or insufficient.

Third, it is almost impossible to imagine foreclosures on the massive scale anticipated without dire social consequences or even some form of social unrest. As Peggy Noonan has observed, the real meaning of Occupy Wall Street is that this is just the beginning of the protests we are likely to see. "OWS is an expression of American discontent, and others will follow," she predicts. Protests and social unrest are particularly likely if people feel they are unfairly losing their homes to support irresponsible, law-breaking institutions that have successfully disregarded the fundamental rules of capitalism and good citizenship. Mechanisms to avoid this possibility are one of the central issues I address in my forthcoming book, *Making Capitalism Work for the 99%: A Manifesto*.

What is shocking is the almost total lack of attention the administration has paid to suffering homeowners. It's hard for me (and apparently Chairman Bernanke) to understand how the administration can possibly hope to revitalize the economy without seriously addressing the overhang of consumer housing debt. Moreover, the failure to address the risk this poses for a broader economic catastrophe borders on the inexcusable.

If President Obama is serious about saving the middle class and reducing income inequality, the administration needs to be far more aggressive in developing policies to keep homeowners as homeowners. As I have written before, this was one of FDR's central goals in the New Deal. Detailed proposals for addressing this extraordinary risk do exist. However, they will require a determined effort. There are solutions, but they are not simple.

What is most important right now is that we recognize we are in a lifeboat that will not reach land. We need to focus on implementing a meaningful solution to the problem. A clock is ticking and Washington needs to acknowledge that a witching hour is approaching.

BRUCE JUDSON IS ENTREPRENEUR-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE YALE ENTREPRENEURIAL INSTITUTE AND A FORMER SENIOR FACULTY FELLOW AT THE YALE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT.

Source: *New Deal 2.0*, 1/14/12, <http://www.newdeal20.org/2012/01/09/>

US ranks 27th in social justice

JIM HIGHTOWER

"USA: We're No. 1!"

Oh, wait – Iceland is No. 1. But we did beat out Poland and Slovakia, right? Uh...no. But go on down the rankings and there we are! No. 27, fifth from the bottom. So our new national chant is, "USA: At Least We're Not Last!"

A foundation in Germany has analyzed the social justice records of all 31 members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), ranking each nation in such categories as health care, income inequality, pre-school

education, and child poverty. The overall performance by the United States – which boasts of being an egalitarian society – outranks only Greece, Chile, Mexico, and Turkey. Actually, three of those countries performed better than ours in the education of pre-schoolers, and Greece did better than the United States on the prevention of poverty.

Our bottom-of-the-heap ranking in social justice confirms the economic and political inequality that the Occupy movement is protesting. It also helps explain why this grassroots

uprising in America has spread so rapidly to more than 600 communities and has generated such broad public support. After all, our nation is fabulously rich, ranking well ahead of nearly every other OECD member in national wealth, so there's no excuse for us sitting at the bottom of the list in education, health care, poverty, and other measures of a democratic and egalitarian society.

Bluntly put, We the People have let today's elites abandon America's founding principles of fairness, justice, and equal opportunity for all.

These privileged few have purchased our government, stolen the wealth and economic future of working families, and reduced America to a plastic imitation of the country we thought we had. The Occupy rebellion is long overdue and on target. Join it.

Source: *Other Words Blog* 1/16/12
<http://www.otherwords.org/>



Supreme Court justices unethical behavior



LISA GRAVES

The Center for Media and Democracy today joined a coalition of public interest organizations in calling for the United States Supreme Court to agree to follow the Code of Conduct for U.S. judges. CMD joined the Alliance for Justice, American Association of University Women, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Common Cause, Communications Workers of America, CREDO Action, Equal Justice Society, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Employment Lawyers Association, People for the American Way Foundation, and U.S. Public Interest Research Group in a letter to Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts. The letter calls on the Court to “take it upon itself to agree to be bound by the Code,” and “do so unequivocally and publicly.”

The conduct of the six men and three women appointed to the highest court in the land is claimed not to be governed by the basic ethical standards governing every other judge in the federal court system, according to Chief Justice Roberts, 56, an appointee of President George W. Bush. The Code of Conduct was adopted decades ago by the circuit (appellate) and district (trial) court judges on the U.S. Judicial Conference in order to protect the integrity and independence of the federal courts for all Americans. The rules help protect the people’s vital interest in a fair judiciary by limiting unethical conduct by the hundreds of men and women with lifetime jobs sitting in judgment in federal cases.

AVOIDING THE APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY

The outside activities of one third of the justices sitting on the U.S. Supreme Court have called into question their commitment to avoiding impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all their conduct. Specifically, Canon 2 of the Code of Conduct mandates that “A judge should not allow family, social, political, financial, or other relationships to influence judicial conduct or judgment. A judge should neither lend the prestige of the judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others nor convey or permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence the judge.” Many believe these standards have been violated by three sitting justices.

Justice Antonin Scalia (75, an appointee of Ronald Reagan) and Justice Clarence Thomas (63, an appointee of George H.W. Bush) have attended exclusive events at private resorts orchestrated by the billionaire oil barons Charles and David Koch, which the brothers use to advance their partisan political agenda. Justice Thomas has also accepted gifts of travel on the private jets of billionaire Harlan Crow, and he has not been fully forthcoming about the income and political activities of his wife, Ginny Thomas, who launched a group, Liberty Central, to take advantage of the Supreme Court’s controversial ruling in the case that struck down election rules, “Citizens United,” before the decision in the case was even issued publicly in 2010. And Justice Samuel Alito (51, an appointee of the last Bush) has headlined fundraising events for right-wing organizations, such as the American Spectator magazine.

NO SUPREME COURT JUSTICE IS ABOVE THE LAW

In CMD’s view, no one is above the law, especially not justices given lifelong jobs on the Supreme Court. Our highest court should adhere to only the highest standards, and commit publicly to acting beyond reproach. CMD urges the Senate to hold hearings examining the activities of Justices Thomas, Scalia, and Alito that appear to violate the ethical norms for judicial officers. In CMD’s view, it simply cannot be the case that the judges given lifetime jobs as the final word in cases affecting our constitutional rights are not obligated to act ethically. This is not just a crisis of confidence in the U.S. Supreme Court’s fairness. It is an ethical crisis for justices to behave the way they have.

Over the past several months, CMD has been investigating the activities of Justice Thomas and his billionaire buddies, the Kochs and Crow, as well as efforts by corporate CEOs to influence and distort public policy and the law. (This past summer, CMD launched ALECExposed.org, along with profiles of politicians, corporations, and CEOs involved in efforts to remake the law through the American Legislative Exchange Council.)

SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT SUPREME ETHICAL FAILINGS

The Alliance for Justice (AFJ) has asked concerned citizens to join in asking Chief Justice Roberts to have the Supreme Court adopt and agree to follow the Code of Conduct. The Alliance, which represents 100 organizations committed to progressive values and the creation of an equitable, just, and free society, prepared this illuminating video to explain the ethical concerns raised by the conduct of Justices Thomas, Scalia, and Alito. AFJ’s Ned Aron said “With so much at stake at the Supreme Court this year, the justices can no longer avoid the need to make an unequivocal, final, and formal commitment to the highest possible ethical standards.” Lisa Maatz of the AAUW added, “The court should stand for justice and fundamental fairness,” but in failing to enforce ethical standards on the justices, “the Supreme Court risks losing the confidence of the people.”

Common Cause has filed a Freedom of Information Act request for disclosure of details about Justice Thomas’ use of billionaire Harlan Crow’s private jets and yachts. Common Cause, which is led by Bob Edgar, has also asked the Attorney General of the United States, Eric Holder, to investigate whether Justices Thomas and Scalia should have recused themselves from the Citizens United case under 28 U.S.C. Â§ 455, based on their attendance at the Koch brothers’ events and Ginny Thomas’ activities surrounding that case. Common Cause also asked the Justice Department to ask the Court to vacate the judgment in that case if the Department concludes there are sufficient grounds for disqualification of either judge. Edgar observed that “It is time for our highest court to meet the highest standards” and to stop making excuses for why it does not want to apply the Code of Conduct to the justices.

A group of House Democrats, led by Representative Louise Slaughter of New York, are also pushing for a Justice Department investigation into various possible ethics infractions by Justice Thomas. People for the American Way (PFAW), which is led by Michael Keegan, has asked citizens to join them in urging the U.S. Judicial Conference

(which adopted the Code of Conduct) to refer the matter of Justice Thomas’ failure to fully disclose his wife’s income and activities to the Justice Department.

Chief Justice Roberts was dismissive of calls for ethics reform in his annual end-of-year letter issued last week. Public interest groups are jointly sending the letter today to renew the call for the Supreme Court to formally abide by the ethical rules that are supposed to govern the conduct of all federal judges.

LISA GRAVES IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY, WHICH PUBLISHES PRWATCH.ORG, SOURCEWATCH.ORG, AND BANKSTERUSA.ORG.

Source: Center for Media and Democracy release 1/9/12. CMD, 520 University Ave, Suite 260, Madison, Wisconsin 53703 Phone: 608-260-9713 @ Fax: 608-260-9714




Roger K.Lang, D.D.S., Inc.
 3031 W. March Lane, Suite 318E
 (Go north on I-5, exit March Lane, go west to “The Fountain” and turn right)
 (209) 956-0601
 Fax: (209) 952-8845
 Email: info@drklangdds.com
 Web: www.drklangdds.com

“Together, we will walk the pathway to health and wholeness.”

Publications
 Technical Writing & Editing / Graphic Design / Web Sites

InfoWright
 PO Box 162644
 Sacramento 95816
 916.444-5118
 llitman@pacbell.net

Emulating Jesus Christ’s Radical Acceptance of All People

Come Celebrate with the Episcopal Church of St. Anne
 1020 W. Lincoln Road
 Stockton, CA 95207
 209-473-2313

Sunday Mass, 8 & 10am
 (childcare provided at 10am)
 Tuesday 6:30am Mass
 Wednesday 7:00pm Youth Group
 Thursday 6pm Healing Mass



LELA NELSON REALTY
 2222 Pacific Avenue • Stockton, CA 95204

(209) 467-1200
 (209) 942-5673 Fax
 (209) 466-6243 Res.
 E-Mail: LelaNelson@aol.com
 Website: www.lelanelson.com

E. Lela Nelson
 BROKER





Who knew there was so much poverty? The poor, that's who

DONNA SMITH

Last evening, Tavis Smiley hosted a program that was broadcast live on C-SPAN live and that focused for two-and-a-half hours on the issue of poverty in America. The energy and commitment of the experts assembled to investigate and help alleviate poverty made the conversation rich beyond anything I've seen in ages. Each panelist came at the topic from a different perspective. That added to the richness of the discussion about being poor in America.

Even though I've been through the slide from middle-income to poor and now am fighting the unwinnable fight to climb back out, I still need the affirmation these sorts of discussions can give to remember that it still isn't my fault. The system crushed me, and the system will crush me again unless I stay intensely vigilant—and maybe it will crush me again even if I do. But I do not want to stay vigilant about the wrong things.

I want a life without the terror of poverty. I hate fearing what I cannot control. It's worse than any horror movie could ever be. I do not want a lot of stuff. I do want some peace....The poverty of spirit in our nation has reached crisis proportions. The stain of shame should not be on me. Yet we've spent a generation celebrating cruelty as if it were the

Supporting Mormon Slough residents in solidarity

FELLOW OCCUPY STOCKTON MEMBERS,

The last few nights have been sleepless for me because I knew that this police action was going to take place today. These are people who I have helped in my limited way and to now see them truly homeless tonight really hurts. These are not people who roam the streets who are looking for a way to make it through the day. They are my friends who I care about. So part of me hurts for them but another part makes me proud that I am part of a truly great group of community activists who understand the pain of our fellow citizens.

I am proud of our actions and what we're about to accomplish today, which more important than you would ever realize. We stood up and let the Mayor, the City Council, and the management team of the City of Stockton know that they can no longer disregard the 99%. We stood as one with the homeless and let the police department know that past practices of disregarding the rights of our fellow citizens is unacceptable and will not be allowed again.

I have been at two past homeless raids and they were just horrible. I became so enraged at the police that I had to walk away or get arrested for shooting off my big mouth. But today we were able to vent and express our displeasure with the action of the City of Stockton and still make sure the needs of our homeless friends were respected as best we could do.

We need to be proud of our action today. Everyone gave of themselves in whatever way they could. We helped these individuals stay focused; no one was arrested. We provided assistance and comfort where we could and all the dogs and cats are safe and warm tonight. For those who know me, I am an animal activist whose personal goal is to make sure every furry friend never goes hungry and has a safe place to live.

So I would like to say thank you to one and all for a job well done and that we just earned the respect of many people today. This is just the beginning of a most important journey for all of us and our community. I would also like to thank Joe Goldeen who worked hard to find the real and important story of our fellow citizens. Thanks a million Joe.

RICHARD BLACKSTON

calling of those strong enough to achieve wealth and flaunt their superiority over people like me.

The show uplifted me. The only thing I thought might have made it stronger was to include one more expert on poverty on the panel – a poor person. It would have been interesting to hear someone challenge the notion that the poor simply bought into what the rich dished out – easy mortgages, credit cards with high interest rates, payday loans, etc. Most of the poor folks I know – including me – bought into survival. And the only way to survive was often to use the terrible and abusive financial instruments offered to poor people. The alternative was sometimes to just die.

Instead of just dying when the for-profit healthcare system stripped from me every thing and most of the good intentions I had for my own economic health, I borrowed in whatever way I could to keep myself and my husband alive. I knew it was not the best financial practice, but when death is the alternative, a payday loan can be a lot more attractive and a high-interest credit card can seem like a gift. Until the day when we have a progressively financed, single standard of high quality care for all without financial barrier, people like me will likely keep doing whatever it takes to stay alive.

"Poor people have poor ways" because that is often the only way to hang on to anything. No one on the panel was exactly or directly blaming the poor at all, but in listening to Orman say that we ought to have debit cards contribute to our credit ratings and do away with most credit cards, payday loans, and other high interest financial products all together, I wondered a bit. There was an inference that people make poor choices when in fact there may be no other choice out there sometimes. Is she thinking that parents without the cash

Occupy Stockton

The eviction of the Mormon Slough

CATHY MATHIS

In the early hours of January 18, about a dozen members of Occupy Stockton, along with representatives from Occupy Amador and Occupy Sacramento, gathered at the Mormon Slough near Simms Metal on Aurora Street to bear witness to the evacuation of an established community living there. Approximately 30 residents had been living under the bridge and in the dry creek bed for the past five years. Their homes were, in many cases, relatively sophisticated, with plywood and brick walls, often comprising several rooms.

One man, age 33, has lived there for three years. He works in the fields and can't afford to rent an apartment. He sends money to his family in Mexico: a wife, parents and three children. The community is a peaceful place, he said. The majority work as he does, for low wages on a seasonal basis, but community members share what they have with one another. There is clean water, and trash is collected by city workers. Nearby St. Mary's

offers a place to take a shower, use the restroom or have a hot meal.

Besides Occupy Stockton, a dozen neighbors gathered in small groups to show their support for the community as well. Joseph Cortez, age 66, stood at the edge of the slough and looked down. "I grew up over there," he said, gesturing to the south side of the slough. "Back then, the slough had water in it, and bamboo and hobo jungles. To us, it was like Huckleberry Finn. We'd ride cardboard boxes over the tall grasses, down the slopes." He has watched the slough over the years, and has been an occasional benefactor to the residents there. "I've come down here a few times, passed out blankets. You know these people? These people have an understanding. They share."

Michael Casias, 42, lives in Merced. He came in solidarity with Occupy, and with the occupants of the slough. "I've seen this happen before, in Merced. I feel it's a tragedy....Where are they going to go? They're just moving from one area to the next. It doesn't make sense."

up front to buy a child's medicine, go to the doctor, buy food, or other needs should either pay cash, rely on the kindness of strangers to offer help, or let their children go without? She missed the reason many families get into trouble. And it really wouldn't have fit in well to the program, but no one on the panel really challenged her position too much.

Until we let poor people be the experts on being poor, we are going to continue to see the issue as something the intellectually worthy people know about while the people experiencing the problem sit in the audience or watch on TV. A poor person could have asked her straight up what should be done when the paycheck is gone and someone needs medicine or care.

This is part of why I like organic movements so much, like the Occupy movement. Mic check. Reality check. Let's keep talking with each other about poverty and learn as much as we can from those who have lived it and are still living it. And let's try to make sure a poor person's voice is heard as loudly as Suze Orman's. Then we'll have the revolution the panel was imagining in our society and our thinking. Poor people have some pretty great ways too. They are often strong and imaginative and forgiving. What's so wrong with that?

DONNA SMITH IS A COMMUNITY ORGANIZER FOR NATIONAL NURSES UNITED (THE NEW NATIONAL ARM OF THE CALIFORNIA NURSES ASSOCIATION) AND NATIONAL CO-CHAIR FOR THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS OF AMERICA HEALTHCARE NOT WARFARE CAMPAIGN.

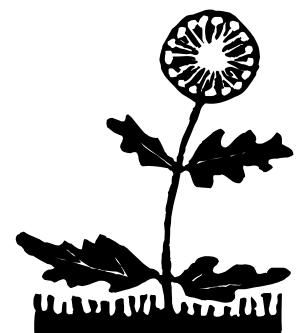
Source: CommonDreams.org 1/13/12 <http://www.commondreams.org>



PHOTO BY CATHY MATHIS

When asked about his reasons for participating in the Occupy movement, Casias had two words: "Corporate greed." He elaborated while helping to pack the possessions of one of the slough residents into an awaiting vehicle, "Everybody has to pay their fair share. And close out the loopholes. The middle class and poor are losing ground and the one per centers are gaining."

Later that morning, after the homes were emptied of personal possessions, and the cats and dogs of the residents had been removed to foster homes, large equipment moved forward to topple the dwellings that had so painstakingly been built.





America's teachers see growing poverty up close

MARK NAISON

One of the things I've discovered in recent years is that when it comes to education policy, the last people asked for input are America's teachers. We have a President who holds an "education summit" that includes the nation's top business leaders and foundation heads, but no teachers; we have billionaires lobbying to privatize education and break teachers unions; we have an organization that purports to work for educational equity that encourages its recruits to leave teaching after two years because they can influence policy more by moving into other, more prestigious careers, rather than spending a lifetime as a "mere teacher."

The results are plain to see. After ten years of No Child Left Behind, three years of Race to the Top, and twenty years of Teach for America, we have seen no change in the global standing of America's schools and no reduction in the test score gap between racially and economically disadvantaged groups and the rest of the population.

But we lose something more than an opportunity to improve our schools by excluding teacher's voices—we lose a chance to understand the human impact of poverty and economic distress, not only those locked in inner-generational poverty, but those made newly poor by the economic crisis. Students bring the wounds of poverty into their classrooms every day, in ways that break teachers hearts, keep them up at nights, and make the accountability protocols based on test scores that "education reformers" are now imposing seem totally divorced from reality.

As someone who is married to an elementary school principal, and talks to teachers almost daily because of my work in Bronx schools and my contact with former students who have chosen to teach, I have, even second hand, been haunted by the portrait of what this recession is doing to young people and their families.

One thing that leaps

out at me from the teacher's stories I hear, is how many students in poor and working-class neighborhoods have no secure place to stay. Students move from apartment to apartment or house to house when their parents or grandparents can't pay rent; experience bouts of homelessness where they sleep in shelters, temporary residences, and occasionally subways or cars; and move in and out of foster care. Sometimes students disappear for days or weeks at a time, sometimes they disappear altogether.

But even those who come in somewhat regularly often fall asleep in class because the places they are staying are so crowded or noisy that it is difficult to sleep. I have heard these stories from teachers in inner-city schools in New York, Buffalo and Philadelphia, but I have also heard them from teachers in suburban communities where people are sinking into poverty. Those who think the housing and foreclosure crisis in America has no impact on education need to talk to teachers—but we won't do that if we believe that low attention spans in school are largely the result of "bad teachers" protected by evil unions.

That's one portion of the stories teachers tell. The other relates to the lack of food and medical care students in poor communities get and how it affects their concentration levels and general well-being. I will never forget how a principal and two teachers at a school located in the most decayed and dangerous housing project in the Bronx closed the door on my Sudanese colleague and I after taking us on an upbeat tour of several classes and said "Let us tell you what is really going on here"

"Every Friday," the principal said, "students in the school start crying because they are afraid they may have little or nothing to eat all weekend. The only time they know they are going to have three meals a day is on school days. And because they closed down the health clinic in the project, students bring their whole families to see the school nurse. This is

place that God forgot."

My Sudanese colleague, by the time he had finished, started crying and said "This is like a refugee camp in Africa." You think that this is the only place in the country where this kind of story could be told, think again. Hunger and lack of medical care is a huge and growing problem among America's school children and has a tremendous affect on their academic performance. Then there is the growing level of violence and stress that young people experience in homes and communities where people are losing jobs, losing homes, and losing hope, violence that they bring into the school environment. I have been hearing more and more stories from teachers of kids exploding in rage at school, at one another and at teachers, sometimes individually, sometimes in large groups.

Bedlam in hallways and classrooms is increasingly common, often set off by the minutest provocation. Some of this disorder can be attributed to chaotic school environments, but some of it stems from the extraordinary stress which students are under out of school, rooted in a toxic mixture of food insecurity, unstable living situations, and violence inflicted on them by people in their own households or by neighborhood gangs and crews.

None of what I am describing is new. You could have heard similar stories from teachers in poor and working class neighborhoods in the '70s, '80s and '90s. What is new is the extent of the suffering as more and more families whose lives were once stable get pushed into poverty.

All throughout the nation, in small towns and suburbs, in once middle-class communities as well as inner-city neighborhoods, teachers are ready to tell these stories. Will we listen, or will we continue to put our head in the sand and blame the messenger for the message?

Source: LA Progressive 1/14/12
<http://laprogressive.com/>

Report: fix 'perverse concentration of wealth'



Martin Luther King's dream of racial equality is far from reality. Census Bureau figures show the U.S. on track to be a majority minority nation by 2042. But if the trends of the last 30 years continue, according to a new report, the economic racial divide is set to increase.

The non-partisan group United for a Fair Economy's (UFE) ninth annual MLK Day report, State of the Dream 2012: The Emerging Majority <<http://www.faireconomy.org/dream>> finds that racial economic divide will remain "disastrously large and will threaten the stability of the entire economy."

While the numbers of people of color in the nation surge, this fact alone is not enough to change the economic reality. From the report: "In the age of mass media and Citizens United, money buys influence, and the national income and wealth will remain overwhelmingly in the hands of Whites – a small group of Whites at that."

"The early 1980s marked a turning point in U.S. politics. Reagan sparked a 'me-first' ideological revolution in Washington, D.C. and beyond," says Brian Miller, Executive Director of UFE and a co-author of the report. "The policies since have done little for economic progress for people of color, which should raise great concern as these demographic shifts occur. Without a sea-change

in public policy, racial inequality will devastate our economy as people of color become the population majority."

"Income and wealth inequality lend to a host of other social inequalities that keep people of color locked into cycles of hardship and poverty," says Wanjiku Mwangi director of UFE's Racial Wealth Divide program. "If we do not change course, our economy will not be able to provide for the swelling numbers of Blacks and Latinos out of work, in poverty and in prison."

"As a nation, we honor Martin Luther King Jr. with a holiday, but we tolerate the perpetuation of racial inequality that he dedicated his life to fighting," says co-author Tim Sullivan. "The growing share of the non-White population presents an opportunity for Blacks and Latinos to build political power. In this era of extraordinary economic inequality, the fate of the vast majority of the White population is more connected with the economic interests of Blacks and Latinos than with the ruling political elite."

From the report's key findings:

- Disparities in income perpetuate poverty in communities of color and will continue to do so unless change is made.

- Increasing wealth inequality entrenches the racial economic divide.

- Education is one of the most important tools we have for increasing social mobility, yet dramatic disparities in education perpetuate inequality.

- The mass incarceration of people of color is historically unprecedented.

Democracy Now! also remarked this morning on the mass incarceration: "Today there are more African Americans under correctional control, whether in prison or jail, on probation or on parole, than there were enslaved in 1850. And more African-American men are disenfranchised now because of felon disenfranchisement laws than in 1870."

In order to abolish this inequality, the group contends, a massive movement is necessary: "Eliminating racial inequality will require a powerful and sustained political movement, aligned not just along the lines of race, but also by economic interests. The renewed national debate about who benefits from the economic system, who doesn't, and why—a debate inspired in large part by Occupy Wall Street—presents an opportunity to build such a movement. The perverse concentration of wealth and power in the U.S. is central to both Occupy Wall Street and efforts to close the racial economic divide."

Source: CommonDreams.org 1/13/12
<http://www.commondreams.org>



Doomsday clock moves: 5 to midnight

THE BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS

It is five minutes to midnight. Two years ago, it appeared that world leaders might address the truly global threats that we face. In many cases, that trend has not continued or been reversed. For that reason, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is moving the clock hand one minute closer to midnight, back to its time in 2007.

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Despite the promise of a new spirit of international cooperation, and reductions in tensions between the United States and Russia, the Science and Security Board believes that the path toward a world free of nuclear weapons is not at all clear, and leadership is failing. The ratification in December 2010 of the New START treaty between Russia and the United States reversed the previous drift in US-Russia nuclear relations.

However, failure to act on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by leaders in the United States, China, Iran, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Israel, and North Korea and on a treaty to cut off production of nuclear weapons material continues to leave the world at risk from continued development of nuclear weapons. The world still has approximately 19,500 nuclear weapons, enough power to destroy the Earth's inhabitants several times over. The Nuclear Security Summit of 2010 shone a spotlight on securing all nuclear missile material, but few actions have been taken. The result is that it is still possible for radical groups to acquire and use highly enriched uranium and plutonium to wreak havoc in nuclear attacks.

Obstacles to a world free of nuclear weapons remain. Among these are disagreements between the United States and Russia about the utility and purposes of missile defense, as well as insufficient transparency, planning, and cooperation among the nine nuclear weapons states to support a continuing draw down. The resulting distrust leads nearly all nuclear weapons states to hedge their bets by modernizing their nuclear arsenals. While governments claim they are only ensuring the safety of their warheads through replacement of bomb components and launch systems, as the deliberate process of arms reduction proceeds, such developments appear to other states to be signs of substantial military build-ups.

The Science and Security Board also reviewed progress in meeting the challenges of nuclear weapons proliferation. Ambiguity about Iran's nuclear power program continues to be the most prominent example of this unsolved problem—centrifuges can enrich uranium for both civilian power plants and military weapons. It remains to be seen how many additional countries will pursue nuclear power, but without solutions to the dual-use problem and without incentives sufficient to resist military applications, the world is playing with the explosive potential of a million suns and a fire that will not go out.

The potential for nuclear weapons use in regional conflicts in the Middle East, Northeast Asia, and particularly in South Asia is also alarming. Ongoing efforts to ease tensions, deal with extremism and terrorist acts, and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in international relations have had only halting success. Yet we believe that international diplomatic pressure as well as burgeoning citizen action will help political leaders to see the folly of continuing to rely on nuclear weapons for national security.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

In light of over 60 years of improving reactor designs and developing nuclear fission for safer power production, it is disheartening that the world has suffered another calamitous accident. Given this history, the Fukushima disaster raised significant questions that the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' Science and Security Board believe must be addressed. Safer nuclear reactor designs need to be developed and built, and more stringent oversight, training, and attention are needed to prevent future disasters. A major question to be addressed is: How can complex systems like nuclear power stations be made less susceptible to accidents and errors in judgment?



CLIMATE CHANGE

In fact, the global community may be near a point of no return in efforts to prevent catastrophe from changes in Earth's atmosphere. The International Energy Agency projects that, unless societies begin building alternatives to carbon-emitting energy technologies over the next five years, the world is doomed to a warmer climate, harsher weather, droughts, famine, water scarcity, rising sea levels, loss of island nations, and increasing ocean acidification. Since fossil-fuel burning power plants and infrastructure built in 2012-2020 will produce energy—and emissions—for 40 to 50 years, the actions taken in the next few years will set us on a path that will be impossible to redirect. Even if policy leaders decide in the future to reduce reliance on carbon-emitting technologies, it will be too late.

Among the existing alternatives for producing base-load electricity with low carbon dioxide emissions is nuclear power. Russia, China, India, and South Korea will likely continue to construct plants, enrich fuel, and shape the global nuclear power industry. Countries that had earlier signaled interest in building nuclear power capacity, such as Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and others, are still intent on acquiring civilian nuclear reactors for electricity despite the Fukushima disaster. However, a number of countries have renounced nuclear power, including Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. In Japan, only eight of 54 power plants currently operate because prefecture governors, responding to people's opposition to nuclear power, have not allowed reactors back online. In the United States, increased costs of additional safety measures may make nuclear power too expensive to be a realistic alternative to natural gas and other fossil fuels.

The hopeful news is that alternatives to burning coal, oil, and uranium for energy continue to show promise. Solar and photovoltaic technologies are seeing reductions in price, wind turbines are being adopted for commercial electricity, and

energy conservation and efficiency are becoming accepted as sources for industrial production and residential use. Many of these developments are taking place at municipal and local levels in countries around the world. In Haiti, for example, a nonprofit group is distributing solar-powered light bulbs to the poor. In Germany, a smart electrical grid is shifting solar-generated power to cloudy regions and wind power to becalmed areas. And in California, government is placing caps on carbon emissions that industry will meet. While not perfect, these technologies and practices hold substantial promise.

Yet, we are very concerned that the pace of change may not be adequate and that the transformation that seems to be on its way will not take place in time to meet the hardships that large-scale disruption of the climate portends. As we see it, the major challenge at the heart of humanity's survival in the 21st century is how to meet energy needs for economic growth in developing and industrial countries without further damaging the climate, without exposing people to loss of health and community, and without risking further spread of nuclear weapons.

The challenges to rid the world of nuclear weapons, harness nuclear power, and meet the nearly inexorable climate disruptions from global warming are complex and interconnected. In the face of such complex problems, it is difficult to see where the capacity lies to address these challenges. The political processes in place seem wholly inadequate to meet the challenges to human existence that we confront.

As such, the Science and Security Board is heartened by the Arab Spring, the Occupy movements, political protests in Russia, and by the actions of ordinary citizens in Japan as they call for fair treatment and attention to their needs. Whether meeting the challenges of nuclear power, or mitigating the suffering from human-caused global warming, or preventing catastrophic nuclear conflict in a volatile world, the power of people is essential. For this reason, we ask other scientists and experts to join us in engaging ordinary citizens. Together, we can present the most significant questions to policy makers and industry leaders. Most important, we can demand answers and action. As the first atomic scientists of the Bulletin recognized in 1948, the burden of disseminating information about the social and economic "implications of nuclear energy and other new scientific developments rests with the intelligent citizens of the world; the intense and continuing cooperation of the scientists is assured."

Few of the Bulletin's recommendations of 2010 have been taken up; they still require urgent attention if we are to avert catastrophe from nuclear weapons and global warming. At a minimum these include:

- Ratification by the United States and China of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and progress on a Missile Material Cutoff Treaty;
- Implementing multinational management of the civilian nuclear energy fuel cycle with strict standards for safety, security, and nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, including eliminating reprocessing for plutonium separation;
- Strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency's capacity to oversee nuclear materials, technology development, and its transfer;
- Adopting and fulfilling climate change agreements to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through tax incentives, harmonized domestic regulation and practice;
- Transforming the coal power sector of the world economy to retire older plants and to require in new plants the capture and storage of the CO₂ they produce;
- Vastly increasing public and private investments in alternatives to carbon emitting energy sources, such as solar and wind, and in technologies for energy storage, and sharing the results worldwide.

The Clock is ticking.

Source: The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists release 01/10/12. <http://thebulletin.org>



New military strategy, same old war mentality

BRIDGET MOIX

“So yes, our military will be leaner, but the world must know the United States is going to maintain our military superiority with armed forces that are agile, flexible and ready for the full range of contingencies and threats.”—President Obama

On January 5th, President Obama and Secretary of Defense Panetta released the Pentagon’s new military strategy document <http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf>, designed to guide military budgets and operations for years to come. Despite the heavy rhetoric from President Obama and Secretary Panetta claiming the new strategy represents big changes, there is little more than cosmetic touch ups to the same old war policies that have gotten the US into its current economic and security problems and reaped horrendous global damage along the way.

Yes, the size of the forces will be reduced somewhat. Yes, there’s a shift away from the idea of the US being able to fight two major wars simultaneously (that one has been buried in Iraq and Afghanistan already). Yes, military planners will be focusing more on Asia and the Middle East, less on Europe and Latin America. And yes, there will be changes in the budget line items (think more drones and cyberwarfare) presented to Congress.

But, the same failed assumptions (security comes from global domination; war works) and underlying policies (invest first in fighting wars, divide what’s leftover for human security) are still at the core of the document. Its authors, the President, Panetta, and far too many members of Congress still seem unable to grasp the undeniable reality of what security means in today’s world and what’s needed to

manage today’s threats.

If the US really wants to shift to a new, more effective strategy for promoting national and global security—as Obama and Panetta claim—then policy makers should get serious about planning to prevent wars, not fight them. After all, decades of planning to fight various numbers and forms of warfare at any given time has led to, well, various numbers and forms of warfare at any given time. Go figure.

This unquestioning reliance on military hammers as the tools of choice for dealing with security threats, and the enormous expense in lives and money of doing so, has sapped the imagination, human resources, and funding for alternative approaches. Approaches that are based on the realities that our security in this country is inextricably linked to the security of others. In other words, the fewer wars that are fought, the safer everyone is. (Not rocket science really.) And we need a strategy that faces the fact that the threats the Pentagon itself identifies—violent extremism, weapons proliferation, climate change and regional instability—

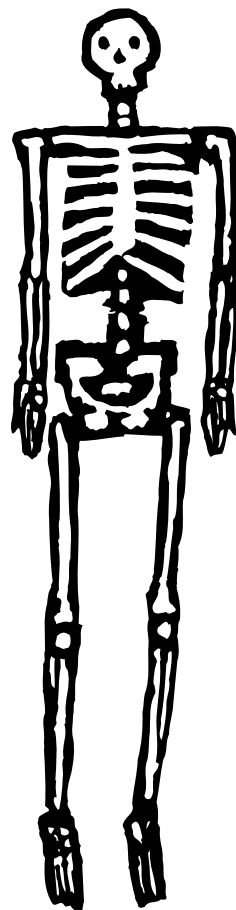
require non-military tools to manage.

Diplomacy, development, and international cooperation should be the beginning of a new US security strategy—not a few words thrown in at the end with no money attached. These tools—not “smarter” drones or more “agile” forces—are the tools FCNL sees as core to creating real security, security based on preventing—not fighting—wars, investing in human needs at home and abroad, and working cooperatively as just one player in a shared global community.

Perhaps it would be asking too much for the Pentagon—an institution dedicated to fighting and winning wars—to consider such a shift, but a budget-conscious Congress should at least be demanding it. Preventing wars, after all, is 60 times less costly than responding with military force. Unfortunately, until our policy makers start recognizing that clinging to visions of global military domination only undermines security—ours and the rest of the world’s—we’ll be stuck with the same old war

mentality wrapped in a shiny new strategy document.

Source: *The FCNL Staff Blog 1/5/12*
2011 FCNL, 245 Second St, NE,
Washington, DC 20002 202-547-
6000 <http://fcnl.org/blog/2c/>



Mainstream Media = Truth? Check out the Alternatives and Find out for yourself!

If you tap in to some of the alternative media, you will get a very different perspective on events. Especially now, when the mainstream media often acts as a cheerleader for whatever the administration does, it’s necessary to go a little further to get your news. An internet connection is helpful.

- Firedoglake <http://firedoglake.com>
- Emptywheel <http://emptywheel.firedoglake.com/>
- Calitics <http://www.calitics.com/>
- Eschaton <http://www.eschatonblog.com/>
- Huffington Post <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- Hullabaloo <http://digbysblog.blogspot.com>
- Daily Kos <http://www.dailykos.com>
- Talking Points Memo <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com>
- TPM Muckraker <http://www.tpmmuckraker.com/>
- FiveThirtyEight.com <http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/>
- Congress Matters <http://www.congressmatters.com>
- Think Progress <http://thinkprogress.com>
- Down With Tyranny <http://downwithtyranny.blogspot.com/>
- Crooks and Liars <http://www.crooksandliars.com>
- Media Matters <http://mediamatters.org/>
- Common Dreams: <http://www.commondreams.org/>
- Truth Out: <http://www.truthout.org/>
- Raw Story <http://www.rawstory.com>
- Open Left <http://www.openleft.com/>
- AlterNet <http://www.alternet.org/>
- Independent Media Center <http://www.indymedia.org>
- The Nation <http://www.thenation.com/>
- Hightower News <http://www.webactive.com/hightower/>
- Mother Jones <http://www.motherjones.com/>
- In These Times <http://inthesetimes.com/>
- The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/latest/>
- Corporate Watch <http://www.corpwatch.org/home/PHH.jsp>
- KPFA (94.1 FM) provides excellent coverage on many issues. You can listen on the internet at <http://www.kpfa.org>
- Democracy Now! on KPFA, 94.1 FM and KVMR, 89.5 FM or on the web at: <http://www.democracynow.org>

Become a PEACE PAL!

Please consider giving to PJN month by month. It will give us stable, predictable funding to continue providing our services. It’s easy for you and cost-effective for us. Our website online donation is recommended for ease and convenience. Your monthly donation can be automatically withdrawn from your bank account.

Monthly Giving Enrollment Form

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Yes, I accept your invitation to become a charter member of Peace Pals.

Here is my monthly pledge contribution of:

- \$10 \$15 \$20 \$25
 \$(Other) _____

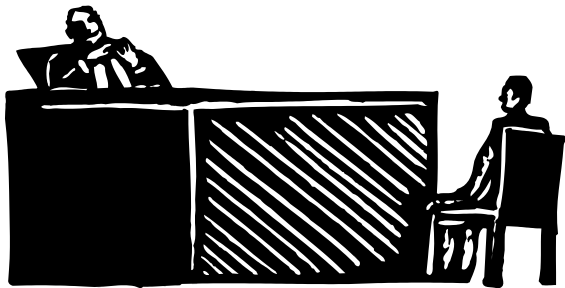
I prefer to donate by one of the following methods:

- U.S. mail; please send me envelopes
 Online donation through PJN website: www.pjnsjc.org (click on donation button)
 Automatic Bank Transfer
 I've enclosed a check for my first contribution. Arrangements will be made by me with my bank for future pledges.

Mail checks to: Peace and Justice Network, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton CA 95204

The Peace and Justice Network is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational corporation. Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Extend unemployment insurance: no conditions



ROBERT GREENSTEIN

For legislation to extend the payroll tax cut through the end of 2012, House Republicans are expected to push for a provision on unemployment insurance (UI) that is appalling even by current Washington standards. Neither President Obama nor Congress should accept any payroll-tax legislation that includes it. Here's why:

The provision, part of a full-year payroll-tax bill that the House passed in December, would deny UI benefits to any worker who lacks a high school diploma or GED and is not enrolled in classes to get one or the other – regardless of how long the person worked or whether he or she has access to adult education, which itself has been subject to significant budget cuts in the past few years and is heavily oversubscribed.

The proposal would deny UI benefits to hundreds of thousands of workers – many of them middle-aged – who have worked hard, played by the rules, and effectively paid UI taxes for years and who then were laid off due to no fault of their own.

This would violate the basic compact that the UI system has embodied since its creation under President Roosevelt in 1935 – that people who have amassed a sufficient record of work, and on whose behalf UI taxes have faithfully been paid, may receive UI benefits for a temporary period if they are laid off and are searching for a new job.

Older workers would be hit the hardest. Nearly half (47 percent) of UI recipients with less than a high school education or the equivalent are over age 45, and 35 percent are age 50 or over, Census data show. In 2010,

half a million workers age 50 or over who received UI lacked a high school diploma. By contrast, less than one-fifth of UI recipients without a high school diploma or the equivalent are under age 30.

For most of these individuals, who may have worked for 30 years or more, returning to high school education, even when it might be useful because the workers are younger, very often isn't available due in part to federal and state budget cuts.

Virtually every state had waiting lists in local adult education programs in 2009-2010, according to the most recent survey, and the number of people on waiting lists doubled just between 2008 and 2009-2010. Furthermore, the shortage of adult education slots has almost certainly grown significantly since 2009-2010 because of substantial budget cuts in adult education since then.

Federal funding for career, technical, and adult education in fiscal year 2012 is 15 percent below the fiscal year 2008 level, after adjusting for inflation, and 23 percent below the 2006 level – largely as a result of cuts made by the current Congress. In addition, a number of states have cut state funding for adult education significantly or eliminated it altogether. And more cuts in federal funding are almost certainly coming as a result of the Budget Control Act's austere caps on discretionary funding and the additional, automatic cuts (or "sequestration") that will occur starting in January 2013.

The proposal will primarily affect workers who were paid low or modest wages (since people with less education tend to be paid less) and who consequently

are unlikely to have much in the way of assets to help them weather their period of unemployment.

Moreover, the people affected will, in many cases, have paid significant UI taxes over the years. UI taxes are generally levied on the first \$7,000 of a worker's wages (this figure is somewhat higher in some states). Although employers pay the tax, economists agree that employees largely bear the burden of the tax in the form of lower wages than they would otherwise receive. And since the tax is levied on only the first \$7,000 (or a similar figure) in annual wages, it constitutes a larger share of the wages of lower-wage workers than of higher-wage ones.

To add insult to injury, the proposal would allow people without a high school diploma or GED to receive benefits only if they enroll in classes for which there often would be no slots available – in part because of budget cuts approved by some of the same policy makers who now embrace this new requirement.

President Obama and lawmakers of both parties face a crucial test. They claim to care about average Americans who are trying to find work in an economy that still struggles to create jobs. If they give in to House Republicans and agree to this provision as part of a final package on the payroll tax cut, their claims will ring thin – and they will deserve the strong criticism that will come their way.

ROBERT GREENSTEIN IS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities release 1/6/12 <http://www.offthechartsblog.org>

Time is on our side: the survival of social security

DEAN BAKER

As we approach budget time we can look forward to another burst of handwringing by the Washington elites, who will once again tell us about the need to cut Social Security and Medicare. News stories and opinion columns will be filled with solemn pronouncements about how these programs must be curtailed before they drive the nation to bankruptcy.

We can look forward to that famously deceptive graph showing how the cost of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are projected to soar as a share of the economy over the next two or three decades. Those with good eyes will notice that it is the cost of Medicare and Medicaid that are soaring, not Social Security.

This is primarily due to the projected explosion

of private sector health care costs; top leaders in the Democratic Party have repeatedly indicated their willingness to cut these programs.

President Clinton was all set to go along with a plan that would have reduced the annual cost of living adjustment for Social Security by as much as 1.1 percentage points. Had he gotten his way back in 1997, many seniors would be getting checks that are more than 10 percent smaller today. This sort of cut could have been devastating for people struggling to survive in the wreckage created by the incredible economic mismanagement of the last 15 years.

More recently, President Obama indicated his willingness to support an increase in the age of eligibility for Medicare and a cut of 0.3 percentage points in the annual cost of living adjustment for Social

And, there is no reason to think that once cuts were put in place that the elites won't come back for more. After all, those of us who remember the 2000 presidential race know that any improvement in the budget situation is an argument for more tax cuts. And tax cuts will inevitably mean that we will have more pressure in the future for budget cuts.

The other important part of the argument for delay is the demographic fact that we hear repeated endlessly. The country is aging. The huge baby boom cohort is reaching the eligibility ages for Social Security

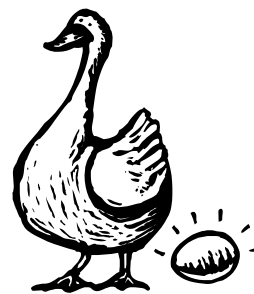
and Medicare. This means that the percentage of the electorate directly affected by these programs is rising every year. As hard as it was to make cuts in these 15 years ago, it will be much harder in 2014 or 2016, when the percentage of the adult population eligible for Social Security will be almost 20 percent larger. Better yet, if we can delay to 2020 the Social Security eligible population will be close to 30 percent larger as a share of the adult population.

With older people voting in much higher ratios than young people, there are not likely to be many politicians anxious to support cuts to the programs they depend upon. And, contrary to the stories of the Washington elite, the support of seniors for these programs is not driven by greed. It is driven by the fact that they recognize the importance of these programs in their own lives. They want to ensure that their children and grandchildren will enjoy the same security in their old age.

The moral of this story is that we should celebrate the work of hundreds of thousands of people across the country who have blocked the Washington elite to cut Social Security and Medicare. And remember, the future is on our side.

DEAN BAKER IS CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH IN WASHINGTON, DC.

Source: Truthout News Analysis 1/16/12 www.truthout.org



of private sector health care costs, not the impact of aging on the cost of the programs. That would lead honest people to focus on the need to get U.S. health care costs in line with costs in every other country in the world, but no one ever said that the Washington elites were honest.

But this is old hat. We know that the elites tell stories to advance their agenda. What is worth noting – and celebrating – is that thus far they have failed.

They have been pushing this line for the last twenty years, yet during this period there have been no substantial cuts to either Social Security or Medicare. This is a great victory for the vast majority of the country, the 99 percent, over the One Percent.

This fact is truly an impressive accomplishment. It is not only the Republicans who want to cut these

Security. These cuts would be a great hardship to tens of millions of near retirees who have seen much or all of their wealth destroyed by the collapse of the housing bubble.

In addition to those openly advocating cuts to these programs, Washington is also filled with a large number of "good cops." These are people who ostensibly support these programs. The good cops tell us that we are better off taking a deal in the long-run, because otherwise the bad guys will come back with even more powerful ammunition and push through larger cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

No one can know the motives among this group of good cops, but the fact is that they have repeatedly been proven wrong. If we had taken their advice back in the 90s, seniors today would already be receiving much lower benefits.



When Medicare isn't Medicare

WENDELL POTTER

Let's say you have a Ford and decide to replace everything under the hood with Hyundai parts, including the engine and transmission. Could you still honestly market your car as a Ford? That question gets at the heart of the controversy over who is being more forthright about GOP Rep. Paul Ryan's plan to "save" Medicare, Republicans or Democrats.

If you overhaul the Medicare system like you did your Ford and tell the public it's still Medicare, are you doing so honestly? Last week, PolitiFact, the /St. Petersburg Times/ fact checker, decided that the Democrats' claim that Ryan's plan would mean the end of Medicare was so blatantly untrue it merited designation as the 2011 "Lie of the Year." Republicans, whose erroneous claims about health care reform garnered "Lie of the Year" prizes in 2009 and 2010, cheered. Democrats, as you might imagine, jeered—as did some journalists and pundits.

PolitiFact's Washington-based editor defended the choice by contending that Ryan's proposal to restructure Medicare by providing beneficiaries subsidies to buy private insurance would not "end" the program. It would still be Medicare, he reasoned. What he's missing is that Ryan's proposal would change the program so fundamentally as to represent the equivalent of replacing the engine and transmission.

BIG CORPORATIONS SHIFTING THE RISK BURDEN (TO US)

Ryan's plan would be a continuation of what Yale professor Jacob Hacker wrote about in his 2006 book, *The Great Risk Shift*. As Hacker pointed out, big corporations, aided and abetted by their political allies, have been methodically shifting more and more of the risk of providing benefits from them to us. Ryan's plan would accelerate the trend and take it a major step further by gradually shifting much of the financial obligation of paying for benefits from the government to Medicare beneficiaries. Under Ryan's blueprint, the government would be doing just what big corporations have been doing for several years now: off-loading risk.

The corporate world started doing this when big banks and multi-line insurance companies with financial services divisions persuaded them to phase out their pension plans and replace them with 401(k)s, so-called because of the section of the federal law that authorized their creation.

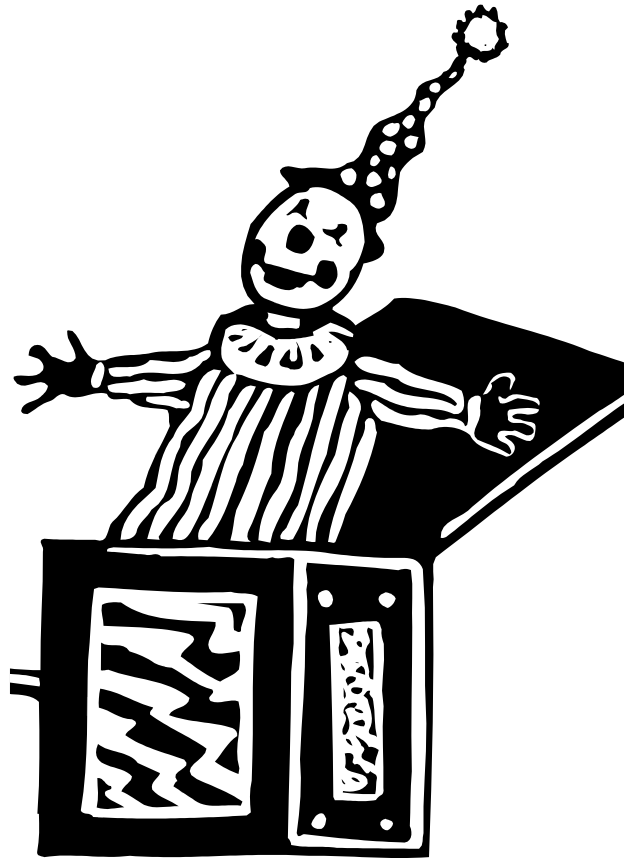
In the early part of my father's career, 401(k)s had not yet been invented. Soon after he was hired as a shift worker at a Tennessee glass factory, he was enrolled in his employer's pension plan. When he retired

more than 25 years later, he began receiving a predetermined pension benefit every month until he died last December. The payments weren't nearly as big as the paycheck he received while on the job, but it was an enormous help financially.

By contrast, when I went to work for CIGNA in 1993, pensions were an endangered species. CIGNA still offered one, but the company changed the structure soon after I was hired, which meant that I would get less each month upon retirement than colleagues who had joined the company a few years earlier. CIGNA was among the first companies to offer a 401(k) plan because, at the time, it was one of those multi-line insurance companies that had a financial services division. That division created and managed 401(k)s for several large employer customers, CIGNA itself being one of them.

AETNA AND CIGNA PLAYED KEY ROLES IN ENDING PENSIONS

Aetna also had a financial services division back then. So two of the biggest health insurance firms in the country, Aetna and CIGNA, played key roles in the early years of the great risk shift by ushering in the era of 401(k)s and bringing the pension era to an end. Employers began phasing out pensions in the 1990s as rapidly as they began jettisoning indemnity health insurance plans in favor of HMOs and other managed care plans (which, of course, Aetna and CIGNA also marketed, and still do).



Transitioning from pensions to 401(k)s meant that employers would have much more money available to reward shareholders because they would be paying less in revenues over time to retired employees. The winners consequently have been the wealthy individuals and institutions who own today's corporations, while the losers have been the ones who work for them.

Instead of being "defined" benefits plans like pensions, 401(k)s are referred to as defined "contribution" plans. That means that workers enrolled in such plans no longer get a certain amount of money every month when they retire as my father did, but instead will get whatever is in their 401(k) balances, most of which they contributed themselves.

Highly compensated employees, including CEOs, are pleased with the shift because they have the means to sock away more money in their 401(k)s than the rank and file. And the money they sock away is tax-deferred, so 401(k)s have become a favorite tax shelter for the well-to-do.

RYAN'S MEDICARE SCHEME REPLICATES THE 401(K) SYSTEM

Ryan's Medicare scheme would replicate what 401(k)s have done to the rank and file. The vouchers the government would provide beneficiaries are the equivalent of a defined contribution. And the vouchers invariably would become less valuable over time as the cost of insurance increased. The wealthy among us wouldn't be nearly as disadvantaged when that occurred as low- and middle-income earners who would have to dig deeper into their own pockets to buy health care coverage from private insurers. And undoubtedly, they would find that the only plans they could afford would be those with high deductibles.

If backers of Ryan's plan would drop the word "Medicare" and name it something with a bunch of numbers and a letter or two in parenthesis, that would be far more honest than calling it Medicare or anything similar. At least the proponents of the great risk shift didn't have the audacity to call 401(k)s pensions. They're entirely different creations with engines and transmissions that bear little resemblance to each other. That ain't no lie, PolitiFact.

Source: SourceWatch 12/27/11 Center for Media and Democracy, 520 University Ave., Suite 260, Madison, Wisconsin 53703 <http://www.sourcewatch.org>

"OVER THE COURSE OF 14 BILLION YEARS, HYDROGEN GAS TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO MOUNTAINS, BUTTERFLIES, THE MUSIC OF BACH, AND YOU AND ME. AND THESE ENERGIES, COURSING THROUGH US, MAY INDEED RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH."

FROM JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE VIDEO

AD PAID BY JOHN MOREARTY

Henry Paine Camera Repair

An owner-operated shop. You are welcome to come in and ask questions about our work


147 E. Alpine, Stockton, 95204
(209) 942-2821 — open M-F, 1:00-6:00

Efficient and reliable repair of your camera.

FREE ESTIMATE

Photographs for viewing at the Henry Paine Gallery, 147 E. Alpine Ave. Mon-Fri., 1-6pm. Stockton

Spiritual Counseling
Past-Life Regression • Tarot Card Readings • Crystal Sessions
• 30 Years Experience
Call Joyce McCallister for an appointment: 209.565.1173

 **PACIFIC COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE CENTER**
serving Stockton since 1984

Yi-Po Anthony Wu, M.D., M.P.H. *Medical Director, Internal Medicine* Teresa M. Chen, Ph.D. *Program Coordinator*

Dorel Rotar, L.Ac., MTOM
Brian Chee C. Loh, L.Ac., O.M.D.
Shu-Chuan Susan Wang, L.Ac., Ph.D., O.M.D.
Licensed Acupuncturists, Herbalists

The Best of Eastern and Western Medicine for Health and Healing

- Internal Medicine • Acupuncture & Moxibustion • East & West Herbs • Chinese Health Exercises (Tai Chi & Qi Gong)

Shop at the Herb Store

Specializing in Traditional Chinese Herbal Remedies
wide variety of western herbs & nutritional supplements
imported teas ☞ vitamins & minerals ☞ health bars
essential oils ☞ healthcare & educational books ☞ over-the-counter medications

Store Hours: Monday—Friday 9 a.m.— 5 p.m.

645 West Harding Way • 464-4800
Visit our website @ <http://www.wuway.com>



Vatican official condemns GMOs as 'new form of slavery'

ANTHONY GUCCIARDI

In an interview with the magazine *L'Osservatore Romano* on January 5, a prominent member of the Vatican spoke out against genetically modified crops. Cardinal Peter Turkson said that genetically modified crops are a "new form of slavery," and went on to discuss the impact that they have on both the environment and the economy. Regardless of religious association, anyone speaking out against genetically modified should be listened to. As a prominent leader of the Catholic people, Cardinal Turkson has the ability to inform millions worldwide regarding the negative effects of genetically modified food.

Even farmers have risen up against Monsanto and genetically modified seeds, with Monsanto forcing thousands of farmers into debt worldwide. In India, Monsanto has ruined the lives of so many farmers that the prevalence of their suicide has led to a large farming area to be titled the 'suicide belt of India'. Some have even blamed Monsanto for the recent bird and fish deaths, claiming that the poison coming from their factories may have poisoned animals worldwide. Monsanto's destruction isn't limited to the environment, however.

Genetically modified foods been proven not only to be a threat to nature, but extremely harmful to humans. The process of bioengineering GM ingredients itself is quite ridiculous. Billions are spent each year to genetically modify the food supply, tainting it with genetically modified frankenfood. Genetically modifying foods requires one to tamper with the very genetic coding of the crop and/or seed. The process entails the transfer of genes from one organism to another, such as taking particular genes from a pig and transferring them to a tomato. Not only does this defile nature, but it leads to a

host of health problems.

Due to the complexity of a living organism's genetic structure, it is impossible to track the long-term results of consuming genetically modified food. Introducing new genes into even the most simple bacterium may cause an array of issues, highlighting the complexity of even the simplest organisms. Introducing new genes to highly complex organisms such as animals or crops is even riskier.

When introducing the gene to its new host, it is essentially impossible to predict the reaction. The genetic intelligence of the host could be disrupted with the introduction of the new gene, creating an adverse reaction. There is truly no way of knowing the long-term effect of genetically modified food, as there are too many variables. There is simply no room for science when Monsanto is involved.

Monsanto has inexorably pushed for widescale dominance of the world's food supply by buying out competition and using FDA regulations to get around accurate labeling. In fact, labeling has protected Monsanto from excessive criticism for quite some time. Under the ludicrous labeling guidelines, food products in the United States do not even have to openly state that they contain genetically modified ingredients. While countries like Australia require products to be labeled genetically modified if they contain an ingredient that is more than 1% genetically modified, the United States goes by no such precautionary code.

Besides Monsanto's crusade to alter the very genetic coding of the food, they have been charged with discharging toxic waste that included PCBs into a west Anniston creek, and dumping millions of pounds of PCBs into open-pit landfills. The people in that area had no idea, and continued to swim and play in the creek. PCBs have been classified as a persistent organic pollutant,

meaning they are resistant to environmental degradation. While they heavily pollute the environment, PCBs are also extremely toxic. PCB production was banned in 1976 by the U.S. Congress, and ultimately by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic

POLLUTANTS IN 2001.

A study published in the *International Journal of Biological Sciences* also helped to end the debate regarding the health effects of genetically modified food (GMO). The study shows that three Monsanto corn varieties cause a direct health hazard, with the study picking up mainstream attention.

There is a worldwide debate concerning the safety and regulatory approval process of genetically modified (GM) crops and foods. In order to scientifically address this issue, it is necessary to have access to toxicological tests, preferably on mammals, performed over the longest time-scales involving detailed blood and organ system analyses. Furthermore, these tests should, if possible, be in accordance with OECD guidelines. states the introduction.

For the first time in the world, we've proven that GMO are neither sufficiently healthy nor proper to be commercialized. Each time, for all three GMOs, the kidneys and liver, which are the main organs that react to a chemical food poisoning, had problems, indicated Gilles-Eric Seralini, an expert member of the Commission for Biotechnology Reevaluation, created by the EU in 2008.

Source: *Natural Society* 1/14/12
<http://naturalsociety.com/>



Grand Canyon's million-acre uranium mining ban finalized

Conservation groups are applauding the Obama administration's final decision Monday protecting 1 million acres of public land around Grand Canyon National Park from new uranium mining. Monday's Interior Department "record of decision" establishes a 20-year ban on new uranium mining and mining of current claims without valid permits across 1 million acres (more than 1,500 square miles). The ban will protect Grand Canyon's springs and creeks, as well as imperiled species like the humpback chub, from uranium-mining pollution.

"This landmark decision closes the door on rampant industrialization of Grand Canyon's watersheds," said Roger Clark of the Grand Canyon Trust. "Uranium mining imposes well documented and unacceptable risks to the people and natural resources of our region."

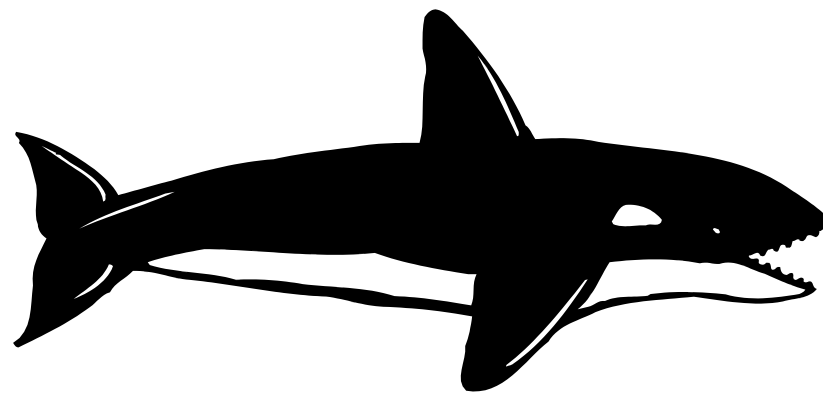
On July 21, 2009, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar issued a two-year order banning new mining claims across 1 million acres of public lands around the world-famous national park – a ban made final and long-term today.

Uranium pollution already plagues the Grand Canyon and surrounding area. Proposals for new mining have prompted protests, litigation and proposed legislation. Because dozens of new mines threatened to industrialize iconic and regionally sacred wildlands, destroy wildlife habitat and permanently pollute or deplete aquifers, scientists, tribal and local governments and businesses have all voiced support for today's protections.

"This is a great day for Grand Canyon National Park and all those who care about the park and the surround public lands, including the hundreds of thousands of individuals, hundreds of businesses and organizations, local governments and Native American tribes who have supported this proposal. We are pleased the Obama administration has taken this important action to protect the Grand Canyon's watershed and would like to also thank Representative Grijalva for his leadership on working to protect these lands," said Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club's Grand Canyon chapter director.

Source: *Center for Biological Diversity* release 1/10/12 <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>

Obama deals a blow to ocean wildlife



President Barack Obama today announced a plan to take the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) out of the Commerce Department and house it within the Department of the Interior.

Miyoko Sakashita, oceans director at the Center for Biological Diversity, issued the following statement in response:

"Moving the agency that oversees the health of our oceans and sea life to the same agency that permits offshore drilling is courting trouble. Under Obama's plan, NOAA's mission to safeguard our waters could easily be compromised by Interior's drive to expand offshore drilling. Interior is the same department that once housed the infamous Minerals Management Service, whose lax oversight contributed to the Deepwater Horizon disaster."

"During his last campaign, Obama promised to bring scientific integrity to government decision-making – and NOAA was an agency at the forefront of that promise. I guess his new campaign promises expedience over science – if history is any measure, this is a pledge that the Interior Department could deliver.

"Our oceans are already in trouble with pollution, overfishing, ocean acidification and climate change. Shuffling NOAA around will only distract resources that can better be spent on taking care of our oceans."

Source: *Center for Biological Diversity* release 1/16/12 <http://www.enmagazine.com/>



Methane & soot: big greenhouse impact



DEVIN POWELL

Carbon dioxide may be public enemy number one in the fight against global warming. But taking aim at methane and soot has a better chance of keeping the planet cooler in the short run, a new study finds.

Cutting the amounts of these two pollutants that are poured into the sky would diminish warming by half a degree Celsius by 2050, researchers report in the Jan. 13 Science. That could buy a little time for the world – slowing sea level rise, glacial melting and other problems caused by rising temperatures. Targeting these agents of climate change would also improve air quality, potentially preventing up to 4.7 million premature deaths every year, the researchers calculate.

“These are really the low-hanging fruit both for mitigating climate change and improving air quality,” says study leader Drew Shindell, a climate scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City. Shindell and his colleagues put 400 known pollution controls to test, selecting 14 interventions that had the greatest impact on warming in a computer simulation. These measures work quickly because methane and soot don’t hang around in the atmosphere for very long – about 12 years for methane and weeks for soot. Cut emissions, and levels of methane and soot drop rapidly. Carbon dioxide, on the other hand, can linger high above for centuries.

Seven of the proposed controls focus on methane, a greenhouse gas that’s about 21 times more potent at warming the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Implementing interventions already being used in some parts of the world can prevent methane from reaching the atmosphere by filtering it out of air rising from coal mines, livestock manure, landfills and other sources.

The other recommendations target soot. Putting filters on cars that burn diesel gas, for instance, could trap these black flakes of carbon, which absorb sunlight and heat the atmosphere. Soot also darkens snow and glaciers, which hastens melting.

Piers Forster, a climate scientist at the University of Leeds in England, agrees that limiting methane emissions would affect climate. But he cautions that the case for soot may not be entirely clear cut. Some sources of this black carbon – burned agricultural waste and wood-or dung-burning cookstoves in developing countries – also give off other particles that reflect sunlight, cooling the planet.

Source: Science News 1/13/12 <http://www.sciencenews.org/>

How the environment fares in governor’s budget

Last week, the Brown Administration released the Governor’s proposed 2012-13 budget. Through \$10.3 billion in cuts and increased revenues, the proposed budget would close a \$9.2 billion deficit, compared to last year’s \$26 billion gap, and build a \$1.1 billion reserve. The most severe cuts will be inflicted on CalWORKS, Medi-Cal, child care, and the Cal Grant Program. The budget is contingent on voters approving a temporary increase in the sales tax and a higher levy on wealthy residents. If voters reject the ballot initiative in November, the state would be forced to cut another \$4.8 billion from schools and community colleges; a cut equivalent to 3 weeks of instruction. ‘Trigger cuts’, as they’re called, would also strip funds from courts, public safety officers and flood protection.

So how did the environment fare in the proposed budget? Overall, environmental protection did better than many other programs, though there are significant cuts to key programs, and much of the funding that has been allocated is for projects that are controversial even within the environmental community. The Department of Parks and Recreation will see \$22 million in cuts, twice the reduction from last year’s budget, which would result in the closure of up to 70 state parks. Additionally, if the Governor’s tax initiative does not pass, it will trigger the elimination of all seasonal lifeguards on state beaches and a 20% reduction of the Park Rangers workforce.

Programs that will see more funding in 2012 include highly contentious projects, like California High Speed Rail and the Delta conveyance program. The budget allocates \$15.9 million to usher along the development of a high speed rail system, which is under increasing scrutiny due to governance, routing and financing issues. The budget would also allocate more funding to

the Department of Water Resources for its work on the highly controversial Bay-Delta conveyance research and planning processes; specifically, for 135 positions for preliminary engineering work to support the Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program.

The budget also earmarks \$1 billion that are to be received by auctioning pollution credits to California companies to be used to “create jobs and deliver public health, economic and environmental benefits” as part of the state’s effort to curb global warming. Businesses have complained that this cap-and-trade program, a critical piece of California’s landmark legislation aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, represents an unfair tax. Cap-and-trade is also controversial among the environmental and environmental justice communities, some of whom believe it merely commoditizes dangerous pollution rather than directly and more aggressively curbing it.

The governor’s proposal still needs to be debated by the Legislature, and the Brown Administration will release an updated version in May. The deadline to have a budget passed by lawmakers and signed by the governor is June 30.



Source: PCL Insider: News from the Capitol 1/12/12 The Planning and Conservation League, 1107 9th Street, Suite 901, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 822-5631 www.PCL.org

Operating a Successful Business in a Down Economy!



Free and confidential business consulting
Affordable training (no charge for many workshops)
Call the SBDC to see how we can assist you
56 S. Lincoln Street • Stockton, CA 95203
209-954-5089
www.sbdc.deltacollege.org

J. F. DONALDSON TIRES • BRAKES • ALIGNMENT

Committed to excellence in customer
service for nearly 100 years.

Bridgestone • Michelin
Auto Repair • Oil service
Monday-Friday 7-5

Phone: 466-4393 Fax: 209-466-2310
240 N. Hunter St. @ Miner, Stockton 95202

Tiger's Den Kid School



• Strength Based Education

• 1:6 Teacher/Child Ratio

• Home Environment

Child Diaper Service Available
Free meals provided—pesticide
& trans fat free, locally grown

- K-8 Professional Tutoring
- Infants & Toddlers
- Preschool • Extended Care

209-467-0171
tigersdenschool@gmail.com



Membership includes a subscription to *Audubon Magazine* & *Hoot Owl*.

Make checks payable to ... National Audubon Society.

Send to: Audubon

PO Box 7755, Stockton, CA 95207

___\$35 Individual ___\$38 Family ___\$20 Student ___\$21 Senior-

NAME _____ PH# _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Questions about Audubon? Call Dave Wagner 943-6997.
www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Join our
LOCAL

Audubon



**LAW OFFICES OF
ANN M. CERNEY
SHELLIE LOTT
LANGLEY KREUZE**

Attorneys at Law
45 Hunter Square Plaza, Stockton
104 N. School St. #205, Lodi
948-9384 or 369-1333

- Personal Injury
- Social Security
- Wills
- Probate
- Trusts
- General Practice

Se Habla Espanol • Thai • Vietnamese

Time to stop being cynical about corporate money in politics and start being angry

BILL MCKIBBEN

My resolution for 2012 is to be naïve—dangerously naïve. I'm aware that the usual recipe for political effectiveness is just the opposite: to be cynical, calculating, an insider. But if you think, as I do, that we need deep change in this country, then cynicism is a sucker's bet. Try as hard as you can, you're never going to be as cynical as the corporations and the harem of politicians they pay for. It's like trying to outchant a Buddhist monastery.

Here's my case in point, one of a thousand stories people working for social change could tell: All last fall, most of the environmental movement, including 350.org, the group I helped found, waged a fight against the planned Keystone XL pipeline that would bring some of the dirtiest energy on the planet from Canada through the U.S. to the Gulf Coast. We waged our struggle against building it

out in the open, presenting scientific argument, holding demonstrations, and attending hearings. We sent 1,253 people to jail in the largest civil disobedience action in a generation. Meanwhile, more than half a million Americans offered public comments against the pipeline, the most on any energy project in the nation's history.

And what do you know? We won a small victory in November, when President Obama agreed that, before he could give the project a thumbs-up or -down, it needed another year of careful review. (The previous version of that review, as overseen by the State Department, had been little short of a crony capitalist farce.) Given that James Hansen, the government's premier climate scientist, had said that tapping Canada's tar sands for that pipeline would, in the end, essentially mean "game over for the climate," that seemed an eminently reasonable course to follow,

RNC wants no donation restrictions

ANDREW JONES

Emboldened by the Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling, the Republican National Committee (RNC) is seeking to increase the influence corporations have over funding American politics. In a brief filed Tuesday afternoon to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal, the RNC is seeking to overturn a 1908 law banning corporations from directly giving money to candidates, calling it unconstitutional.

"The complete ban both is over-inclusive to this aim and artificially disadvantages political party and candidate committees," they wrote. "It is over-inclusive because it bans all corporate donations without regard to the ability of corporate donors to attribute their donations to individuals."

The Supreme Court's /Citizens United/ ruling of 2010 continues to have a huge impact on the American electoral process, allowing corporations to spend unlimited money without disclosure in political campaigns through Super PAC groups. The RNC's push to allow direct corporate contributions to individual campaigns would only serve to deepen the already-large influence corporations current have in elections.

Source: The Raw Story 1/11/12 <http://www.rawstory.com>

How much does each proposed initiative cost the "typical" California taxpayer?

MillionairesTaxCA.com

	Amount to be raised per year & expiration	Tax change	Who benefits	Who backs this	Annual cost to "typical" taxpayer*
Millionaires Tax of 2012	\$6 billion (no expiration)	Raises income tax by 3% on income between \$1-2 million; raises rate by 5% on income over \$2 million.	3/5 to K-14, CSU, and UC, remainder to local governments to restore services for children and seniors, public safety & infrastructure. All in a "lockbox" that bypasses the Legislature.	California Federation of Teachers (CFT), Courage Campaign, California Calls, UC Students' Assoc. & 25 other community groups	\$0
Gov. Brown	\$6.9 billion (expires 2016)	Temporarily increases state sales tax by a half-cent as well as marginal income tax rates on income above \$250,000. Adds to Constitution a tax shift to local governments to pay for incarceration & other "realigned" state services.	K-14, public safety, social services & corrections.	Gov. Brown, SEIU State Council	\$123
Our Children, Our Future	\$10 billion (expires 2024)	Raises personal income taxes on all Californians who earn more than \$7,316 per year.	K-12, early childhood programs.	Civil rights attorney Molly Munger	\$222
Think Long	\$10 billion (no expiration)	Extends statewide sales tax to services. Reduces personal income tax rates. Reduces the corporate tax rate. Raises taxes on out-of-state firms. Lowers taxes for top income earners, raises taxes on everyone else.	Pays down debt initially. In future, \$5 billion for K-14, \$1.5 billion to higher education, \$1.5 billion to county public safety, \$1 billion to cities.	Billionaire Nicolas Berggruen, Silicon Valley executives, former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, billionaire Eli Broad, former political leaders	\$288

* "Typical" taxpayer = median joint filer, \$65,000

Sources: Sacramento Bee and San Francisco Chronicle



even if it was also eminently political.

A few weeks later, however, Congress decided it wanted to take up the question. In the process, the issue went from out in the open to behind closed doors in money-filled rooms. Within days, and after only a couple of hours of hearings that barely mentioned the key scientific questions or the dangers involved, the House of Representatives voted 234-194 to force a quicker review of the pipeline. Later, the House attached its demand to the must-pass payroll tax cut.

That was an obvious pre-election year attempt to put the president on the spot. Environmentalists are at least hopeful that the White House will now reject the permit. After all, its communications director said that the rider, by hurrying the decision, "virtually guarantees that the pipeline will not be approved."

As important as the vote total in the House, however, was another number: within minutes of the vote, Oil Change International had calculated that the 234 Congressional representatives who voted aye had received \$42 million in campaign contributions

from the fossil-fuel industry; the 193 nays, \$8 million.

BUYING CONGRESS

I know that cynics—call them realists, if you prefer—will be completely unsurprised by that. Which is precisely the problem. We've reached the point where we're unfazed by things that should shake us to the core. So, just for a moment, be naïve and consider what really happened in that vote: the people's representatives who happen to have taken the bulk of the money from those energy companies promptly voted on behalf of their interests.

They weren't weighing science or the national interest; they weren't balancing present benefits against future costs. Instead of doing the work of legislators, that is, they were acting like employees. Forget the idea that they're public servants; the truth is that, in every way that matters, they work for Exxon and its kin. They should, by rights, wear logos on their lapels like NASCAR drivers.

If you find this too harsh, think about how obligated you feel when someone gives you something. Did you get a Christmas present last month

from someone you hadn't remembered to buy one for? Are you going to send them an extra-special one next year?

And that's for a pair of socks. Speaker of the House John Boehner, who insisted that the Keystone approval decision be speeded up, has gotten \$1,111,080 from the fossil-fuel industry during his tenure. His Senate counterpart Mitch McConnell, who shepherded the bill through his chamber, has raked in \$1,277,208 in the course of his tenure in Washington.

If someone had helped your career to the tune of a million dollars, wouldn't you feel in their debt? I would. I get somewhat less than that from my employer, Middlebury College, and yet I bleed Panther blue.

Don't ask me to compare my school with, say, Dartmouth unless you want a biased answer, because that's what you'll get. Which is fine—I am an employee.

But you'd be a fool to let me referee the homecoming football game. In fact, in any other walk of life we wouldn't think twice before concluding that paying off the referees is wrong. If the Patriots make the Super Bowl, everyone in

America would be outraged to see owner Robert Kraft trot out to midfield before the game and hand a \$1,000 bill to each of the linesmen and field judges.

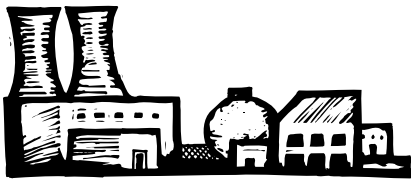
If he did it secretly, the newspaper reporter who uncovered the scandal would win a Pulitzer. But a political reporter who bothered to point out Boehner's and McConnell's payoffs would be upbraided by her editor for simpleminded journalism. That's how the game is played and we've all bought into it, even if only to sputter in hopeless outrage.

Far from showing any shame, the big players boast about it: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, front outfit for a consortium of corporations, has bragged on its website about outspending everyone in Washington, which is easy to do when Chevron, Goldman Sachs, and News Corp are writing you seven-figure checks. This really matters. The Chamber of Commerce spent more money on the 2010 elections than the Republican and Democratic National Committees combined, and 94% of those dollars went to climate-change deniers. That

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Fukushima's owner: radioactive fallout isn't theirs



JOHN LAFORGE

In the amoral milieu of the corporate bottom line, you can't blame Tokyo Electric Power Co. for trying. Tepco owns the six-reactor Fukushima complex that was wrecked by Japan's March 11 earthquake and smashed by the resulting tsunami. It faces more than \$350 billion in compensation and clean-up costs, as well as likely prosecution for withholding crucial information that may have prevented some radiation exposures and for operating the giant station after being warned about the inadequacy of its protections against disasters.

So, when the company was hauled into Tokyo District Court October 31 by the Sunfield Golf Club, which was demanding decontamination of the golf course, Tepco lawyers tried something novel. They claimed the company isn't liable because it no longer "owned" the radioactive poisons that were spewed from its destroyed reactors.

"Radioactive materials that scattered and fell from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant belong to individual landowners there, not Tepco," the company said. This stunned the court, the plaintiffs and the press. An attorney for the golf club said, "We are flabbergasted...."

The court rejected Tepco's notion that its cancer-causing pollution is owned by the areas it contaminated. But you have to hand it to Tepco. For brash balderdash, there's hardly a match in the world.

Even Union Carbide, whose toxic gas in Bhopal, India, killed 15,000 people in 1984, hasn't tried that one. Dow Chemical, which bought Union Carbide in 2001, is still fighting India's demand for \$1.7 billion in compensation. Perhaps Dow could try Tepco's dodge: "The gas belongs to the breather now, since possession is nine-tenths of the law."

Meanwhile, babies in Japan may be in for a life of debilitation and disease because radioactive cesium-137 and cesium-134 was recently found in infant milk powder. A December 6 announcement by the Meiji Holdings Company, Inc. said it was recalling 400,000 cans of its "Meiji Step," powdered milk for babies older than nine months. The powder was packaged in April—at the height of Fukushima's largest radiation releases—distributed mostly in May and has an October 2012 expiration date.

The amount of cesium in one serving of the milk powder was about 8 percent of the total contamination allowed by the government. But no one knows how much formula individual babies may have consumed prior to the recall. It is well known that fetuses, infants, children and women are harmed by doses of radiation below officially allowed exposures. Most exposure standards have been established in view of radiation's projected effect on "Reference Man," a hypothetical 20- to 30-year-old white male, rather than women and children, the most vulnerable.

Even tiny amounts of internal radioactive contamination can damage DNA, cause cancer and weaken the immune system. Fukushima's meltdowns dispersed radioactive contamination found in vegetables, milk, seafood, water, grain, animal feed and beef. Green tea grown 250 miles from Fukushima was found contaminated. Rice harvested this fall from 154 farms in Fukushima Prefecture was found in November to be poisoned with cesium 25 percent above the allowable limit. Shipments of rice from those farms were banned, but not before many tons had been sold. Presumably, that radiation is now the property of each consumer under the inventive assertion of Tepco's corporate attorneys.

Source: Truthout News Analysis 1/16/12 www.truthout.org

stop being cynical, start being angry

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

helps explain why the House voted last year to say that global warming isn't real.

It also explains why "our" representatives vote, year in and year out, for billions of dollars worth of subsidies for fossil-fuel companies. If there was ever an industry that didn't need subsidies, it would be this one: they make more money each year than any enterprise in the history of money. Not only that, but we've known how to burn coal for 300 years and oil for 200.

Those subsidies are simply payoffs. Companies give small gifts to legislators, and in return get large ones back, and we're the ones who are actually paying.

WHOSE MONEY? WHOSE WASHINGTON?

I don't want to be hopelessly naïve. I want to be hopefully naïve. It would be relatively easy to change this: you could provide public financing for campaigns instead of letting corporations pay. It's the equivalent of having the National Football League hire referees instead of asking the teams to provide them.

Public financing of campaigns would cost a little money, but endlessly less than paying for the presents these guys give their masters.

And it would let you watch what was happening in Washington without feeling as disgusted. Even legislators, once they got the hang of it, might enjoy neither raising money nor having to pretend it doesn't affect them.

To make this happen, however, we may have to change the Constitution, as we've done 27 times before. This time, we'd need to specify that corporations aren't people, that money isn't speech, and that it doesn't abridge the First Amendment to tell people they can't spend whatever they want getting elected. Winning a change like that would require hard political organizing, since big banks and big oil companies and big drug-makers will surely rally to protect their privilege.

Still, there's a chance. The Occupy movement opened the door to this sort of change by reminding us all that the system is rigged, that its outcomes are unfair, that there's reason to think people from across the political spectrum are tired of what we've got, and that getting angry and acting on that anger in the political arena is what being a citizen is all about.

It's fertile ground for action. After all, Congress's approval rating is now at 9%, which is another way of saying that everyone who's

not a lobbyist hates them and what they're doing. The big boys are, of course, counting on us simmering down; they're counting on us being cynical, on figuring there's no hope or benefit in fighting city hall. But if we're naïve enough to demand a country more like the one we were promised in high school civics class, then we have a shot.

A good time to take an initial stand comes later this month, when rallies outside every federal courthouse will mark the second anniversary of the /Citizens United/ decision. That's the one where the Supreme Court ruled that corporations had the right to spend whatever they wanted on campaigns.

To me, that decision was, in essence, corporate America saying, "We're not going to bother pretending any more. This country belongs to us."

We need to say, loud and clear: "Sorry. Time to give it back."

BILL MCKIBBEN IS A DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR AT MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE AND CO-FOUNDER OF 350.ORG. HIS MOST RECENT BOOK IS EAARTH: MAKING A LIFE ON A TOUGH NEW PLANET.

Source: TomDispatch.com 1/5/12 <http://www.tomdispatch.com/>

Latest scare for Fukushima survivors

The Japanese government announced today that radioactive concrete has been used to construct new apartment buildings in the Fukushima Prefecture, housing evacuees from a town near the site of the multiple nuclear plant meltdowns. The Japanese government is investigating the distribution of crushed stones that may contain radioactivity from the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. It has found that concrete made of the stones has been sold to more than 200 firms.

The probe comes after radioactive cesium was detected in a new apartment building in Nihonmatsu, Fukushima Prefecture where the concrete was used. Readings of up to 1.24 microsieverts per hour have been recorded inside the building which is higher than outside. "We thought we could finally settle here. I have no words," said a resident, who told broadcaster NHK she moved to the apartment with her husband and young children, to escape radiation. "I just feel so awful for my kids. I feel like I've failed as a parent." The gravel comes from a quarry in Namie that was designated as an evacuation zone in April.

The quarry operator says it shipped more than 5,000 tons of crushed stones to 19

firms in the weeks after the accident. The government has set no limit on radiation in stones and sand used for construction even after the nuclear accident. The company president told reporters on Monday that he never imagined that stones from his quarry would cause such a problem and that he wants to apologize to residents of the building for their exposure to radiation. The economy ministry says 2 of the 19 firms sold concrete made of the stones to more than 200 companies. It believes that the concrete was used in housing construction and on roads.

JAPAN'S KYODO NEWS SERVICE REPORTS:

High levels of radiation have been detected on the first floor of a newly built condominium complex in Nihonmatsu, Fukushima Prefecture, the municipal government said. The quarry operator says it shipped more than 5,000 tons of crushed stones to 19 firms in the weeks after the accident. Crushed stones used in the building's concrete foundation came from the exclusion zone around the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, local

government officials said. A quarry firm said Monday it shipped some 5,280 tons of crushed stones from Namie, Fukushima

Prefecture, to 19 contractors after the nuclear crisis started last March 11, including some 1,065 tons distributed to a concrete maker that provided the material for the Nihonmatsu building's foundations. The city conducted the checks after a junior high school girl living on its first floor logged an exposure reading of 1.62 millisieverts during a three-month period from September, the local authority said.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE REPORTS:

Japan's government was Monday investigating how an apartment had been built with radioactive concrete in the latest scare from the country's ongoing nuclear crisis. Radiation levels of up to 1.24 microsieverts per hour were recorded in the building in Nihonmatsu, Fukushima, 55 kilometres (35 miles) from the crippled power plant, local authorities said Sunday. Radiation fears have since become part of daily life in Japan after cases of contaminated water, beef, vegetables, tea and seafood were discovered. The government has consistently been at pains to stress the lack of an "immediate" health risk, but has been faced by scepticism from the public.

Source: Common Dreams 1/16/12 <http://www.commondreams.org>



The T is not silent

From humiliation to the greatest pride

ELENA KELLY

“Mankind’s greatest gift, also its greatest curse, is that we have free choice. We can make our choices built from love or from fear.” ~Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Transgender websites have been ablaze lately with articles and blogs that deal with the choices we have as transgender people. Some ill-informed people will argue that we deliberately choose to be men or women. Really? I ask you, dear reader, when did you choose your gender? As a child, did you wake up one day and choose to be the gender you are today? Or, did you always have an abiding sense within yourself that you were a boy or girl? I’ve asked many people that question, and everyone has answered that they always knew their gender. Transgender people are no different.

In the years since I transitioned from living as a man to living as a woman, I have had to make many choices, but I never had to choose whether I was a man or a woman. Like everyone else, I have always known, deep inside myself, that I was a woman. I did, however, have to choose what I would do with that knowledge. For most of my life I chose to keep that knowledge to myself. Or rather, I chose self-preservation over abuse, ridicule, and attacks.

As a minister I have read, and deeply appreciated the work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. I read *On Death and Dying* several times, and practically memorized her book *AIDS: The Ultimate Challenge*. The quote at the beginning of this piece comes from her book *On Children and Death*. She was adamant that we must teach our children “from day one” that they are responsible for their lives. Because of her influence on my life, I often preached and taught on the themes of love and fear.

At seminary I learned an acrostic for the word fear. It is False Evidence Appearing Real. We experience fear when we embrace falsehood as truth. It starts with believing in monsters under our beds, and for transgender people it evolves into believing we live in a society that wants to destroy us. And while some in society would like to harm us, even kill us, we can choose to face that evidence with love rather than fear.

What does it mean for a transgender person to make choices from fear? It means we believe we will face unbearable hardships that few others will ever have to face. It means that we believe we will be discriminated against in employment, education, healthcare, housing, religious practice, and which public toilet we can use. It means we believe that we will be the victims of abuse and violence. It means we believe that we have to live our lives dishonestly, hiding who we really are. It means we believe we will suffer from depression and much higher rates of suicide and murder. It means that we believe that we have to live our lives riddled with guilt and shame about who we are.

On the other hand, what does it mean for a transgender person to make choices from love? It means that we believe that we will become experts in matters of gender, and will have unique perspectives on male and female gender issues that non-transgender people could never have. It means that we believe that we can know what it feels like to live fully authentic lives of integrity and honesty, something that many non-transgender people will never know. It means that we believe we will be able to contribute to society in ways that non-transgender people ever could. And in many of our lives, it means that we will have many new and richly rewarding relationships with people we never would have known, except that we are transgender.

In my case, it means that I have often sat and talked with the Mayor of my city, many members of the Stockton City Council, my state assembly representative, my state senator, my U.S. Congress members, all of whom know me on a first name basis. I have met transgender leaders all over the state, from all over the U.S., and even from countries around the

world. I know, and am friends with most all of the ministers, priests, rabbis, and imams in Stockton, as well as many area business leaders who are open to dialogue with a transgender woman. I have their numbers in my cell phone, and their email addresses in my laptop. These leaders and politicians are my friends, people I trust to do the right thing. They are people who, for the most part, make choices based on love, not fear.

I am not an exception. There are many hundreds, perhaps thousands more like me around the state, around the nation, and around the world. Last fall I attended the Transgender Leadership Conference in West Hollywood. There were well over 200 leaders, mostly from California, but about 40 came from out of state to attend. These are transgender people who are making choices built from love. These are the people I strive to emulate. These are the people I wish everyone would emulate.

Do I wish that society would just learn to accept the

natural diversity that is true of all humanity? Sure I do. Do I wish transgender people could be loved unconditionally as children and supported in their gender expression without imposing sex stereotypes on them? Of course! Do I wish that violence and murder of transgender people was a thing of the past? Absolutely I do! But until those things become a reality, I will call for transgender people to rise up from false evidence that appears to be true. I will call for all non-transgender people to rise up from false evidence that appears true, and I will support, with all my heart, each person who embraces mankind’s greatest gift; the gift to make choices built on love.

REV. SR. ELENA KELLY, OSH IS A MINISTER TO THE PEOPLE OF STOCKTON AND THE CENTRAL VALLEY, AND IS THE CHAPLAIN AND TREASURER OF SAN JOAQUIN PRIDE CENTER. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT ELENA.KELLY@COMCAST.NET.



Lowes, Kayak.com drop ads amid Islamophobic complaints

The travel website Kayak.com and Lowes Hardware stores pulled advertising from TLC’s reality show *All-American Muslim* after the right-wing Florida Family Association (FFA) complained that the show presented Muslim-American families as ordinary people. FFA, disturbed by the normative portrayal of American Muslims, complained on its website that “The point of the show is to depict Muslims as ordinary folks just like you and me who are subjected to unjust suspicion,” and saying the show is “propaganda clearly designed to counter legitimate and present-day concerns about many Muslims who are advancing Islamic fundamentalism and Sharia law.” FFA maintained that the show was an attempt “to manipulate Americans into ignoring the threat of jihad.” The group started pressuring advertisers to drop their sponsorship of the show. The CEO of Kayak.com, which dropped its ads, claimed that no third party had influenced their decision to discontinue advertising on the show. A Kayak.com executive claimed TLC had misled them about the nature of the show, and added, “...Mostly, I just thought the show sucked.” Lowes responded to FFA saying the show did not “meet Lowe’s advertising guidelines.” The chain issued a more ambiguous public statement saying the company had a “long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion,” and saying the show had turned into “a lightning rod for people to voice complaints from a variety of perspectives—political, social and otherwise.”

After Lowe’s made it public that it had pulled its ads, boycotts have been called, protests planned, 200,000 petitions have been delivered by local religious leaders, a spoof Lowes TV ad has gone viral and hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons offered to buy the remaining advertising on the show.

Source: *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting* report, 12/14/11
<http://www.prwatch.org> Center for Media and Democracy, 520 University Ave, Suite 260, Madison, Wisconsin 53703 608-260-9713



Navigating

In Irish, "muirchearaigh" means "navigator"—one who searches out the way

Children of stardust

Video review, "Journey of the Universe"

JOHN MOREARTY

"We belong here, we've always belonged here.
Wonder will guide us."

We watched the drama of Earth unfold on PBS the other night. Wonderful!

The one-hour documentary is called "Journey of the Universe," produced at Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies by evolutionary philosopher Brian Swimme and historian of religions Mary Evelyn Tucker, with a team of astronomers, biologists and historians. It's being acclaimed by scientists and educators worldwide: "Show this to the children; it could change history."

Rooted in the latest science, the film uses astonishing images to tell humankind's Big Story—from the "Great Flaring Forth" till now. Walking barefoot on the beach on the Greek island of Samos, narrator Swimme makes our heads swim with spiral galaxies, whirlpools and twisting genes. Stepping into the dark cave of the Greek mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras, Swimme tells how earth's beings longed for light—leaves turning to the sun's energy like lovers, trilobites growing calcite rod eyes, worms forming waterbased eyes like ours. And now, humans have in-sight.

In the museum on Samos, Swimme shows us ancient works of art (a crouching tiger, a compassionate goddess) which were gathered from afar, much as knowledge from all over the world gathers together in this film—and in our own minds these days. We gaze up at a fifteen foot sculpture of a man; "The Greeks walked among these colossal figures," he says, "and began to think they were godlike, capable of anything."

On the other hand, we might easily have not existed at all.

Consider this Improbability: 20th century astronomers discovered the universe is expanding. But mathematicians calculate that if the rate of expansion had been a tiny bit slower, the universe would have collapsed back into itself in a massive Black Hole. If it had expanded a tiny bit faster, it would have ballooned so fast that gravity could not have pulled the expanding matter together into galaxies, stars and planets.

Improbability Two: Life on earth can exist only within a narrow band of temperature. But over the four and a half billion years of the earth's existence, the temperature of our sun has increased by 25%! Yet earth's temperature has remained relatively steady. We understand some of the mechanisms by which that happened, but not all; it's almost, says Swimme, as if the Earth System itself were struggling to maintain life.

Life has learned to preserve itself. Fish devoured their offspring, but birds and mammals care for their young, and even nourish them from their own bodies. Mates learned to care for each other beyond the act of reproduction, and even remain together lifelong. (Images of courting: seabirds, seals, human beings.) Childhood in human beings became prolonged beyond that of apes, and the period of playfulness, creativity, bonding and learning was enhanced. (Children playing soccer, skipping.)

Pythagoras taught that the essence of life is number, pattern. (Stalks of purple compound flowers.) Living beings are self-organizing, they create their own patterns, and store them in organic "memory," DNA. A successful pattern gets passed along to descendants.

Somehow, human beings invented language, symbolic consciousness. Our DNA now includes the power to learn the language around us; "infant" means "not speaking," but infants learn to speak—Chinese, Navajo, English, whatever. And with language, with symbolic consciousness, we have

a new way to create and preserve patterns—we can make up stories, and pass them along.

And then, only six thousand years ago, our ancestors invented writing. Scratches on rocks became another DNA, human powers of memory mushroomed, and so did our capacity for self-organizing, for creating and preserving patterns—tool-making, social organization and governance, religions, literature, art and architecture, flutes and violins....

Then in the last couple centuries, factories, trains, sewage systems and penicillin, bulldozers, bicycles, eyeglasses, computers, cellphones, video, stereos—all of them ways for consciousness to circle around on itself, and human society to concentrate, complexify and enjoy, seven billion and counting.

Not to mention advertising and propaganda, tanks and warships, AK-47s, drones and atomic bombs. Toward the end of the film, scary images: strip-mined mountains, bleached coral reefs, ice shelves collapsing, rainforests aflame. "We are changing life's dynamics, in an irreversible way."

And yet, and yet—so much beauty! Green sprouts, a hippo splopping up from waterweeds, soaring antelopes, pouring rivers, spiral galaxies and spiderwebs, eagle diving rabbit leaping, a plunging line of cormorants, fawns cavorting, a baby elephant waving its trunk in the air.

Which old patterns will we preserve? Which will we change? What new patterns might we create?

As night comes down at the end of the film, Brian Swimme leaves Samos aboard the motor launch Ag. Nikolaos, St. Nicolas; Santa Claus, who brings gifts to children. I'm giving copies of this video to my grandchildren; fourteen year old Cody has already watched it with me twice, soaking it in.

If you google for "Journey of the Universe" you get a video trailer and a host of links; this piece of cultural DNA is going viral. Just in time.

Here are Brian Swimme's ending words: "How are we to use this symbolic consciousness to create a human presence that will enhance the well-being of the earth community? We are beginning to understand the profound powers of the universe. And just as these powers have brought forth galaxies, stars and life itself, perhaps the universe is now unfolding toward some new destiny. What if our ultimate destiny is to experience the universe so deeply we come to realize that we are in some sense the mind and heart of the universe? Our deepest yearning is for a whole-hearted participation in this flourishing. As we float in the midst of such mysterious immensities, is there any deep wisdom that might help us align our consciousness with the grain of cosmic evolution?"

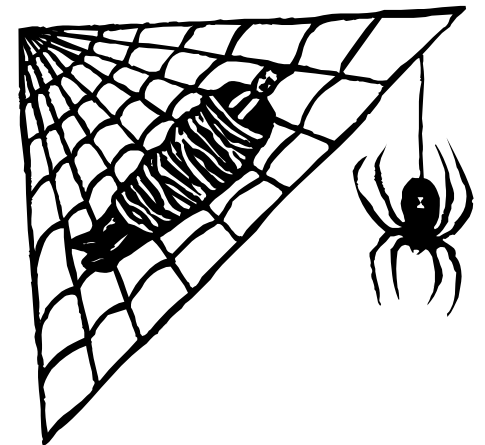
Wonder will guide us. The human species has a genius for becoming astonished by almost anything in the universe. What can this mean?

The body of the universe gave birth to our bodies. The self-organizing dynamics of the universe gave birth to our minds. We belong here. We've always belonged here.

These deep discoveries of science are leading to a new story of the universe. It's a story that can be summarized in a single sentence: Over the course of 14 billion years, hydrogen gas transformed itself into mountains, butterflies, the music of Bach, and you and me. And these energies, coursing through us, may indeed renew the face of the earth."



No more back room deals— Users must have a voice in governing the Internet



MPAA Chairman Chris Dodd gave an interview to the New York Times yesterday, in which "Mr. Dodd said he would welcome a summit meeting between Internet companies and content companies, perhaps convened by the White House, that could lead to a compromise." While framed by the Times as his acceptance of defeat (the MPAA had rejected a prior meeting), the article shows that Dodd still doesn't get it.

The former Senator hopes for a return to the traditional levers of power, where the laws are written by lobbyists, and sold by back-room deals negotiated behind closed doors. He wants to frame the debate as the comfortable story of a dispute between companies in Silicon Valley and companies in Hollywood, that would doubtless be resolved on the basis of who's more connected or has better lobbying budgets—or so he hopes.

It wasn't the technology companies who broke the back of PIPA and SOPA. To be sure, Internet companies played a critical role—Google, Wikipedia, Reddit, Mozilla, Craigslist and over a hundred thousand other websites changed their home pages, informed their users about the bills and facilitated the users' communications to Congress.

But the dramatic and unprecedented sea change in opposition to blacklist legislation on the Hill came about because of the users themselves. Millions of users—and voters—like you spoke as one, and demanded that freedom of the Internet not be sacrificed on the altar of outdated business models. The opposition was grassroots, not astroturf.

Now that the proponents of SOPA/PIPA have blinked, and taken the bills back to committee, there will be calls to come to a "compromise." But there is no need to assume that legislation is necessary. As we discuss the future of the Internet, all stakeholders, including the people who use Internet services and consume (and create and share) movies and music, must have a seat at the table. The internet is too important to be debated, dissected and possibly disabled in a private meeting.

KURT OPSAHL IS A SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY WITH THE ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION FOCUSING ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, FREE SPEECH AND PRIVACY LAW.

Source: *Electronic Frontier Foundation* 1/20/12 <https://www EFF.org/>



Feb 2 – Apr 1

81st Annual Robert T. McKee Student Art Contest & Exhibition

McKee Student Art Exhibition The Haggin Museum continues the longest-running student art competition in the United States, when the annual McKee Student Art Contest & Exhibition returns in 2012. The exhibition was first envisioned by founding patron Robert T. McKee, whose goal was to encourage students by providing a public venue for their artworks. Every year the invitation is sent to all public, private and charter schools as well as homeschool groups in San Joaquin County. And every year we receive on average 1,000 pieces of art chosen by teachers as the best of their class.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STOCKTON SYMPHONY

In the spirit of collaboration between arts institutions we are also pleased to announce a partnership with the Stockton Symphony which brings a thematic focus to this year's exhibit. The Symphony has commissioned Israeli Composer Avner Dorman to create a symphonic piece based on a children's book called Uzu and Muzu from Kakaruzu. Set for its Stockton and world premiere in March, this fable of misunderstanding compounded through generations teaches an important lesson about conflict and resolution. The Haggin is inviting teachers who participate in the McKee Student Art Exhibit to help their students create artwork based on the themes of conflict and resolution: communication, compromise, empathy, and respect. Special prizes will be awarded to upper and lower division students whose work exemplifies an artistic interpretation of this very current human reality.

Feb 9—11

Pub Nights presented by the Episcopal Church of St. Anne

Take your family out for an evening of authentic English food. The Episcopal Church of St. Anne presents its Annual Pub Night from 6:00 to 8:30pm, for three nights, Thursday February 9th through Saturday February 11th. Join us for a night complete with English foods, family fun, games, entertainment and raffles. Thursday night is Family Night and no alcohol will be served. Tickets are \$30 and include admission, meal, souvenir glass, and desserts. Micro-brewed beer and local wine will be available. Kids under 12 are \$15 every night. Adults are \$25 on Thursday night. Purchase tickets online at <http://pubnight2012.eventbrite.com> or in advance at the Episcopal Church of St. Anne, 1020 W Lincoln Rd, Stockton.. For more information call (209) 473-2313.

Feb 18

Come take part in a privatization study

Join us at the Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave from 9:30 am to 12 noon, as we continue the discussion concerning privatization within our community. Should it be for an entire utility or for government services or functions such as prisons, water companies, law enforcement, libraries or others. What are the pros and cons of community management or private management; what are the costs involved and what are might be the positive or negative consequences? Our last meeting brought together public employees as well as those in the private. What are your opinions? Do join us. For more info, call 957-1010.

Feb 25

Without words: a night of jazz and funk

The Stockton Empire Theater will be the scene for Without Words: A Night Of Jazz And Funk. The night will include Bernadette Conant, a beautiful, young, singer/songwriter from Monterey, California. She has an angelic voice that really must be heard in person to fully appreciate. She writes all her own music and, at only 20, her impressive repertoire of songs and bell-like voice gardner her more fans and admirers wherever she goes.

Ship of Foolz is made up of a group of young, talented Stocktonian musicians, who have become a local favorite. They emit sounds of Jazz, Funk, and a hint of Pop. Everywhere they go in Stockton they draw a crowd.

E-squared is a popular band from Sacramento that has a very Alternative/Electronic sound. Also, they have won a Sacramento SAMMIE award for best Jazz group.

And, finally, the band ZuhG is a Sacramento-based Jam Band who definitely are hard to describe. Perhaps, the easiest thing you could say is that they are Jazz influenced, Funk influenced (they are definitely funky), and extemporaneously gifted. Their sound takes you back to a grittier time in Jazz, one based on sounds coming from the horn and voices of Louie Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday. Yet, make no mistake about it, they are no mere cover band, nor a band desperately trying to cash in on the sounds established yesterday; their sound is "their" sound. Their music is just as original as the image they created for themselves. They are on their 3rd album, produced from their own independently established record label. It is our hope and belief that this event will leave you Without Words. Tickets are from \$10–12; call 209-430-1700 for more info. Doors open at 6 pm, 1825 Pacific Ave, Stockton.

HELP WANTED



STATION MANAGER

OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

BUILDING A *COMMUNITY*
RADIO STATION FROM THE
GROUND UP.

INTERESTED PARTIES SEND A
COVER LETTER AND RESUME
TO **89.5fmkynj@gmail.com**

Feb 3

Greg & Steve back in Stockton

Education Through Music brings Greg and Steve back to Stockton for their thirty first concert appearance in Stockton Wednesday, February 1, Thursday, February 2 and Friday, February 3 for 10 a.m. concert appearances at the Scottish Rite Auditorium, 33 W. Alpine Ave, Stockton.

Greg and Steve

are former teachers who transitioned their ability to motivate through music into a successful career as composers and singers of children songs. They have sold more than two million albums, and their concerts featuring interactive, multicultural and educational themes have been popular with the preschool and young school age children for over 30 years in Stockton. Songs such as "Siesta," "It is a Beautiful Day," "The World is a Rainbow" and "The Freeze" are some of their most recognizable numbers which have been translated into seven languages. Tickets are available by calling 209.462.2536.

Talking It Through

EDUCATION • ENVIROMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

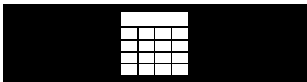
Peace & Justice Network Sponsors two Half-Hour Shows:

"Lets Talk" documentaries of important community meetings and events. **Mondays, 6pm.**

"Talking It Through" hosted by Sammy Nuñez features live discussines of important community issues, especially with your people. **Mondays, 6:30pm.**

Both shows are produced by Peace & Justice volunteer Vince Kotecki on SJTV: Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cable channel 26.

For up to the minute listings of current shows, see our website www.pjnsjc.org, click on Talking it Through.



FEB CALENDAR

Editor's note: if your event isn't listed, let us know. Send all copy to: bgudici@caltel.com by the 10th of every month.

WED-SUN JAN 11—FEB 4
Dearly Beloved. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Thur Dec 1 & 8. 7:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton \$15—\$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

JAN 13—FEB 29
Fragmentation and abstract expression, by Helen Betz. Free exhibit on the 1st and 2nd floors of the San Joaquin County Administration Building, 44 N San Joaquin St, Stockton.

JAN 19—FEB 15
Fine Art Faculty Show. Tu 11am—4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am—1pm. SJ Delta College, LH Horton Jr Gallery, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 954-5507.

FRI, JAN 27
Pianist Frank Wiens performs Postcards, music inspired by Argentina, Brazil, China, Rissia and Switzerland. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 seniors, students free.

SUN, JAN 29
11th Annual St John's Chamber Orchestra Festival featuring the strings and works of guest Ann Miller, including Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." 5 pm. St John's Anglican Church, corner of Miner and El Dorado, downtown Stockton. \$20. www.stjohn-stockton.org

Delta Harmony Xpress Open House, welcoming female singers age 12 and up, to sing and learn about Sweet Adelines membership. 5:45 pm. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 2737 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Call 951-3551 to reserve a spot.

TUES, JAN 31
Stockton's 20th Annual HIREvent, gathering regional employers with immediate openings to meet jobseekers. University Plaza Waterfront Hotel, 110 W Fremont St, Stockton. 12—4 pm. Co-sponsored by the City of Stockton. Call 888-843-5627 or visit JobJournal.com.

FEB 2—APR 1
81st Annual McKee Student Art Contest and Exhibition. continuing the longest-running student art competition in the US. Haggin Museum, 1201 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. Hundreds of art works by SJ County students from K-12. Wed-Fri 1:30—5 pm. Sat-Sun—12—5 pm. 1st and 3rd Thurs 1:30—9 pm. \$5 adult 18 & older, student/senior/youth

age 10-17 \$2.50. Under 10/first Saturday free. 940-6300 info@hagginmuseum.org

THU, FEB 2
Peace & Justice Network board meeting, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm social, 7:00 Board. All welcome. 467-4455

SAT, FEB 4
UOP University Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 senior, student free.

SUN, FEB 5
Resident Artist Series featuring Nina Flyer, cello and Sonia Leong, piano. 7:30 pm. Recital Hall, 3515 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 senior, student free.

THU—SAT, FEB 9—11
Pub Nights at St Anne's Episcopal Church, featuring an evening of English food, drink and entertainment. 6—8:30 pm. Thursday is non-alcohol family night (\$25). \$30 adult, \$15 kids under 12. St Anne's, 1020 W Lincoln Rd, Stockton. 473-2313 or <http://pubnight2012.eventbrite.com>

FRI, FEB 10
UOP Symphonic Wind Ensemble, 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 senior, student free.

SAT, FEB 11
11th Annual Winter Benefit Powwow, featuring Native American vendors, entertainment and more. All dancers and drums welcome. 12—10 pm. Taggart Gym, Edison High School, 1425 S Center St, Stockton. Free. 609-9253 or 933-7075 ext 8069. Stockton Symphony Valentine Pops, 6 pm, Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 954-5110.

SUN, FEB 12
Los Angeles Piano Quartet presented by the Friends of Chamber Music, featuring Mozart, Stucky and Faure. 2:30 pm, UOP Conservatory of Music, Stockton. \$25 general, students free, UOP staff/faculty \$10. 946-0540.

TUE, FEB 14
89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7—9 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. All welcome. 467-4455

SAT, FEB 18
Privatization Study discussion group, 9:30 am—noon. Central

United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 957-1010

FRI, FEB 24
Pacific Jazz Ensemble, 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$8 general, \$5 senior, student free.

11th annual Souper Supper and Auction benefitting the Tidewater Art Center and Gallery. 10 savory soups, with local breads, wines and desserts with locally crafted souvenir soup bowls. Advance \$40, \$45 at the door. tidewaterartgallery@yahoo.com or (209) 986-0979.

SAT, FEB 25
Without word: a night of jazz and funk, featuring 5 performers (see p 18). 6 pm, Stockton Empire Theater, 1825 Ave, Stockton. \$10—\$12. 209-430-1700.

SUN, FEB 26
Peace & Justice Annual potluck and gathering. 4—7:30 pm. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. Come to discuss, plan and eat! All welcome. 467-4455.

FIRST MONDAYS
Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm, Towers Building, 509 W Weber Ave, Stockton. ccgmemb@gmail.com

FOURTH MONDAYS
Delta Sierra Club meeting, 7 pm. Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7 pm program with social time following. All welcome.

SECOND TUESDAYS
89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 7—9 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

SECOND THURSDAYS
Single Payer San Joaquin meeting, 6:30 pm, Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. bailey_hcasj@sbcglobal.net

THIRD THURSDAYS
Central Valley Wellstone Progressive Democratic Club, 6 pm, Perko's Cafe, 1703 E. Yosemite Ave., Manteca, Info: Rose Roach, 209-474-8496

FOURTH SATURDAYS
Greater Lodi Area Democrats (GLAD) breakfast meeting, 8:30 am, Dee Dee's Family Dining, 1170 S. Cherokee Ln, Lodi. 209-663-3717

LAST FRIDAYS

San Joaquin Bicycle Coalition Critical Mass. 7 PM, School for Adults, 1525 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. sjbike.weebly.com

LAST SUNDAYS
Bike-In Movie, hosted by the San Joaquin Bicycle Coalition. 7PM, TBA sjbike.weebly.com

MONDAYS
Jazz at the Blackwater 9—11:30 pm. Mike Rocha, Rick Russell, Giulio Cetto, Michael Klooster and more. Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton. 943-6938.

WEDNESDAYS
San Joaquin Bicycle Coalition Night Ride, 7 PM, leaving from parking lot behind Espresso Coffeehouse, 1825 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. sjbike.weebly.com

THURSDAYS
Peace demonstration, 5-6 PM, edge of Delta campus across from Elephant Bar. Park at Sherwood Mall. Signs provided, or bring your own! Info: Patrick Wall, 954-5438.

Dinner and a show, 6:30—9:30. Blackwater Cafe, Acacia & Yosemite, Stockton.

SATURDAYS
Crosstown Freeway Farmers Market, under the freeway between El Dorado & San Joaquin, Stockton. 7—11, or when sold out. 943-1830

SUNDAYS
Occupy Stockton meetings, 3—5 pm. Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

SJBC Presents
BIKE IN MOVIE

TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE

TSHIRT RELEASE PARTY
BAKE SALE
SUN & FREE POPCORN
JAN 29TH Event starts at 6PM
Peace & Justice Center
231 Bedford Street



Contact Your Reps

Pres. Barack H. Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202—456—1414; www.whitehouse.gov

Sen. Barbara Boxer, 1700 Montgomery St, Ste 240, San Francisco, CA 94111. 415—403—0100; 112 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202—224—3553, senator@boxer.senate.gov

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, One Post Street, Ste 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104. 415—249—0707; 331 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202—224—3841, senator@feinstein.senate.gov

Rep. Jerry McNerney (D—11th District) 2222 Grand Canal Blvd #7, Stockton, CA 95207. 209—476—8552. Fax 209—476—8587. 312 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington DC 20515; info@jerrymcnerney.org, 925—833—0643, <http://www.JerryMcNerney.org>

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D—District 18) 137 E. Weber Ave, Stockton, CA 95203. 209—946—0361. 503 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, 202—225—6131.

Rep. Dan Lungren (R—District 3), 2262 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515. 202—225—5716. Local office: 2334 Gold Meadow Way, Ste 220, Gold River, CA 95670. 916—859—9906.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 2201 C St, NW Washington, DC 20520

Gov. Jerry Brown, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916—445—2841

State Sen. Lois Wolk (District 5), 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209—948—7930; State Capitol, Rm 4032, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916—651—4005

Assemblyperson Kathleen Galgiani (District 17), 31 E. Channel St., Rm. 306, Stockton CA 95202, 209—948—7479

DON'T LET OUR POWERFUL MESSAGE DIE !

THE WONDERFUL PUBLICATION YOU'RE HOLDING IS IN NEED OF A FEW MORE VOLUNTEERS TO HELP DISTRIBUTE CONNECTIONS TO ESTABLISHED ROUTES IN AND AROUND THE STOCKTON AREA.

AVERAGE TIME NEEDED: 2-3 HOURS PER MONTH.

CONTACT: DEANE OR MARCIA SAVAGE 209-339-1599

Single-payer health care bill SB810 clears Senate Appropriations

The Senate Appropriations Committee on January 12 approved the California Universal Health Care Act, authored by Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco). Senate Bill 810 guarantees all Californians comprehensive, universal health care while reducing the state's ballooning health care costs and improving the quality of care and delivery of health services statewide. The legislation passed with a 6-2 vote.

California currently spends about \$200 billion annually on a fragmented, inefficient health care system that wastes 30% of every dollar on administration. Under Senate Bill 810, that wasteful spending is eliminated. The bill redirects the funds Californians already spend on health care to allow comprehensive coverage. In fact, studies show that the state would save \$8 billion in the first year under this single-payer plan.

"California is being overrun by out-of-control health care costs, which have a significant impact on families, businesses and the state budget," said Senator Leno, D-San Francisco. "Health care premiums in the last few years have grown five times faster than our economy. Consequently, fewer employers are

providing health benefits to their employees, and those workers who are fortunate enough to receive coverage are paying higher premiums for diminishing services. By guaranteeing universal access for all Californians, our single-payer plan will reduce the health care burdens that are hurting families and our state's economy."

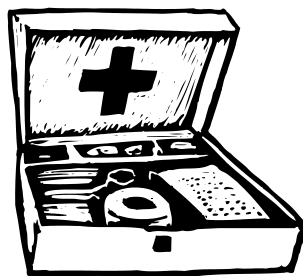
SB 810 creates a private-public partnership to provide every California resident medical, dental, vision, hospitalization and prescription drug benefits and allows patients to choose their own doctors and hospitals. This single payer, "Medicare for All," type of program works by pooling together the money that government, employers and individuals already spend on health care and putting it to better use by cutting out the for-profit middle man.

"SB 810 is the only proposed solution to the continuing patient care crisis that guarantees healthcare for all Californians and controls costs while eliminating the denials of care and restrictions of provider choice imposed by private insurance companies," said DeAnn McEwen, a registered nurse at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center and co-president of the California Nurses Association. CNA is one of the co-sponsors of SB

810.

"Health is a right, not a privilege," said Maria Lemus, executive director of Vision y Compromiso, a co-sponsor of SB 810. "All Californians, without exception, need access to quality medical services. Senator Leno's single-payer proposal would provide California residents access to health services with an opportunity to prevent illness, the right to choose their doctor and control inflation without increasing health care costs in California."

SB 810 is sponsored and supported by a broad coalition of patients, nurses, doctors, teachers and school employees, small businesses, faith community members, retirees, local governments and school districts. These groups represent more than 2 million Californians. The bill is co-sponsored by the California Nurses Association, Health Care for All California, California One Care, California School Employees Association, Physicians for a National Health Program-California, Single Payer Now, Campaign for a Healthy California, California Federation of Teachers, California Alliance of Retired Americans, Amnesty International, League of Women Voters, California Council of Churches, Progressive Democrats of America, California Consumer Federation, National Organization for Women-California, Vision y Compromiso, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club, Dolores Huerta Foundation, California Health Professional Student Alliance and Courage Campaign.



SB 810, Leno California Universal Healthcare Act (Single Payer)



WHAT IS SB 810, AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

7 million Californians, one in five, have no health insurance at all. Those with insurance are hardly more fortunate: half the bankruptcies nationwide are from medical costs, and at least half the medical bankruptcies are from people who were insured but went broke paying huge deductibles and co-pays, or were canceled when they got sick or injured. Insurance costs are shooting up, so fewer employers are providing coverage and premium costs are rising four times as fast as wages, 87% since 2001.

US Medical costs are the highest in the industrialized world (18% of GDP), yet we get comparatively little doctor and hospital care, and our health statistics rank 37th in the industrialized world. Insurance companies take 25-40% of healthcare dollars for profit and administrative costs. These costs, when added to the additional administrative costs for healthcare providers, cause an estimated 50% loss in healthcare dollars.

SB 810 would eliminate health insurance companies in California and set up a state-run California Healthcare System that would collect federal, state, employer, and taxpayer funds, and pay today's doctors, clinics, and hospitals for the

healthcare they provide. The delivery of healthcare is not changed, only the payment mechanism.

California's budget is in a state of severe and permanent crisis, with no hope of recovery without controlling health costs, and eliminating insurance companies is the only viable way to do this. The health reform bills being proposed in Washington can neither control healthcare costs nor provide equal, comprehensive, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all. We need single-payer healthcare in California.

WHERE IS SB 810 IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS?

SB 810 passed Senate Appropriations Committee but it must be passed by the full Senate by January 31 to stay alive.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP PASS SB 810?

California's single-payer bill, SB 810 must pass the full Senate by the end of January. The need for single-payer in California is becoming ever clearer as the Obama Health Plan shows itself increasingly inadequate and California's devastating budget cuts make today's wasteful health-care financing more intolerable. Yet the fight for single payer becomes more difficult as some legislators who had supported SB 810 are now unwilling to challenge the Obama Health Plan.

Single-Payer advocates are beginning a new study to provide updated information on the huge savings SB 810 would give the State.

Action: Please call your Senator in preparation for the difficult Senate floor vote ahead. Tell them:

- Every single person in the State needs and deserves healthcare that is equal, comprehensive, accessible, affordable, and is cost-effective! Single-Payer, Medicare-for-All healthcare is the only way to do it!
- Our only hope of getting the State budget under control is by controlling health costs. The savings from Single-Payer healthcare will far outweigh the costs of setting it up!
- Economic projections show Single-Payer healthcare would generate thousands of jobs in California!

Call Senators Gaines, (R-01) (916) 651-4001; Wolk (D-05) (916) 651-4005; Berryhill (R-14) (916) 651-4014

California Alliance for Retired Americans, 600 Grand Ave., Room 410, Oakland, CA 94610 (510) 663-4086 info@CaliforniaAlliance.org
UPDATED: January 19, 2012

CONNECTIONS

Would you like Connections delivered to your home? It's FREE!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail to: Peace & Justice Network, Box 4123, Stockton, CA 95204 (209) 467-4455

Peace & Justice Network does not sell or donate our mailing list. Connections is supported by donations and advertisers.