


July 31, 4:30—8 pm
Stockton's Medicare anniversary celebration

Join Single Payer San Joaquin in celebrating Medicare's 50th Anniversary, Friday, July 31, 4:30 pm to 8 pm, Janet Leigh Plaza (N. El Dorado at movie theater). Information about Medicare and how we must fight to protect it, a Patient Bill of Rights, and other topics will be available. We hope you will join our "sing-a-long" to help raise our voices in celebration of Medicare and for the lives it has enhanced and saved for 50 years—and enjoy an apple pie! Because reliable medical care is as simple as P.I.E. -- Protect, Improve, Expand!

For more information, visit www.singlepayersanjoaquin.org.

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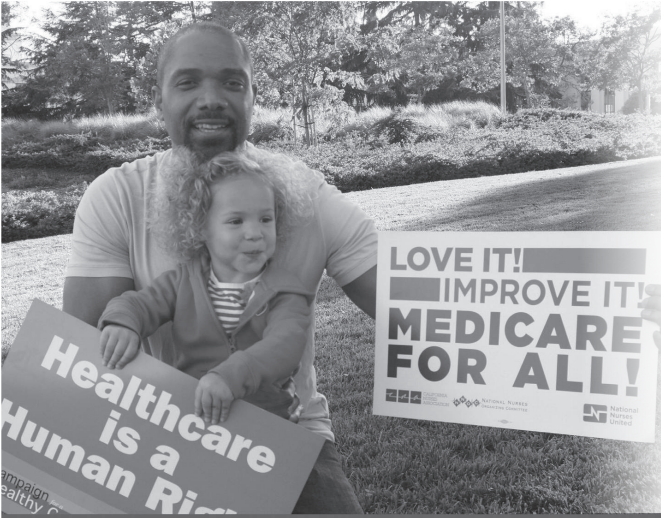
STOCKTON CELEBRATES
MEDICARE
AS AMERICAN AS APPLE PIE

PROTECT
IMPROVE
EXPAND

We need to protect and improve Medicare as the highly successful public program it has been for nearly 50 years—and extend its coverage to all.

- Seniors and people with disabilities have been saved from financial ruin and provided access to care through Medicare.
- There have been attacks on Medicare that have weakened it — most of those problems have been caused by private health insurance interests.
- Along with improving and protecting Medicare, we need to expand it to cover everyone as the most cost-effective way to provide a single standard of high quality care for all without financial barriers

Healthcare is a human right!



Free Snack Pie!

MEDICARE TURNS 50!
July 31, 2015
4:30PM
Rally

**Janet Leigh Plaza,
Downtown Stockton
(next to the theater)**

For more info, 209-670-4442
or singlepayersanjoaquin.org

singlepayersanjoaquin.org

Thurs, July 30
Get on the bus to the Oakland rally

Because this is such an important event, the Campaign for Healthy California and California Alliance for Retired Americans have arranged bus transportation for those who live in Northern CA but are not within reach using public transportation. There will be a bus leaving from the Clarion Hotel parking lot, Highway 99 and Waterloo at 9am. To reserve a seat on the bus, please call Marcia Savage at (209) 242-2254 or email her at savage1599@gmail.com to reserve a seat. Space is limited, so you should call today.

You will not want to miss this event. There will be a carnival and booths, great speakers, musicians, spoken word artists, and MORE. Please plan to join us for this important event and help us make history on Medicare's 50th Anniversary. Call to reserve your seat on the bus today. (Water and granola bars will be provided during the event and a box lunch will be provided on the bus ride home.)

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BRUCE GIUDICI

Editors Letter

It would be easy to avoid stories about how much money is going to be spent in the upcoming presidential election. The numbers are pretty huge - but when \$100 million begins to look like \$10 million used to - and now for a month, not a quarter or a year - a casual observer may not notice that serious influence is being bought here. The totally lopsided sway corporate business holds over government is thus easily explained - regardless of the party "in power." The truth is that corporate money is completely in power - keeping the rest of us functioning only to the extent that we can keep feeding it more. Two examples are noteworthy: first, the move of Attorney General Holder to a \$2.5 million Wall Street job that was kept open while he was doing Wall Street's bidding in not prosecuting a single person in the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown. And second, the \$103 million of Super PAC dark money (unlimited and anonymous) raised by the Jeb Bush campaign in the first half of 2015 - raising the bar for any

It's just a matter of time

presidential candidate selling themselves to the increasingly wealthy 0.1%, corporations and individuals alike. The truth is, we have never seen a campaign like the one we are about to witness - unlimited and anonymous money vying to buy the most powerful political position in the world. The result will only be a more corrupt version of where we have been. Organizations to support include: Public Citizen, Common Cause and us.

The anti-wealth candidate, Bernie Sanders, is given short shrift by the powers that be for a variety of reasons - the main one being that his financial support is unconventional and much less than the "frontrunners" and, as a result, his popularity is less easy to gauge than displaying a spreadsheet column of huge donations. And yet, the future of a sustainable world is on the road he is taking. In a world that is increasingly interdependent, we will need to work together to keep it working. We will need more equality and conservation, less violence and war. Our reaction to the Iran proposal is a test on how well we can travel this new road. The climate agreement in Paris will be another. Nationally, we have debt forgiveness and locally, we have the tunnels and policing issues. Whenever we have to choose a path going forward, long

term investment will have to take precedence over short-term profit. So how can we stay optimistic and hopeful amidst all the negativity? By realizing that, sooner or later, today's sustainable road will become tomorrow's only road. It's just a matter of time. Happy summer.



Healthcare timeline

This important timeline shows the incredibly long effort to have national healthcare available for all Americans. That effort continues today.

- Aug. 6, 1912** - President Theodore Roosevelt campaigns on national healthcare insurance.
- Nov. 11, 1934** - President Franklin D. Roosevelt speaks on the need for a national health insurance program.
- June 3, 1943** - Rep. John Dingell Sr. first introduces a bill for comprehensive healthcare reform.
- Nov. 19, 1945** - President Truman details his plan for health care reform.
- Jan. 31, 1955** - President Eisenhower notes the rising cost of health care—and the need to fix an outdated system.
- Feb. 9, 1961** - President Kennedy calls for health insurance for the elderly and improvements to the health care system.
- Jan. 7, 1965** - President Johnson addresses Congress on the need to provide health coverage to the elderly, poor and disabled.
- July 30, 1965** - President Johnson signs legislation creating the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Stockton proclaims Medicare support:

WHEREAS, Medicare, signed into law on July 30, 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, forged a solemn promise to older Americans that they would have the peace of mind and security of reliable medical insurance in their later years; and

WHEREAS, Medicare insurance helps support longer, healthier lives and economic security for older and disabled Americans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare is an insurance program that is earned over a lifetime of sacrifice through contributions; and

WHEREAS, This extremely valuable American asset called Medicare will be turning 50 years old on July 30, 2015, must be available for future generations to enjoy its benefits in their later years.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ANTHONY SILVA, as Mayor of the City of Stockton, and on behalf of the Stockton City Council, do hereby declare July 30, 2015 MEDICARE'S 50th ANNIVERSARY.

In the City of Stockton, and I encourage all our citizens to recognize Medicare for the significant contributions it has made to the well-being and peace of mind for older and disabled citizens in Stockton and throughout the United States of America, and to join in with Single Payer San Joaquin for their goal to protect, improve, and expand so cost is no longer a barrier to health.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have here unto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Stockton to be affixed this 21st day of July, Two-Thousand-Fifteen.

Mayor Anthony Silva

David Waldon's upcoming book

Dave Waldon's poetry, often tinged with irony and smart insight, has been found from time to time in Connections. A first volume of 55-word poems written over the past 10 years is being crowd-funded and, when successful, will be published through the local publisher Tuleburg Press. If more than the \$5,000 target is raised, the money will be kept in a fund to publish his next book. There is a lot of material—poems, prose, short stories—that he's written over the years, aside from the 55-words - so this first step should be the start of a interesting venture.

To raise money for the publication, the website address is: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/55-and-counting-poems-by-david-waldon/x/10565653#/story> You are encouraged to check it out, browse around on the site, check out the picture gallery, and share with your family and friends as you see fit.

David Waldon has been a friend of Connections for decades— give him a look.

CONNECTIONS

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"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."

MEDICAID AND MEDICARE - TURNING 50

HARRY BRILL

On July 30 this year throughout the country the nation will be celebrating the 50th birthday of Medicare, which, as you know, serves mainly senior citizens. An important component in this celebration is demanding Medicare for All. A major celebration will take place in Frank Ogawa Plaza in Oakland beginning 11am. But 50 years ago President Johnson signed not only the Medicare bill. He signed into law Medicaid, which is a much larger program. Moreover, Medicaid provides services that are not available to Medicare recipients, including the availability of long term care facilities. Yet Medicaid is being ignored by senior organizations, labor unions, faith-based and community organizations. They act as if the program does not exist.

What is the explanation for this unusual omission? The explanation is at the roots of our class related culture. Unlike

Medicare, which is an insurance program for those who have paid into Social Security, Medicaid is needs-tested. It is a program entirely for low-income Americans who must prove that they and their family members are poor. Clearly, poverty earns the poor and the programs that mainly serve them a very low status reputation.

Not least, the program is despised by the medical profession, whose members receive only about 60% of the reimbursement that Medicare pays. For this reason, many doctors either refuse to accept Medicaid patients or take very few. Moreover, they influence many others who work in health related occupations.

The potential consequences of ignoring Medicaid is it makes the program more financially vulnerable. In these conservative times, all our social programs are financially threatened. But more so with Medicaid, whose recipients have the least clout. And they receive little or no support from

those organizations and individuals who are more fortunate and influential. Also, keep in mind that many seniors who currently depend on Medicare will eventually depend on Medicaid in order to receive long term care, including nursing facilities.

So, for this anniversary, all are encouraged to celebrate both programs that make health care affordable for millions of Americans. Now more than ever, we can celebrate health care models that will make the path to single payer easy to find.

HARRY BRILL IS A WRITER FOR THE EAST BAY TAX THE RICH GROUP.

70 Years of Nuclear Weapons— At What Cost?



On the morning of August 6, 1945, the "Enola Gay," a U.S. B-29 bomber, dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima.

Three days later, a second American nuclear bomb incinerated Nagasaki.

CHANGE
THE
FUTURE!

On August 6, 2015, at 8 AM
Come to Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab
Vasco Road at Patterson Pass Road

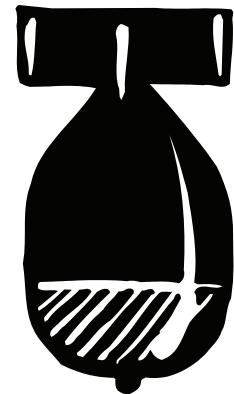
JOIN US
IN
LIVERMORE!

Program featuring Daniel Ellsberg, Country Joe McDonald, Taiko drummers and more; followed by a short march to the Lab gate, a traditional Japanese Bon Dance, nonviolent direct action and legal witness.

Today, after 70 years, nearly 16,000 nuclear weapons—94% of them held by the USA and Russia—continue to pose an intolerable threat to humanity, and the danger of nuclear war is growing. Whether a nuclear exchange is initiated by accident, miscalculation or madness, the radiation will know no boundaries. The USA plans to spend a trillion dollars over the next thirty years "modernizing" its nuclear arsenal. The human cost of this is immeasurable—to our health, environment, ethics, and democracy, to our prospects for global peace, and to our confidence in human survival.

Sponsored by dozens of Bay Area peace and justice groups. More info: Tri-Valley CAREs, 925-443-7148, and Western States Legal Foundation, 510-839-5877

Nuke weapons be gone



KEVIN MARTIN

It was President Obama who created the expectation that our country would lead a global effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons. In his Prague speech in April, 2009 he committed the U.S. to this goal: "I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Instead, the President has committed to completely rebuilding all three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad – strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and nuclear-armed submarines (SLBMs) and calls for spending \$350 billion over the next decade and up to \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. Military experts agree that we cannot afford these costs and we can be just as secure, and probably more so, with far fewer nuclear weapons.

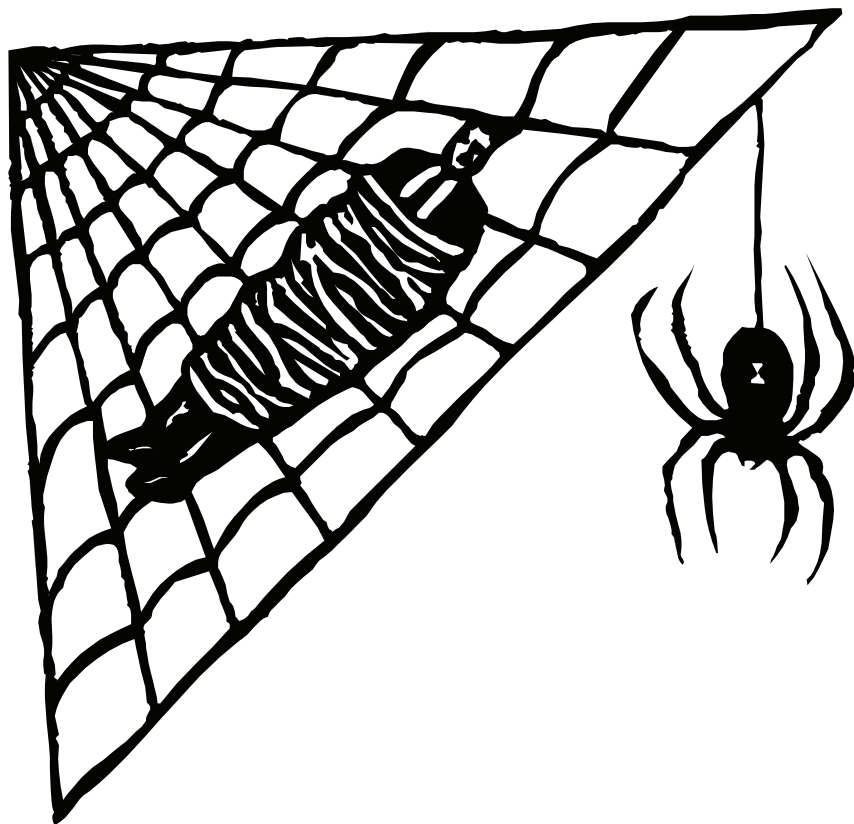
With just 18 months left in his presidency, there are concrete steps he can take immediately to show our nation is prepared to lead the world to that goal. Some of them, like stating the US will not be the first nation to use nuclear weapons in war, taking our nuclear arsenal off 'launch on warning' status and initiating negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention to eliminate all nukes worldwide, as Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) requires, don't require Congressional approval.

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki we are reminded today's nuclear weapons pack much greater destructive power and their use would be a catastrophe unlike any the world has ever seen.

Take action: 1) Attend the August 6 rally in Livermore. 2) Please sign the Peace Action petition at www.peace-action.org and then forward it to your family and friends. Ask them to join in this effort to press President Obama to use the final 18 months of his presidency fulfill his promise "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." Now that would be a legacy of which he could be proud.

Source: Peace Action release 7/1/15 www.peace-action.org

The fight over Obamacare was a giant political charade



SONALI KOLHATKAR

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on June 25 that the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) subsidies for health insurance for the poor were indeed constitutional, liberals cheered. The last-ditch attempt by the right to gut President Obama's signature act failed. In his weekly address, Obama triumphantly announced that "after more than fifty votes in Congress to repeal or weaken this law; after a Presidential election based in part on preserving or repealing this law; after multiple challenges to this law before the Supreme Court, we can now say this for certain: the Affordable Care Act still stands, it is working, and it is here to stay."

The case at the heart of the ruling was *King v. Burwell*, a legal challenge that was based on a technicality. The Los Angeles Times explained that legal experts saw it "as a fatuous misreading of the law and a tortured effort to bend the process of statutory interpretation for ideological ends." But the constant attacks on the ACA, including this last attempt, were less ideological than political, and in the end, the Supreme Court ruling was an affirmation of the supremacy of capitalism over human needs.

It is true that 6.4 million Americans currently receiving subsidies for insurance would have lost their coverage had the court not voted to preserve the ACA. The vote was 6-3, with conservative Chief Justice John Roberts joining swing voter Anthony Kennedy and the four liberal stalwarts (Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen Breyer). The fact that Roberts voted for it, and wrote the majority opinion, speaks volumes about what the ruling really means. According to him, "Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance markets, not to destroy them." That single sentence clearly lays out the problem with what the right has sardonically named "Obamacare." In voting to preserve the health care reform law, the court sought to "improve health insurance markets," not access to health care.

Paul Y. Song is the executive chairman of the Courage Campaign, executive board member of Physicians for a National Health Program, and co-chair of Campaign for a Healthy California. He told me in an interview on Uprising that "this was really less about protecting patients and more

about protecting the health insurance industry, hospitals and all of the medical corporations." The subsidies at stake are our tax dollars filling the coffers of private corporations in exchange for profit-based "managed care."

As Michael Moore wrote, "Obamacare is awful. That is the dirty little secret many liberals have avoided saying out loud for fear of aiding the president's enemies." Song concurred, saying, "This is less of a government-run program, but it's a corporate bailout. It really is giving people money to buy a product from a for-profit industry that only makes money by denying care."

The right-wing attacks on Obamacare were always about attempting to delegitimize the president rather than the actual substance of a pro-corporate health reform law. Indeed, Republicans long ago suggested similar reform proposals, such as the health exchanges, to those at the heart of the ACA. "Had anyone else proposed this," said Song, "I think the Republicans would have said, 'Wow this is a great idea.'"

The GOP's relentless attacks on the ACA left progressives in the awkward position of having spent the last five years defending a pro-corporate law that the right would have ordinarily salivated over. When the Supreme Court ruled to

Our health care system places an entirely needless middleman between us and our doctors, whose sole function is to vacuum up as many dollars as possible in the interest of capital enterprise.

preserve the ACA, privately some Republicans expressed relief, knowing that if 6.4 million Americans relying on subsidies had suddenly lost them, the GOP would have paid a stiff political price.

The act of opposing the law at any cost has given Republicans legitimacy among their right-wing supporters for targeting Obama while ultimately getting what they want, which is a pro-corporate law. For Democrats, supporting Obamacare has given them the appearance of caring about medical bankruptcies and the plight of the uninsured. And Obama has won by achieving the seemingly impossible task of passing health care

reform, while also propping up private industry. In the end, the fight over the ACA has resulted in wins for the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, the health insurance industry and the president.

Among the losers are Americans who remain dependent on their employers for health insurance, and those who have bought plans from the ACA's exchanges but pay through the nose for minimal coverage. Even plans available to those who used to be denied them because of pre-existing conditions are expensive and the deductibles extremely high.

Most unfortunate of all are the nearly 13 percent of Americans who remain uninsured. Song pointed out that "the one thing that Democrats and Republicans could agree on was to exclude our undocumented brothers and sisters." It's no surprise that Latinos are among the least insured communities in the nation.

Compared with the lack of regulations that the health insurance industry used to enjoy, Obamacare has imposed some minimal limits. But in the end, it leaves companies stronger than ever, as evidenced by the buoyancy of insurance stocks in the aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling. In other words, Obamacare is a win for the 1 percent, and a loss for the rest of us.

Our health care system places an entirely needless middleman between us and our doctors, whose sole function is to vacuum up as many dollars as possible in the interest of capital enterprise. But if our interest is health care, a simpler equation is in order. It goes by the innocuous name of "single-payer health care," and it takes the elegant form of "tax dollars in, health care out."

Given the long-drawn-out fight Obama had over a pro-corporate law secretly favored by Republicans, he might have been better off expending his energy on passing a Medicare-for-all bill.

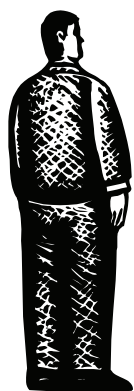
Thankfully, Obamacare's provision allowing states to design their own health care systems starting in 2017 could result in state-by-state adoptions of single-payer systems. California has twice passed legislation that would have established a single-payer system, only to be vetoed by Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2006 and 2009. Activists like Song are determined to build momentum toward that end in the next two years.

As Obama, in his weekly address, said of the Supreme Court ruling, "We strive to do better, to be better, than the generation before us, and we try to build something better for the generation coming behind us. With this behind us, let's come together and keep building something better right now." Those words ring true: Obamacare is not good enough to pass to the next generation. It's time to build something much better.

SONALI KOLHATKAR IS THE HOST AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF *UPRISING*, A DAILY RADIO PROGRAM AT KPFC PACIFICA RADIO, SOON TO BE ON FREE SPEECH TV FOR THE CAMPAIGN TO TELEVISION UPRISING). SHE IS ALSO THE DIRECTOR OF THE AFGHAN WOMEN'S MISSION, A US-BASED NON-PROFIT THAT SUPPORTS WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND CO-AUTHOR OF "BLEEDING AFGHANISTAN: WASHINGTON, WARLORDS, AND THE PROPAGANDA OF SILENCE."

Source: TruthDig 7/3/15 <http://www.truthdig.com/>

The choice ahead: a private health-insurance monopoly or a single payer



ROBERT REICH

The Supreme Court's recent blessing of Obamacare has precipitated a rush among the nation's biggest health insurers to consolidate into two or three behemoths. The result will be good for their shareholders and executives, but bad for the rest of us – who will pay through the nose for the health insurance we need. We have another choice, but before I get to it let me give you some background.

Last week, Aetna announced it would spend \$35 billion to buy rival Humana in a deal that will create the second-largest health insurer in the nation, with 33 million members. The combination will claim a large share of the insurance market in many states – 88 percent in Kansas and 58 percent in Iowa, for example. A week before Aetna's announcement, Anthem disclosed its \$47 billion offer for giant insurer Cigna. If the deal goes through, the combined firm will become the largest health insurer in America. Meanwhile, middle-sized and small insurers are being gobbled up. Centene just announced a \$6.3 billion deal to acquire Health Net. Earlier this year Anthem bought Simply Healthcare Holdings for \$800 million.

Executives say these combinations will make their companies more efficient, allowing them to gain economies of scale and squeeze waste out of the system. This is what big companies always say when they acquire rivals. Their real purpose is to give the giant health insurers more bargaining leverage over employees, consumers, state regulators, and healthcare providers (which have also been consolidating). The big health insurers have money to make these acquisitions because their Medicare businesses have been growing and Obamacare is bringing in hundreds of thousands of new

customers. They've also been cutting payrolls and squeezing more work out of their employees.

This is also why their stock values have skyrocketed. A few months ago the Standard & Poor's (S&P) 500 Managed Health Care Index hit its highest level in more than twenty years. Since 2010, the biggest for-profit insurers have outperformed the entire S&P 500. Insurers are seeking rate hikes of 20 to 40 percent for next year because they think they already have enough economic and political clout to get them.

That's not what they're telling federal and state regulators, of course. They say rate increases are necessary because people enrolling in Obamacare are sicker than they expected, and they're losing money. Remember, this an industry with rising share values and wads of cash for mergers and acquisitions.

It also has enough dough to bestow huge pay packages on its top executives. The CEOs of the five largest for-profit health insurance companies each raked in \$10 to \$15 million last year. After the mergers, the biggest insurers will have even larger profits, higher share values, and fatter pay packages for their top brass. There's abundant evidence that when health insurers merge, premiums rise. For example, Leemore Dafny, a professor at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and her two co-authors, found that after Aetna merged with Prudential HealthCare in 1999, premiums rose 7 percent higher than had the merger not occurred.

The problem isn't Obamacare. The real problem is the current patchwork of state insurance regulations, insurance commissioners, and federal regulators can't stop the tidal wave of mergers, or limit the economic and political power of the emerging giants. Which is why, ultimately, American will have to make a choice. If we continue in the direction we're headed we'll soon have a health insurance system dominated by two or three mammoth for-profit corporations capable of squeezing employees and consumers for all they're worth – and handing over the profits to their shareholders and executives.

The alternative is a government-run single payer system – such as is in place in almost every other advanced economy – dedicated to lower premiums and better care. Which do you prefer?

Source: Robert Reich's Blog 7/6/15 <http://robertreich.org>

All-American Social Security truths

MICHAEL PHELAN

There are two kinds of people who want to cut Social Security: liars, and people who believe the lies. They've heard the conservative talking points. "Social Security is going broke." "Social Security won't be there for me when I retire." "The only way to save Social Security is to cut benefits." Unfortunately, these Wall Street funded lies have gotten plenty of traction in recent years. So much so that a recent survey shows that 43 percent of young people believe that Social Security won't be there for them when they retire; no matter how much that same survey shows that these same young people want it to.

So, here are the facts:

- Social Security has a \$2.8 trillion surplus and can pay out every benefit owed to every eligible person for nearly two decades. After that, even if we do nothing, it will pay out approximately 80% of benefits owed for the next 75 years.
- Social Security has not contributed one penny to the deficit because it is independently funded by the FICA payroll tax.

- Proposed "tweaks" to Social Security would hurt seniors, disabled veterans and people with disabilities.

- All we need is to ask millionaires and billionaires to start paying into Social Security at the same rate as the rest of us and we not only extend the life of the Social Security trust fund, but we can expand benefits to the majority of Americans.

With the facts on our side, we have begun to see a dramatic shift in the national conversation around Social Security. It wasn't that long ago that we were still fighting a "chained CPI" benefit cut being proposed by President Obama, all Republicans and some Democrats in Congress. Today, 44 out of 46 Senate Democrats and 116 out of 188 House Democrats have gone on record supporting expansion. And 79% of likely voters? Democrats, Republicans and Independents? support expansion.

Action: Let your representative know that fixing Social Security means expansion.

Source: Social Security Works release 7/4/15 www.socialsecurityworks.org



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.tpmuckraker.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/worldlatest/>

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>

People's World <http://www.peoplesworld.org>



Multimillion-dollar ad campaigns aim to influence Congressional votes



MEDEA BENJAMIN

A nuclear deal with Iran could be a game changer for US foreign policy and for the Middle East. The P5+1 (the U.S., China, Russia, France and the United Kingdom, plus Germany) and Iran have been developing a comprehensive agreement that would freeze Iran's ability to create a nuclear weapon and start the process of sanctions relief.

If it succeeds, this deal would dramatically decrease the probability of another costly war in the Middle East and could usher in an historic rapprochement between the US and Iran after 34 years of hostilities.

US-Iranian collaboration against extremist groups from ISIL to Al Qaeda could help damp down the fires raging across the Middle East.

Key US allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia, oppose the deal. Both nations harbor long-standing hostilities toward Iran and both want to preserve their preferential relationship with the US. But the American people, frustrated by over a decade of US involvement in Middle East wars, support the initiative. A recent Washington Post/ABC News poll shows that 6 in 10 Americans support a plan to lift international economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for limits on its nuclear program.

Democrats back the agreement by an overwhelming majority of five to one, but even a plurality of Republican voters support the Iran nuclear deal. Why, then, will there be such a tough battle in Congress to approve a deal that the Obama administration has worked so hard to achieve and is supported by most Americans?

Some Republicans have a knee-jerk reaction to anything the Obama administration puts forth. And certain Republican and Democrat Congress members fundamentally distrust Iran, believe it is sponsoring militant groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, and think a deal will strengthen Iran to the detriment of Israel.

But the most compelling reason that so many elected officials will oppose the deal is the power of lobby groups and think tanks, backed by hawkish billionaires who are determined to quash a deal they see as bad for Israel. Little known to the public, here are some of the groups:

UNITED AGAINST NUCLEAR IRAN:

Founded in 2008, UANI boasts a bipartisan powerhouse advisory board of former politicians, intelligence officials and policy experts. Cofounders Richard Holbrooke and Dennis Ross, and its president Gary Samore, have all worked in Obama's White House. In June, UANI announced a multimillion-dollar TV, print, radio, and digital campaign with the message that "America Can't Trust Iran, Concessions

...It advocates for crippling sanctions on Iran, including medicines, as a way to cause domestic hardship and internal turmoil...

have gone too far." Mark Wallace, UANI's chairman and George Bush's US ambassador to the UN, said, "We have a multi-million-dollar budget and we are in it for the long haul. Money continues to pour in."

SECURE AMERICA NOW:

Founded in 2011 by pollsters John McLaughlin and Pat Cadell, it is linked to right-wing pro-Israel factions in the US and abroad. The Advisory Board includes Col. Richard Kemp, who denounces the "global conspiracy of propaganda aimed at the total de-legitimization of the state of Israel" and former UN Ambassador John Bolton, who insists that "the biggest threat to our national security is sitting in the White House."

The group labels Iran "the world's largest sponsor of terrorism" and recently launched its own \$1 million ad campaign against the nuclear deal. One ad features an American woman saying her father was killed by an IED in Iraq, followed by a menacing voice claiming "Iran has single-handedly supplied thousands of IEDs that have killed or maimed America's troops overseas. Today, negotiators are pushing for a nuclear deal with Iran that would give them access to nuclear weapons." It tells Americans to call their Senators and "speak out against a bad deal."

FOUNDATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES:

Founded just after the 9/11 attacks, this neoconservative think tank pushes for an aggressive military response in the Middle East and also follows a hawkish pro-Israel line. It advocates for crippling sanctions on Iran, including medicines, as a way to cause domestic hardship and internal turmoil and its experts are leading advocates for a US military strike on Iran.

AMERICAN SECURITY INITIATIVE:

This is a new group, also bipartisan, formed in 2015 by three former senators: Norm Coleman, Evan Bayh and Saxby Chambliss. In 2014 Norm Coleman, a Republican from Minnesota, became a registered lobbyist for the repressive

Saudi regime, providing the Saudis with legal services on issues including "policy developments involving Iran."

Its first campaign was a successful effort to pass the Corker-Menendez bill, which forces President Obama to submit the agreement to Congress before signing it. In March, the group launched a \$1.4 million ad campaign aimed at Senator Schumer and other key senators with the message that the deal (which had not even been released) is "great for Iran, and dangerous for us." One over-the-top, fear-mongering ad showed a suicide-bombing truck driver in an American city detonating a nuclear bomb, apparently on behalf of Iran. The message, albeit a crazy one, is that if Iran is allowed to get a nuclear weapon, it will attack the US.

AIPAC:

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee is the largest pro-Israel lobby group. AIPAC, too, has been pushing sanctions and opposing the nuclear deal. It claims that Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terror and is racing toward a nuclear weapons capability. AIPAC spends millions of dollars lobbying but its real financial clout lies with the pro-Israel Political Action Committees (PACs) it is tied to.

In addition to lobbying against a deal in Washington, over the past several years AIPAC has also been promoting state-level bills mandating divestment of public funds from foreign companies doing business with Iran.

Dozens of states have passed such bills, and many are likely to stay in place even after a nuclear deal, complicating the federal sanctions relief that is a key element of the negotiations.

What is the source of the millions of dollars now being poured into the effort to squash the nuclear deal? Most comes from a handful of super-wealthy individuals. Home Depot founder Bernard Marcus gave over \$10 million to the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. Other multimillion donors are hedge fund billionaire and Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs board member Paul Singer, and Charles Bronfman of the Seagram liquor empire and board chair of Koor Industries, one of Israel's largest investment holding companies.

The largest donor is Sheldon Adelson, a casino and business magnate who contributed almost \$100 million to conservative candidates in the 2012 presidential campaign, outspending any other individual or organization. He publicly advocated for the Obama administration to bomb Iran. Peter Beinart, a contributing editor at *The Atlantic*, said "Every Republican politician knows that Adelson conditions his checks on their Iran vote."

Congress has 30 days from the day the deal is introduced to vote in support or opposition (or 60 days if the negotiations are delayed). To block the deal, Congress needs a veto-proof majority, which is precisely what these groups and individuals are attempting to buy. "I've been around this town for about 30 years now and I've never seen foreign policy debate that is being so profoundly affected by the movement of hundreds of millions of dollars in the American political system," said former six-term Congressman Jim Slattery.

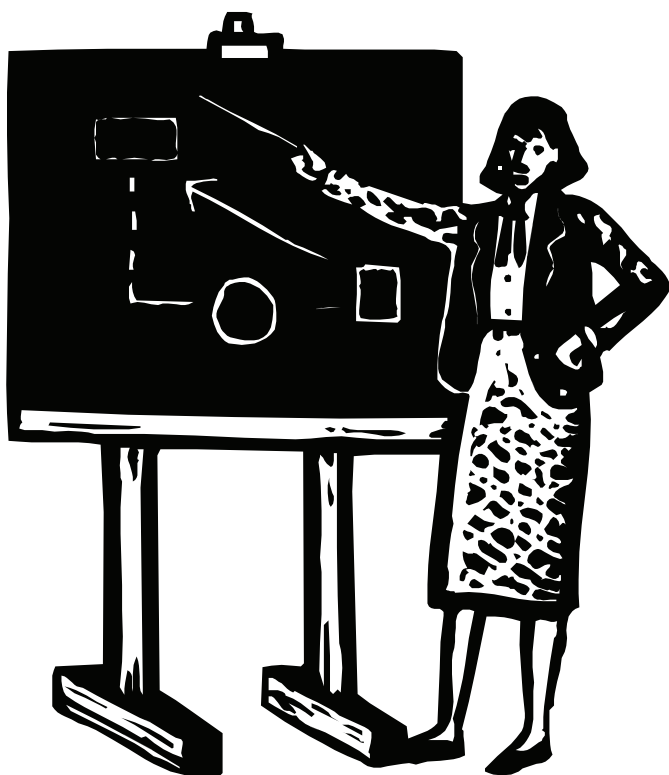
Congresspeople face a dilemma: they fear a backlash by the billionaires if they vote for the deal, but most of their constituents support the deal. The pathetic irony is that the democratic move of giving Congress a say in the Iran deal (instead of leaving the administration with the authority to seal the agreement), the billionaires have a better shot at drowning out the voices of the American people.

MEDEA BENJAMIN, COFOUNDER OF GLOBAL EXCHANGE AND CODEPINK: WOMEN FOR PEACE, IS THE AUTHOR OF *DRONE WARFARE: KILLING BY REMOTE CONTROL*. HER PREVIOUS BOOKS INCLUDE *DON'T BE AFRAID GRINGO: A HONDURAN WOMAN SPEAKS FROM THE HEART*, AND (WITH JODIE EVANS) *STOP THE NEXT WAR NOW* (INNER OCEAN ACTION GUIDE).

Source: *Telesur* 7/6/15 <http://www.telesur.tv.net/>



With Iran deal reached, now US anti-war base must mobilize



SARAH LAZARE

Now that a nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers has been reached, the U.S. anti-war base faces a critical opening to mobilize and prevent hawkish lawmakers in Congress from sabotaging a historic opportunity for military de-escalation, campaigners urged Tuesday. "It is hugely important that people who don't want war with Iran in the future speak up now in defense of the deal," Robert Naiman, policy director for Just Foreign Policy, told *Common Dreams*.

The pact between Iran, the United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the European Union—announced Tuesday—is the product of years of difficult negotiations, and decades of hostility and U.S. aggression. Public polling shows that the deal has majority support among the U.S. public. Furthermore, many from Iranian civil society have called for an agreement, which they say provides a critical path to relief from devastating sanctions, isolation, and the threat of war.

However, Congress could still derail the diplomatic process. Thanks to recently-passed legislation, the U.S. House and Senate will have 60 days to review the final agreement. If lawmakers were to vote against the deal, and amass the votes to override a presidential veto, Obama's hands would be tied on sanctions relief and the deal would sink.

Moreover, while public opinion is on the side of the agreement, opponents of diplomacy are powerful and better-funded. A shadowy network of pro-war lobby organizations is spending millions of dollars on targeted advertisements aimed at persuading lawmakers and their constituents to reject the agreement (see page 6). Furthermore, hawks from U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) to Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu are already loudly denouncing the accord.

"Congress has been hearing more from opponents of the deal, because the opposition is deeply entrenched, has lots of money, and has been doing this for a long time," Jamal Abdi of the National Iranian American Council told *Common Dreams*. "I'm confident we can change that dynamic. We can mobilize millions of Americans to advance peace." U.S.-based organizations including Just Foreign Policy, Win Without War, Peace Action, and Jewish Voice for Peace released calls to action Tuesday urging opponents of war to mobilize to protect the deal. A petition from organizations including CODEPINK and Roots Action urging "Defend the Iran deal and stop Republicans from starting a war with Iran" already has over 34,000 signatures.

Stephen Miles, advocacy director for Win Without War, declared in a press statement on Tuesday that those pushing for escalation towards Iran are using the same dangerous logic that fueled the Iraq War: "We have seen this movie before and we know how it ends. We will not stand idly by while those who pushed for war with Iraq try to push us into war with Iran."

"Our focus is on holding the Democrats in the Senate who have supported the negotiations thus far," said Abdi. "We can afford to lose five Democrats. We can lose Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) and a few others and still prevent a resolution of disapproval from passing."

In the House, 146 voting Democrats signed a letter saying they will approve the deal, added Abdi. "We want to hold those 146 and also expand that list," he explained. Campaigners note that the deal is not a sure-fire path to peace, and it will take active and engaged civil society groups and social movements to

put the United States and Iran on a real path to justice.

In an article published Tuesday in *The Intercept*, journalists Glenn Greenwald and Murtaza Hussain wrote that "much Iranian public opinion, while positive, is more nuanced and guarded," with some holding the view that the deal "unfairly impinges on Iranian sovereignty in exchange for very few legitimate concessions."

A report released last month by the New York-based International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran found that, among civil society leaders, support for the deal is strong, even among those skeptical that benefits will be fairly distributed. "For a number of years, Iran's international isolation and all the excuses for putting pressure on our country, particularly the sanctions, have destroyed the Iranian people's psychological security, and have left them preoccupied, and of course, many people have suffered direct or indirect loss," said Fakhrossadat Mohtashamipour, described in the report as a civil activist and wife of political prisoner Mostafa Tajzadeh.

Hadi Ghaemi, executive director of the New York-based International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, emphasized to *Common Dreams* that—right now—mobilizing to support the Iran deal is a critical way for U.S. civil society members to "show solidarity" with their Iranian counterparts. "In general there is a lot of relief in Iran that an agreement has been reached," said Ghaemi, emphasizing that "ordinary people have been suffering tremendously under sanctions." In addition, an agreement could open up space to open up space to focus on domestic issues of repression and inequality, said Ghaemi.

Source: *Common Dreams* 7/14/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>



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Widespread public support bolsters bill to end restrictions on abortion coverage

KATIE KLABUSICH

At the very moment that a GOP-lead House subcommittee voted to further punish those in need by slashing \$125 billion in federal food assistance funding, three Democratic congresswomen and their 70 congressional cosponsors announced the introduction of legislation this week to end 39 years of discrimination against the poor through abortion funding bans like the Hyde Amendment.

Since 1976, the annually renewed Hyde Amendment has prohibited the use of federal funds to cover abortion care for the one in six women of reproductive age (15 to 44) insured through Medicaid. Hyde, in conjunction with recent laws severely restricting or prohibiting abortion coverage in 25 states, even for some private insurance plans, has led one in four low-income US residents to carry unintended pregnancies to term against their wills.

The EACH Woman Act would nullify existing abortion coverage bans while preventing future legislation from blocking access to low-income people.

Reps. Barbara Lee (D-California), Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois), Diana DeGette (D-Colorado) and the 36 state and national organizations united under the All Above All campaign announced Wednesday that they are seeking to end this injustice and reverse the recent trend of anti-abortion legislation with the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance Act, or EACH Woman Act. The bill extends coverage to Medicaid recipients, and it also restores the constitutional right to abortion for employees of the federal government and their dependents, residents of the District of Columbia, Peace Corps volunteers, Native Americans, federal prisoners and detainees (including those detained for immigration purposes), and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollees.

The EACH Woman Act would nullify existing abortion coverage bans at the state and federal level while preventing future legislation from recreating the disparity in access between low-income people and those with means. Because the policies currently in place disproportionately punish the already disadvantaged, the primary beneficiaries of this first-of-its-kind legislation would be youth, poor residents in rural areas with additional logistical barriers to abortion care, and people of color.

"This legislation would ensure that every woman can access *all* of her health-care options, regardless of how much money she earns or where she lives," Lee said in her statement at Wednesday's press conference. "Regardless of how someone personally feels about abortion, none of us, especially elected officials, should be interfering with a woman's right to make her own health-care decision just because she is poor."

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ABORTION ACCESS

According to a new poll from Hart Research Associates conducted on behalf of All Above All, voters in nearly every demographic combination - age, party affiliation, religious background, ethnicity - agree with Lee and would support legislation like the EACH Woman Act. By a 24-point margin (59 percent to 35 percent), more voters align with the statement: "However we feel about abortion, politicians should not be allowed to deny a woman insurance coverage for it just because she is poor" than with the statement: "Using taxpayer dollars for abortions forces all of us to pay for them - even people who don't believe in abortion."

Flying in the face of ideologically motivated, well-funded legislators and anti-abortion talking heads, Americans are overwhelmingly in favor of repealing abortion funding bans or - at the very least - staying out of their neighbors' business. Double-digit majorities among Democrats (85 percent), Independents (75 percent), and Republicans (62 percent) go even further, agreeing that "as long as abortion is legal, the amount of money a woman has or does not have should not prevent her from being able to have an abortion."

With such strong support for bodily autonomy and empowerment, it's striking that funding bans have been added to every federal budget for a generation and signed by presidents of both parties. Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Illinois) was up front about the motivation for his amendment the year after it first passed, making its annual reintroduction an indictment on our elected officials and political system up to this point.

"I certainly would like to prevent, if I could legally, anybody having an abortion, a rich woman, a middle-class woman or a poor woman," Hyde said in 1977. "Unfortunately, the only vehicle available is the ... Medicaid bill."

Unable to oppress all people who might need access to an abortion, Hyde and his cohorts settled for punishing the group whose rights are always the first to get traded away: the poor. While those who regularly do without basic needs might be used to seeing their rights on the chopping block, eliminating access to abortion care has the potential to

do more than just make someone's life more difficult or uncomfortable.

Representative Schakowsky acknowledged the real-world impact of ensuring abortion care is out of reach for millions of people at Wednesday's press conference. "Roe v. Wade wasn't the beginning of abortion," she said. "It was the end of women dying from abortions."

A SMALL STEP IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

We know from US history that placing abortion out of reach for entire segments of the population has deadly effects. An estimated 5,000 people died annually in this country during abortion prohibition despite the 0.05 percent chance a medically competent, safe abortion will result in a complication of any kind requiring hospital follow-up care.

That this legacy is being addressed by elected officials in Washington after decades of stigma-reinforcing language like "safe, legal and rare" and reluctance to risk political pushback in the defense of a constitutional right makes the introduction of legislation like the EACH Woman Act a culturally monumental moment. And it's happening on the heels of anti-choice legislators having their way with hardly a whisper of pushback.

From 2010-2014 an onslaught of 231 abortion restrictions were signed into law, creating abortion clinic deserts of hundreds and even thousands of miles all over the country. This onslaught continues: bills to further limit access and increase cost were introduced in 43 states just in the first quarter of this year.

In this political climate, the introduction of legislation that recognizes the constitutional and human rights of poor people is a social justice action. "Being able to have an abortion is so much more than abortion being technically legal," said Yamani Hernandez, executive director of the National Network of Abortion Funds, one of the organizations leading the movement to end funding bans, in a conversation with Truthout.

"It's about making communities safe enough for us to raise all of our children and having the financial resources to ensure those kids are healthy and thriving," Hernandez added. "The Hyde Amendment and coverage bans that discriminate based on how much money someone has or where they live are deeply unjust, and we will continue to be the voices speaking that truth because we are fighting for the right to live our lives with dignity and autonomy."

KATIE KLABUSICH IS A WRITER, REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE ACTIVIST AND MEDIA CONTRIBUTOR.

Source: TRUTH-OUT.ORG 7/10/15



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Where are the Presidential candidates on the minimum wage?



RALPH NADER

As the 2016 campaign season gets underway, working families across the country will be very interested in where presidential candidates stand on raising the minimum wage.

Currently, the Federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour or roughly \$15,000 annually, far below the \$23,500 government's poverty threshold for a family of four. Some candidates have already made their positions on the minimum wage clear, but there are many that still have not.

Democratic primary candidates Martin O'Malley and Bernie Sanders have come out in favor of raising the minimum wage to \$15.00 over the next several years, a living wage that would lift tens of millions of individuals out of poverty. Others have remained mum on the subject, including former Virginia Senator Jim Webb and former Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chaffee.

Perhaps most glaringly silent is the front-runner, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. She has spoken many times about making sure that individuals will make enough money to survive, including most recently at the Fight for \$15 conference in June where she said, "It is wrong that so many people stand against you thinking that they can steal your wages with no consequences. That even stacks the deck higher for those at the top." However, Clinton has declined to comment on whether or not she would support a \$15 an hour minimum wage, or when she would like to see a wage hike implemented. In 2007, as a Senator, she supported raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour and in May, 2014 she finally came out in favor of raising it to \$10.10 an hour.

The Republican primary, however, has become a race to the bottom for promoting anti-working family policies. Almost all of the Republican candidates support keeping the minimum wage at \$7.25 an hour.

Some, however, have gone even farther

off the tracks. Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush has called for the elimination of the minimum wage. Anti-worker Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker has said that he doesn't think that the minimum wage "serves a purpose." Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee admits that \$7.25 is a poverty wage, but does not support raising it.

Billionaire real estate mogul Donald Trump supports creating two minimum wages, one for young workers, and a slightly higher one for older workers, so long as it doesn't create a disincentive for business development. He remains vague about specifics.

There are, however, some Republican candidates who have come out in support of raising the minimum wage. Former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum supports an increase smaller than \$10.10 an hour, and has stated that he thinks it is important that Republicans support a wage hike to reach out to the middle class. Dr. Ben Carson also supports raising the wage, although he didn't specify by how much. Carson referred to it as a way for individuals to be removed from public assistance programs.

A 2014 study by the Center for American Progress showed that raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour would cause a six percent drop in welfare enrollments, saving the American people over four billion dollars a year.

The presidential primaries will offer an opportunity for a broad debate about economic policy and income inequality. It would behoove candidates to take a strong stance on raising the minimum wage. A cost of living restoration to just \$11.00 per hour would have people making as much as workers made in 1968, adjusted for inflation.

So far this year, despite Congressional inaction, twenty states and cities are debating legislation to raise their minimum wage. Most recently, Los Angeles voted to increase its minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020 and to tie future increases to inflation. Last year,

Seattle voted to increase its wage to \$15 by 2017. Tacoma, Washington's city council will vote this fall on a wage hike that will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020 for large businesses, and 2024 for small business.

The minimum wage is not only being debated in state legislatures and city councils, but has also become a ballot issue across the country. Citizens in states and cities across the country are collecting petition signatures for ballot initiatives to raise the minimum wage.

In Maine, a group of labor and faith-based groups is pushing to put a minimum wage increase on the ballot in 2016. This is being done because the State Senate was unable to pass an increase last June.

And in 2014, four conservative states had ballot initiatives to raise their state's minimum wages. Not surprisingly, voters in South Dakota, Nebraska, Arkansas and Alaska all voted overwhelming to raise their minimum wages, with some even tying future increases to the rate of inflation. Voters nationwide also support raising the minimum wage. A survey from Hart Research last January showed that three-quarters of all

Americans support raising the minimum wage, and a poll from Gallup in 2013 showed support from over half of all Republicans for raising the minimum wage.

There is also growing conservative support for

raising the minimum wage. Supporters of a hike include former Republican Governor of Minnesota Tim Pawlenty and Illinois' Republican Governor Bruce Rauner. Even Fox News host Bill O'Reilly and conservative author Phyllis Schlafly support raising the minimum wage. Former 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney also supports raising the minimum wage, claiming, "Our party is all about more jobs and better pay."

It's time for the candidates from all parties to reject the corporate dogma that allows companies to pay exploitative wages and force their employees onto public assistance. And it is time for CEOs and members of Congress to raise the minimum wage so people can provide for themselves and for their families.

Visit timeforaraise.org <http://www.timeforaraise.org> for more information.

RALPH NADER IS A CONSUMER ADVOCATE, LAWYER, AND AUTHOR. HIS LATEST BOOK IS THE SEVENTEEN SOLUTIONS: BOLD IDEAS FOR OUR AMERICAN FUTURE. OTHER RECENT BOOKS INCLUDE, THE SEVENTEEN TRADITIONS: LESSONS FROM AN AMERICAN CHILDHOOD, GETTING STEAMED TO OVERCOME CORPORATISM: BUILD IT TOGETHER TO WIN, AND "ONLY THE SUPER-RICH CAN SAVE US" (A NOVEL).

Source: Common Dreams 7/1/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

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Trans-Pacific Partnership

Leaked trade deal draft shows big pharma's sway

OWEN DAVIS

The Obama administration has lauded the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as the most progressive trade deal in history. But a recently leaked chapter of the draft deal, obtained by Politico, reportedly shows a U.S. negotiating team devoted to protecting pharmaceutical industry profits at the expense of cheaper generic drugs in the 12 countries affected.

The provisions pushed by American trade representatives in the May version of the TPP's

intellectual property chapter included measures that would strengthen patent protections across borders, Politico reports. Known as patent linkage, these rules prevent a country from approving cheaper generic drugs if a patent-holder has filed a legal challenge in a member state.

Consumer advocates argue that patent linkage makes it harder for generic drug companies to operate abroad, meaning steeper health costs for the 800 million inhabitants of TPP countries. "It would create higher drug prices around the world," Doctors Without

Borders director of policy Rohat Malpini told Politico. "And in the U.S. too."

The Generic Pharmaceutical Association, a trade group, has estimated that using generic drugs in lieu of their brand-name competitors has saved Americans \$1.5 trillion over the last decade.

The TPP has stirred heated political debate over the past several months. President Obama waged an ultimately successful battle to lay the legislative groundwork for the deal's passage, raising the hackles of progressive politicians

like Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D.-Mass. Like most trade deals, the draft text of the TPP is not publicly available, though a steady stream of leaks has trickled out of the negotiating room.

Covering a dozen Pacific-rim nations with a combined 40 percent of world GDP, the TPP would represent one of the largest trade deals in history. Proponents say the TPP would expand trade between the U.S. and the other member states while enhancing environmental and labor protections.

In particular, the pharmaceutical industry

has argued that the patent-protection measures of the TPP would enable companies to continue making multi-billion-dollar investments in new drugs. PhRMA, the lobbying arm of the pharmaceutical industry, has emerged as one of the top supporters of the TPP and similar deals.

That lobbying has paid off. Patient advocates contend that the U.S. negotiators have fought primarily for the interests of the drug lobby in TPP negotiations. In a letter last year, representatives 11 organizations including the AARP and the Medicare

Rights Center argued that the deal "puts too much emphasis on drug industry priorities, and does not give equal weight to consumer priorities such as prescription drug affordability, safety, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness."

The leaked chapter is not final, however, as provisions are likely to evolve as TPP negotiations reach their conclusion.

Source: *International Business Times* 7/2/15 <http://www.ibtimes.com>

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3. How much water is available for export through the tunnels in a drought after prior water rights and public trust needs are met? And if there isn't any, how often will the tunnels be dry?
4. How does California Water Fix help reduce reliance on Delta imports as mandated by the 2009 Delta Reform Act?
5. The State Water Resources Control Board, the Department of Water Resources, and the Bureau of Reclamation have allowed for the waiving and weakening of Delta water quality standards for all water uses and species protections during the drought, endangering numerous Delta species and bringing some to the precipice of extinction. How can San Francisco Bay-Delta business, tourism, fishing, and farming communities trust the tunnels would be operated any better?
6. Isn't the majority of the habitat designated under California Eco Restore for mitigation for the 2008 biological opinions? Isn't that habitat for damage already done to the Delta?
7. How does a Delta tunnels-only project and less than 2000 acres of mitigation habitat comply with the 2009 Delta Reform Act "coequal goals" of water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration while protecting the Delta as a place?
8. If the North Delta diversions are better for fish, how much will the over overall "take" or "kill" numbers for endangered fish species be reduced? What can we expect in terms of reduction numbers?
9. WHERE does the water for the tunnels come from? What will that do to the source area? How long is it sustainable? Have you analyzed the economic and environmental impacts on those regions?
10. According to Dr. Jeff Michael of University of the Pacific, the estimated benefits for the project drop by \$10 billion without regulatory assurance for water deliveries. How can farmers afford such costly water and hope to maintain a profit? How much of the project will urban ratepayers and property tax payers Southern California and Silicon Valley pay for the project?

Source: *Restore the Delta* release 7/13/15 www.restorethedelta.org



TISA exposed: 'Holy Grail' of leaks reveals detailed plot for corporate takeover

DEIRDRE FULTON

Days ahead of another round of secret international negotiations, *WikiLeaks* released what it described as "a modern journalistic holy grail: the secret Core Text for the largest 'trade deal' in history." That deal is the Trade in Services Agreement, or TISA, currently being negotiated by 52 nations that together account for two-thirds of global GDP. Those nations are the United States, the 28 members of the European Union, and 23 other countries, including Turkey, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Israel. According to *WikiLeaks*, TISA "is the largest component of the United States' strategic neoliberal 'trade' treaty triumvirate," which also includes the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the TransAtlantic Trade and Investment Pact (TTIP).

"Together, the three treaties form not only a new legal order shaped for transnational corporations, but a new economic 'grand enclosure,' which excludes China and all other BRICS countries," declared *WikiLeaks* /publisher Julian Assange in a press statement. What's more, it adds, "[a]ll three treaties have been subject to stringent criticism for the lack of transparency and public consultation in their negotiation processes." The texts published Wednesday cover everything from financial services to telecommunications to migrant labor protections.

Overall, the leak provides further evidence of how "a self-selected group of mainly rich countries" plans to "bypass other governments in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and rewrite its services agreement in the interests of their corporations," reads an expert analysis penned by University of Auckland law professor Jane Kelsey. "It also makes the new risks from TISA to governments' right to regulate in their national interest much clearer."

Or, as the Our World is Not For Sale network said in a statement: "TISA is exposed as a developed countries'

corporate wish lists for services which seeks to bypass resistance from the global South to this agenda inside the WTO, and to secure an agreement on services without confronting the continued inequities on agriculture, intellectual property, cotton subsidies, and many other issues." The group has been sounding the alarm on TISA since 2013.

As *Common Dreams* reported last month, previous leaks demonstrated TISA is aimed at further privatizing and deregulating vital services, from transportation to healthcare, with a potentially devastating impact for people of the countries involved in the deal, and the world more broadly. For example, the Government Procurement (GP) annex, which covers purchasing by all government agencies of services such as construction or infrastructure maintenance, "creates an international legal regime which aims to deregulate and privatize the supply of services—which account for the majority of the economy across TISA countries," according to *WikiLeaks*.

In her analysis of that section, Third World Network legal adviser Sanya Reid Smith states that the GP text aims to "undermine the deliberate government policies of a number of developed and developing TISA countries which try to promote their domestic services companies and hence local employment including for Indigenous peoples, etc. through GP laws and policies."

Another section leaked Wednesday is TISA's Transparency Annex—but the "transparency" covered in the text has nothing to do with increasing public awareness about the corporate-friendly trade deal. In fact, *WikiLeaks* explains, "[t]he draft Annex aims to make governments more transparent to global commercial actors, creating obligations to notify and consult with transnational corporations on decisions and measures which may affect their interests."

"There is deep irony whenever governments make commitments to 'transparency' in contemporary pro-

corporate treaties that are negotiated under conditions of extraordinary secrecy," the *WikiLeaks* analysis reads. "It continues: 'Transparency' in this TISA text means ensuring that commercial interests, especially but not only transnational corporations, can access and influence government decisions that affect their interests—rights and opportunities that may not be available to local businesses or to national citizens."

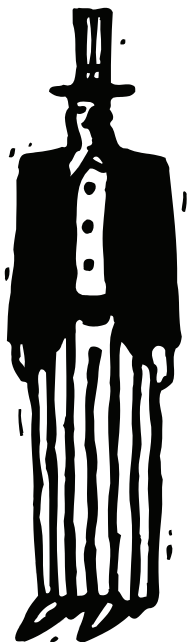
Larry Cohen, president of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), spoke to that irony in a statement published alongside the TISA leak. "Once again *WikiLeaks* reveals what we cannot learn from our own government, a government that defaults to prefer giant trade deals that effect generations of Americans shrouded in secrecy until they are virtually adopted," he said.

Referencing the Trade Promotion Authority bill signed by President Barack Obama on Monday—which will allow Obama to ram the TISA, TPP, and TTIP through Congress with minimal input from lawmakers—Cohen added: "Today's leaks...reveal once again how dangerous Fast Track authority is when it comes to protecting citizen rights vs. corporate rights. This TISA text again favors privatization over public services, limits governmental action on issues ranging from safety to the environment using trade as a smokescreen to limit citizen rights... TISA is as big a blow to our rights and freedom as the Trans Pacific Partnership and in both cases our governments secrecy is the key enabler."

Deborah James of the OWINFS network doubled-down on that sentiment: "Given the added dangers of the recently-approved Fast Track provisions which would apply to a potential TISA, we call on governments to abandon negotiations on this corporate wish list and focus on strengthening public interest regulation and the democratic process."

Source: *Common Dreams* 7/1/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

TISA leaks 2: more evidence of concerted attack on democracy



DEIRDRE FULTON

One day after it leaked a trove of documents related to the massive, pro-corporate Trade in Services Agreement

(TISA), *WikiLeaks* on Thursday published another four chapters of the proposed 52-nation trade deal, covering key areas ahead of the next negotiating round on Monday.

As with Wednesday's documents, Thursday's batch of texts reveals "a concerted attempt to place restrictions on the ability of participating governments to regulate services sectors, even where regulations are necessary to protect the privacy of domestic populations, the natural environment or the integrity of public services," *WikiLeaks* declares.

Combined with Wednesday's revelations, this week's leaks underscore how TISA "responds to major corporate lobbies' desire to deregulate services," trade expert Deborah James, of the Our World Is Not For Sale (OWINFS) network and the Center for Economic

and Policy Research, wrote on Thursday. "This leak exposes the corporate aim to use TISA to further limit the public interest regulatory capacity of democratically elected governments."

The annexes leaked Thursday—each published alongside expert analysis—relate to regulation of financial services, e-commerce, telecommunication, and maritime transport. As *WikiLeaks* puts it, the regulations together create "international legal regime which aims to deregulate and privatize the supply of services—which account for the majority of the economy across TISA countries." The analyses suggest that TISA would have sweeping implications—from rolling back financial regulations to lowering seafarers' wages to infringing on privacy rights and internet freedoms.

"As governments

around the world implement the lessons of the 2008 financial crisis by re-regulating financial firms to prevent another crisis, the leaked TISA rules could require countries—including the world's largest financial centers—to halt and even roll back financial regulations," said Ben Beachy, research director at Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch and author of the analysis on the leaked Financial Services annex. "Indeed," he continued, "TISA would expand deregulatory 'trade' rules written under the advisement of large banks before the financial crisis, requiring domestic laws to conform to the now-rejected model of extreme deregulation that led to global recession." OWINFS, which has been advocating against TISA and other so-called "free-trade" deals for years, calls the section covering

e-commerce "perhaps the most explosive."

Public Citizen lawyer Burcu Kilic, who co-authored the Electronic Commerce annex analysis, said the leak "once again demonstrates that trade negotiations are playing an important role in shaping the future of internet governance. Because these negotiations are closed, they are a poor forum for making internet policy, leading to policy that naturally favors businesses with major lobbying operations in Geneva and Washington, D.C., rather than the sort of open and multi-participant forums deciding issues on the merits we would prefer."

The *WikiLeaks* e-commerce analysis shows how TISA threatens both net neutrality and personal data privacy. "Privacy is a fundamental human right central to the maintenance of democratic societies,"

Kilic said. "TISA includes requirements that could damage privacy protections. TISA should be debated publicly, in order to ensure that adequate, express privacy safeguards are included."

The 52 nations currently negotiating TISA account for two-thirds of global GDP. Those nations are the United States, the 28 members of the European Union, and 23 other countries, including Turkey, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Israel. According to *WikiLeaks*, TISA "is the largest component of the United States' strategic neoliberal 'trade' treaty triumvirate," which also includes the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the TransAtlantic Trade and Investment Pact (TTIP).

Source: *Common Dreams* 7/2/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>



As record settlement announced over BP Gulf oil disaster, lesson is clear: clean energy now

ANDREA GERMANOS

BP and the Justice Department announced Thursday the agreement of an \$18.7 billion settlement over federal, state, and local claims stemming from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Environmental groups responded to the settlement by stressing that the damage from the 2010 oil disaster is ongoing; that the funds must be used to restore the Gulf and its communities; and that the lessons of the disaster should be heeded by moving towards a clean energy future.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch noted the historic amount of the settlement, saying in a statement: "If approved by the court, this settlement would be the largest settlement with a single entity in American history." Her statement adds that the settlement "would justly and comprehensively address outstanding federal and state claims, including Clean Water Act civil penalties and natural resource damages."

BP issued a statement laying out how the amount would be divided: a Clean Water Act civil penalty of \$5.5 billion payable over 15 years; \$7.1 billion to the United States and the five Gulf states over 15 years for natural resource damages (NRD); an additional \$232 million to be added to the NRD interest payment at the end of the payment period to cover any further natural resource damages that are unknown at

the time of the agreement; \$4.9 billion paid over 18 years to settle economic and other claims made by the five Gulf Coast states; and up to \$1 billion to resolve claims made by more than 400 local government entities.

Cynthia Sarthou, Executive Director with Gulf Restoration Network, welcomed the settlement as staving off potential years of further legal wrangling, but added: "Although \$18.7 billion is a significant sum, we have serious concerns about how much of this money is actually going to be allocated towards restoring the Gulf's environment and impacted communities."

"The funds from this settlement provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to repair the Gulf in the wake of the BP disaster and make our coasts and communities stronger and more resilient for future generations. We must not squander this opportunity," she continued.

Jordan Macha, Gulf Policy Analyst with the organization, added: "As these funds make their way to the Gulf Coast, it is important for citizens across the nation to hold our leaders accountable to ensure meaningful restoration for our communities and environment come first."

But is the settlement amount really significant for BP? Oceana's vice president for the U.S. Jacqueline Savitz stated that "it pales in comparison to what BP really owes," and

called the settlement "a disappointment to those who believe that the company should pay the full cost of the damages it caused."

Also scoffing at the amount is attorney Charlie Tebbutt, who filed a lawsuit for the Center for Biological Diversity against BP over the 2010 spill. "While \$18.7 billion looks like a lot, just remember that BP makes that amount in net profit every three months," he said. "These penalties are inadequate to deter a company of the size of BP from further criminal and negligent conduct."

While BP chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg said that "with this agreement we provide a path to closure for BP and the Gulf," the Center for Biological Diversity's Miyoko Sakashita stated: "The Gulf is still far from recovered. For the thousands of dolphins, turtles, birds and fish that died—plus the 11 men who died in the explosion—there is no coming back." Further, Sakashita stated that the administration's continuing push for expanded offshore oil drilling means another BP-like disaster could happen in the near future. "It's finally time to learn our lesson from the BP spill and all the spills that have happened since then: We need to turn away from dirty fossil fuels to energy sources that are smarter, cleaner and safer," Sakashita said.

Source: Common Dreams 7/2/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

Now is the time to eliminate fossil fuel energy



DAVID SUZUKI

What is painfully obvious to so many continues to be rejected by those who wield enormous power and influence: namely, humanity must ditch fossil fuels ... and fast.

If nothing else, the G7 countries' recent agreement to end fossil fuel use for energy by 2100 signals a shift in the way we talk and think about global warming. Previous agreements were about reducing carbon emissions from burning coal, oil and gas. This takes matters a step further by envisioning a fossil fuel-free future.

There are reasons for cynicism: the long time frame means none of the politicians involved in the commitment will even be alive, let alone held accountable, for meeting the target in 2100; Canada and Japan watered

down Germany's proposal to end fossil fuel energy by 2050; and many governments, including Canada's, haven't met even their current weak commitments. But in calling for deep emissions cuts by 2050 and an end to fossil fuel energy by 2100 -- "decarbonization" -- the non-binding pledge at least shows governments recognize the need to confront climate change.

Canada could show it takes the commitment seriously by heeding the advice of 100 scientists (including 12 Royal Society of Canada fellows, 22 U.S. National Academy of Sciences members, five Order of Canada recipients and a Nobel Prize winner, from a range of disciplines) who released a statement with 10 reasons why "No new oil sands or related infrastructure projects should proceed

unless consistent with an implemented plan to rapidly reduce carbon pollution, safeguard biodiversity, protect human health, and respect treaty rights."

According to Simon Fraser University energy economist and statement co-author Mark Jaccard, "Leading independent researchers show that significant expansion of the oil sands and similar unconventional oil sources is inconsistent with efforts to avoid potentially dangerous climate change." Another author, Northern Arizona University ecologist Tom Sisk, said it's not just about climate: "Oil sands development is industrializing and degrading some of the wildest regions of the planet, contaminating its rivers, and transforming a landscape that stores huge amounts of carbon into one that releases it."

The reasons for a moratorium include: oil sands expansion and investment are incompatible with climate protection and are slowing the shift to clean energy; monitoring and enforcement are inadequate; landscape is being contaminated and reclamation is insufficient; First Nations treaties are being violated; affordable alternatives are available; cumulative impacts have been ignored; and Canadians are demanding solutions.

Of course, it will take more than a non-binding pledge and slowing or halting oil sands expansion to avert the worst consequences of climate change. In an article in the journal / Nature / last year, eight scientists who signed the moratorium statement, including Jaccard, argued Canada and the U.S. must stop treating "oil-sands production, transportation, climate and environmental policies as separate issues, assessing each new proposal in isolation. A more coherent approach, one that evaluates all oil-sands projects in the context of broader, integrated energy and climate strategies, is sorely needed."

As part of a co-ordinated strategy, they

proposed putting a price on carbon, through a carbon tax or cap-and-trade, to "ensure that the full social costs of carbon combustion are incorporated into investment decisions about energy and infrastructure." Carbon pricing is widely accepted as an effective way to discourage fossil fuel use and encourage clean energy development.

In the future, people will look back and question why we burned such precious resources so wastefully. Fossil fuels are solar energy, concentrated over millennia and useful for numerous applications, many of which we probably haven't even discovered. Yet we've burned them largely so people, often solo drivers, can move around in tonnes of metal and plastic on land-destroying and expensive infrastructure. And we've used them to create increasing amounts of plastic packaging and unnecessary products that are now choking our oceans and land.

Moving toward zero carbon emissions -- in a much shorter timeline than agreed upon by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States -- is absolutely necessary, and not just for the climate. Eliminating fossil fuel energy will cut dangerous pollution, create new economic opportunities and ensure resources are available for wiser applications.

The words of scientists, government leaders and other experts -- and now Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama -- make it clear that it's time to turn the page on this destructive and relatively recent chapter in our history. Now we must ensure our leaders strengthen and act on their commitments.

DAVID SUZUKI IS A WELL-KNOWN CANADIAN SCIENTIST, BROADCASTER AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST.

Source: EcoWatch 7/2/15 <http://ecowatch.com>



New study exposes 'fatal flaws' in California fracking rules

NADIA PRUPIS

Affirming what environmentalists have long charged, a new study finds that hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, may be polluting the air, water, and wildlife in California—and scientists say state leaders are not doing enough to protect residents from the toxic side effects of the controversial drilling practice.

The California Council on Science and Technology on Thursday released its long-awaited final assessment on well stimulation in the state, which found that a lack of adequate testing and data have made it nearly impossible for regulatory agencies to understand what effects fracking has on the environment. The council is an independent body that advises the state government.

"The toxicity and biodegradability of more than half the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing remains uninvestigated, unmeasured, and unknown. Basic information about how these chemicals would move through the environment does not exist," the report states. "We lack information to determine if these chemicals would present a threat to human health or the environment if released to groundwater or other environmental media."

But while the study could not irrefutably find a cause-and-effect between fracking and pollution, it noted that some of the chemicals used in the process are hazardous to human health, wildlife, and the environment, among other issues.

"Operators have unrestricted use of many hazardous and uncharacterized chemicals in hydraulic fracturing," the report states, adding that "no agency has systematically investigated possible impacts." But the inconclusive nature of the findings resulted in an unambiguous judgment from the researchers: stop fracking—even just for now.

As the *Los Angeles Times* writes: "Jane Long, the report's co-lead, said officials should fully understand the toxicity and environmental profiles of all chemicals before allowing them to be used in California's oil operations....Seth Shonkoff,

lead author on the public health sections of the report, said he was surprised to learn during his research that recycled wastewater from oil fields was being used on crops. 'We've got to know what to test for ... to know that what we are putting onto the crops is safe,' he said. 'Until we have that data, I don't know how we can assure farmers and consumers that their food is safe.'"

As the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) pointed out in a press release on Thursday, "[m]illions of Californians near active oil and gas wells, which exposes them to the air pollutants identified in the report."

More than half of wastewater from fracked oil wells in the state is disposed of in more than 900 open pits throughout the state, which could pollute groundwater, the report found. Many of those pits—about one-third of which don't have proper permits—are concentrated around the San Joaquin Valley, where a majority of fracking operations take place.

CBD also noted that the report comes just a week after California Governor Jerry Brown's "oil officials" finalized new fracking regulations that do not consider adequate safeguards for public health.

"This disturbing study exposes fatal flaws in Gov. Brown's weak fracking rules," said CBD's Hollin Kretzmann. "Oil companies are fouling the air we breathe and using toxic chemicals that endanger our dwindling drinking water. The millions of people near these polluting wells need an immediate halt to fracking and other dangerous oil company practices."

Brown has also come under fire from green groups for his approach to the state's unprecedented drought, now entering its fourth year. Environmental advocates have criticized the governor's mandatory water cuts for urban customers and communities, while giving leeway to the fossil fuel and agriculture industries which together use up more than 80 percent of the state's water.

The report's "troubling findings send a clear message to Gov. Brown that it's time to ban fracking and rein in

our state's out-of-control oil industry," Kretzmann said on Thursday. "California should follow the example set by New York, which wisely banned fracking after health experts there concluded this toxic technique was just too dangerous."

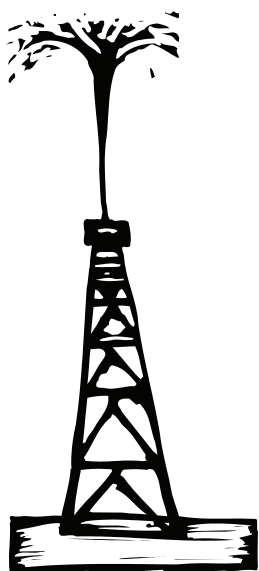
OTHER FINDINGS IN THE REPORT INCLUDE:

- Fracking uses chemicals such as strong acids, biocides, and solvents, which present "significant hazard to aquatic species and other wildlife, particularly when released into surface water";
- The health and environmental impacts of the wastewater dumped into open pits throughout the state "would be extremely difficult to predict, because there are so many possible chemicals, and the environmental profiles of many of them are unmeasured";
- Offshore oil operations are dumping wastewater directly into the ocean, which violates rules set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- California does not regulate how close a fracking well can be to schools, homes, or daycare facilities.

In response to the report, Sen. Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) said she would add an amendment to a recently introduced bill that would eliminate wastewater disposal pits. But green groups see that as only one of the necessary steps. "This study exposes California's oil producers as the polluters that they are," Andrew Grinberg, the oil and gas program manager for Clean Water Action, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "The science clearly identifies numerous threats from fracking and other oil-production activities that California's laws, regulations, enforcement and available data do not adequately address."

Source: Common Dreams 7/10/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

Water use for fracking has skyrocketed, stressing drought-ridden states



ANASTASIA PANTSIOS

Fracking operations in the U.S. have gotten thirstier in the last 15 years, consuming more than 28 times the water they did a mere 15 years ago. A new study by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in partnership with

the American Geophysical Union, shows that not only has the number of such operations grown as fracking has expanded its reach and improved technology has allowed drilling in harder to reach locations, but individual wells are consuming more water as well. The median

amount of water consumed by a single fracked well grew from 177,000 per oil and gas well in 2000 to more than 4 million gallons per oil well and 5.1 gallons per gas well in 2004. That's far more than the 671,000 gallons a year used by a conventional or vertical well. In the 52 out of 57 watersheds with the highest average water use, more than 90 percent of the wells were involved in horizontal drilling in shale gas areas.

Water consumption within a watershed where fracking takes place varied considerably, depending on the geology of the region and the location of the oil or gas deposit. Some operations in southern Illinois used as little as 2,600 gallons per well, while others in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Montana, Colorado, Arkansas and Texas used as much as 9 million gallons.

"One of the most important things we found

was that the amount of water used per well varies quite a bit, even within a single oil and gas basin," said USGS scientist Tanya Gallegos, the study's lead author. "This is important for land and resource managers, because a better understanding of the volumes of water injected for hydraulic fracturing could be a key to understanding the potential for some environmental impacts."

According to study co-author Mark Engle, the increase is due to the same improved technology that allows companies to reach more out-of-the-way deposits. Fracturing the rock formations in those areas to allow access to the gas or oil requires more fluid to be injected under pressure.

The study compiled data on the amount of water used in more than 263,859 oil and gas wells drilled between 2000 and 2014 to create the first ever map depicting

how and where hydraulic fracturing operations use water. The shale formations that coincided with watersheds where the most water was used for fracking operations including Eagle Ford and Barnett with watersheds located in Texas, Haynesville-Bossier above watersheds in Texas and Louisiana, Arkansas' Fayetteville, Oklahoma's Woodford, Tuscaloosa with watersheds located mainly in Louisiana and Mississippi, and the eastern Marcellus and Utica shale plays with watersheds in parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York.

Many of those areas have also experienced damaging droughts in the last five years due to climate change-driven global warming. So while the amount of water used in fracking is small compared to other uses such as agriculture, "The reality is there is a pretty strong constraint on

the amount of fresh water available," said Engle.

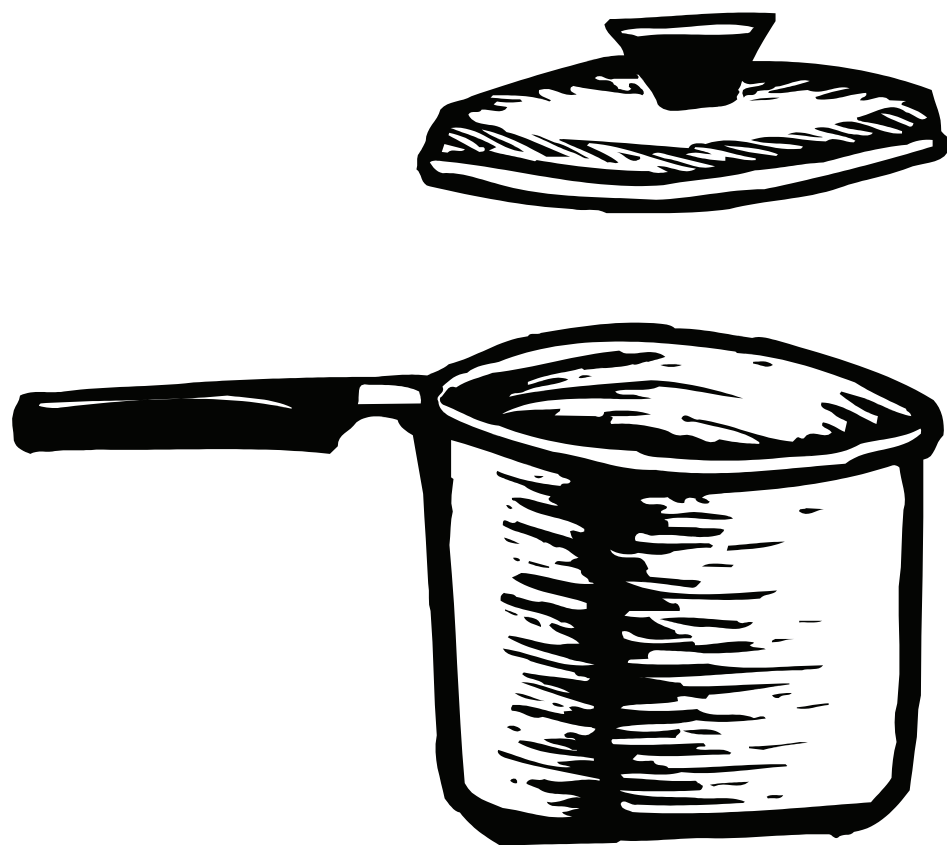
Some of the water used in drilling operations is recycled. But most of it, laden with toxic chemicals, is injected into deep underground wells where it is removed from future reuse. And, injecting fracking wastewater into underground wells has created another issues—for many of these states—earthquakes.

"This research was carried out as part of a larger effort by the USGS to understand the resource requirements and potential environmental impacts of unconventional oil and gas development," says the governmental organization. And if understanding leads to banning, as it did in New York recently, environmental advocates will cheer.

Source: EcoWatch 7/1/15 <http://ecowatch.com>



Hope vs. depression: Argentina shows Greece there may be life after default



JOSEPH STIGLITZ & MARTIN GUZMAN

When, five years ago, Greece's crisis began, Europe extended a helping hand. But it was far different from the kind of help that one would have wanted, far different from what one might have expected if there was even a bit of humanity, of European solidarity.

The initial proposals had Germany and other "rescuers" actually making a profit out of Greece's distress, charging a far, far higher interest rate than their cost of capital. Worse, they imposed conditions on Greece -- changes in its macro- and micro-policies -- that would have to be made in return for the money.

Such conditionality was a standard part of the lending practices of the IMF and the World Bank. Typically, when they imposed these conditions, they had little knowledge of the real workings of the economy; and frequently, there was more than a little politics in the demands. There was sometimes an element of neo-colonialism: the old White Europeans once again telling their former colonies what to do. More often than not, the policies didn't work as they were supposed to. There were huge discrepancies between what the Western experts expected and what actually happened.

Somehow, one expected something better of Greece's Eurozone "partner." But the demands were every bit as intrusive, and the policies and models were every bit as flawed. The disparity between what the Troika thought would happen and what has emerged has been striking -- and not because Greece didn't do what it was supposed to, but because it did, and the models were very, very flawed.

At last, after years of blackmailing Greece and demanding ever more austerity that led to a catastrophic economic depression, the Troika has finally pushed the country into the brink of default. The situation has some important similarities with Argentina's 2001 default -- and some differences as well. In both countries, recessions turned into depressions as a consequence of austerity policies -- making the debt even more unsustainable. In both cases, the policies were demanded as a condition for assistance. Both countries had rigid currency arrangements that gave them no possibility for running expansionary monetary policies during the recession. In both countries, the IMF got it wrong, providing alarmingly flawed forecasts of the consequences of the imposed policies.

Unemployment and poverty soared, and GDP plummeted. Indeed, there is even a striking similarity in the magnitude of the fall in GDP and the increase in the unemployment rate.

In Argentina, youth unemployment in particular skyrocketed and stayed high for several years. The lack of opportunities destroyed motivations and was an immense waste of the talent of millions of young people. With youth unemployment at about 50 percent in Greece, a similar saga is going on.

Defaults are difficult. But even more so is austerity. The good news for Greece is that, as Argentina showed, there may be life after debt and default. The saga that led to the Greek default reminds us time and again of important lessons for the management of sovereign debt crises that we should have learned from earlier such events. The first one is that there is no improvement in the capacity of debt repayment without economic recovery. At the same time, there is no economic recovery without a restoration of debt sustainability.

Both in Argentina and Greece, restoring debt sustainability required a deep sovereign debt restructuring. In both cases, finalizing a "good" debt restructuring, a timely and sufficiently deep restructuring conducive to economic recovery with access to international credit markets, has proven to be quixotic. This is not due to any fault on the part of the countries, but to deficiencies in the frameworks in which negotiations were carried on.

In both cases, creditor institutions pretended that sustainability could be regained through "structural adjustments." Under intense pressure, the programs that were foisted on them were accepted and implemented -- but they obviously didn't work. Exchanging "bailout" funds -- funds that were mostly used to repay the very same creditors that were providing them -- for adjustments (and promises of even bigger adjustments) spiraled into economies that got ever weaker. In the case of Argentina, after years of suffering, the people went into the streets.

In both cases, runs on the banking system ended up with a partial freezing of bank deposits, which in the case of Argentina, triggered a full-fledged banking crisis and a subsequent conversion of deposits denominated in a foreign currency into domestic currency that led to a restructuring of domestic liabilities -- at a high cost for small domestic savers. In Greece, the consequences still remain to be seen.

Debt contracts are voluntary exchanges between creditors and debtors. They are done in a context of uncertainty: when the debtor promises to repay a certain amount in the future, everyone understands that the promise is contingent on the debtor's capacity for repayment. There is risk involved -- the reason that creditors demand a larger compensation (higher interest rates) than if they were lending under no risk.

Debt restructurings are a necessary part of the lender-borrower relationship. They have occurred hundreds of times, and they will continue occurring. The way in which they are resolved determines the size of the losses. Bad management of debt crises, such as demanding austerity policies during recessions -- in spite of theory and empirical evidence showing that austerity in recessions only makes recessions deeper -- inevitably leads to larger losses and more suffering.

Those who get saved by the bailouts (as the German and French banks in the case of Greece) usually give moral hazard as the reason to avoid debt restructuring. They claim that it would create perverse incentives; other debtors would be more inclined to "abuse" borrowing by not repaying. But the moral hazard argument is a fairy tale. Both Argentina and Greece had already paid a very high price for their debt problems by the time of default. No country in the world would be happy to follow the same road.

Greece's experience also teaches us what should not be done in a debt restructuring. The country "restructured" its debt in 2012, but it did it wrong. It was not only insufficiently deep for economic recovery, but it also led to a change in the composition of debt -- from private creditors to official creditors -- making further restructurings more difficult.

To some extent, Greece faces a more complex situation than Argentina did in 2001. Argentina's default was accompanied by a large currency devaluation that made the country more competitive and that, together with the debt restructuring, provided the conditions for a sustained economic recovery. In the case of Greece, default and Grexit would require the re-implementation of a domestic currency. It's not the same to devalue an existing currency than to create a new currency in the midst of a crisis. This additional layer of uncertainty has enhanced the Troika's capacity for pressuring Tsipras's government.

When debt is unsustainable, there needs to be a fresh start. This is a basic, well-recognized principle. So far, the Troika is depriving Greece from this possibility. And there can't be a fresh start with austerity.

Last Sunday, Greek citizens chose the possibility of deciding their own destiny in a context of huge uncertainty over austerity and depression without end. Neither of the options are nice. Both could lead to even worse social disruptions. But while with one of them there is some hope, with the other there is not.

JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ IS UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. HIS MOST RECENT BOOK IS *THE PRICE OF INEQUALITY: HOW TODAY'S DIVIDED SOCIETY ENDANGERS OUR FUTURE*. AMONG HIS MANY OTHER BOOKS, HE IS THE AUTHOR OF *GLOBALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS*, *FREE FALL: AMERICA, FREE MARKETS, AND THE SINKING OF THE WORLD ECONOMY*, AND (WITH CO-AUTHOR LINDA BILMES) *THE THREE TRILLION DOLLAR WAR: THE TRUE COSTS OF THE IRAQ CONFLICT*. HE RECEIVED THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS IN 2001 FOR RESEARCH ON THE ECONOMICS OF INFORMATION.

MARTIN GUZMAN IS A POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, IN PROF. JOSEPH STIGLITZ'S "MACROECONOMIC EFFICIENCY AND STABILITY" INET RESEARCH GROUP. HE IS ALSO A CO-CHAIR OF COLUMBIA IPD'S TASKFORCE ON DEBT RESTRUCTURING AND SOVEREIGN BANKRUPTCY.

Source: *World Post* 7/1/15 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>



World food system: hunger by design



One out of six people is food insecure in San Francisco. That is true of the East Bay. It is true of California and of the U.S. It is also true of the world.

RICHARD STRONG

There is enough food for everyone but many are food insecure. The world could feed itself. if it would allow its economy and politics to do so.

Actually, instead of one food system, there are three: the industrial, traditional and the food aid systems. The industrial system really got momentum after 1950 and includes the green revolution (fertilizer/pesticide intensive), factory farming and the supporting agricultural technology. The second is the traditional system, (in which are included the 'small farms' and organic movement). And the last - the food aid system - is basically a food distributor, responding to conflicts or natural disasters.

The industrial agricultural system feeds two fifths of mankind and uses three quarters of the resources. The traditional system feeds three fifths of mankind, while using a quarter of the resources. The Quaker Institute for the Future holds that both of these food producing systems are required. The traditional system in the developing world has a greater potential for growth, since their crop yields are lower. The industrial system's increase in crop yields lasted to the late nineties and is currently more oriented toward crop protection. Each system can teach the other a pathway through very real and complex problems. Both are needed. The food aid system is a necessary expedient and, although a fraction of the size of the production systems, it effects world governance. To ensure food security moving forward, more attention needs to be paid to increasing the yields of the traditional farming system.,

The term "food insecurity" defines a lack of food access. Food insecurity means that one is unsure where her supper is coming from. One out of six people is food insecure in San Francisco. That is true of the East Bay. It is true of California and of the U.S. It is also true of the world. Consequently, five out of six people know where their supper comes from. And while they are often relatively better off than eighty years ago, they may not all be properly nourished - in fact, one in six are obese.

World population doubled in the last fifty years and,

if trends continue, will increase 35% by 2050, necessitating a further doubling of food production. Lester Brown sees current grain reserves at a thirty year low, with future crop failures, water shortages and food price spikes as the source of a major failure for world food availability in the coming fifteen years. Others say this could happen in five years.

This year is the evaluation year for Millennium Development Goals set in 2000. The National Geographic ran a year- long series on World Food last year. Their concluding five step program to feed the world included: 1. Freezing the agricultural footprint, 2. High tech. farming, 3. Efficient use of resources, 4. Diet shift, and 5. Waste reduction. These steps, although not bad, are linked to the view that only the industrial food system can fill the emerging food gap. I disagree.

Today, traditional farmers lack appropriate resources and infrastructure to increase and market the food they are now raising. The traditional system does have its own food chain including farmers's markets, subsistence barter, informal shops, weekly markets, roadside stands, and street sales.

Before the end of colonial times, the countries of south Asia and Africa were self-sufficient in food. Now they account for the 2/3 increase in food aid since 9/11. Price shocks in unstable markets are an increasing cause of hunger. One item often forgotten in the traditional food system, however, is the resilience of the subsistence farmers. In the vast agrarian societies, they perform a buffer for price spikes, a buffer missing from the growing mega-cities.

The industrial system includes the supermarket model which is expanding over the world. The model has the good effects of safer foods and doubling or tripling yields and moving food around the world, ending the classical great famines. Modern food chains, however, sacrifice food quality, diversity and nutrition for shelf life and ease of processing and preparation. The requirements of the industrial system separates Big Ag from small farmers.

The world food data base is centered around grains (also called 'staples' or 'commodities') and is oriented around trade and production figures, which don't differentiate between food systems. My favorite statement is from a book on the World Food Program: 'The U.S., in particular, bears culpability as a hegemonic actor determined to maintain the inequitable structures at the heart of global hunger.' That would include loans from the World Bank and IMF, headquartered in Washington, Loans often requiring "structural adjustment" result in debtor governments stopping agricultural training, better farm practices and building roads and storage to help small farmers in order to support export crops that generate funds that can pay off the loans. With food seen as a commodity, dependence on imported food in developing countries is an unfortunate consequence of taking the loans. The traditional farmer in the third world gets left out in the cold.

FOOD POLICIES BENEFIT THE RICH

The structures of the aid agencies and many NGOs was created by a council of grain trade groups from 22 exporting donor countries in 1967. Their policies are monitored by a 'Consultative Sub Committee on Surplus Disposal' with offices in the councils' headquarters on London. They lack both transparency and enforcement; their primary function is to support the aid-industrial complex. The main players (major agribusiness: six grain traders, four freight handlers, a few marine terminal operators and shipping companies with 53,000 ships and 137 million containers) dominate the movement of both food trade as well as food aid, creating export markets while relieving surplus gluts in wealthy countries. And while food shipped to developing countries costs 100% more than locally grown food, the price paid is of little concern for western agricultural producers - the balance will be included in the food aid loans, which further impoverishes the less developed country. Transparency and accountability might level the playing field now controlled by narrowly held, secretive interests that control world food.

Donor-driven non-governmental organizations (NGO), like the agencies, mostly buy from the traders and industrial

farms. Donors need to feel they are making a difference, which leads to picking projects with the easiest return. The influx of imported food creates a dependency on developed countries and inhibits efforts at building up local farm production. An unintended role of developed countries is to relieve corrupt leaders of newly independent nations from providing for their own food security. They might end up using their money for cars and mansions.

There are thousands of NGO's addressing the food crisis in the global South than in the North. A small number are working to help small farmers increase crop yields: agro-ecological farmer training efforts that spread knowledge of intensive, adaptive farm techniques that are scaled for easy access for individuals. Examples include La Via Campesina, Biointensive Agriculture, Oxfam and the One Acre Fund, which enables seventy private, for-profit, local seed companies to breed and sell locally-adapted seeds to farmers in Africa.

What is needed for traditional farming is the same appropriate technology that is seen in efficient cooking stoves and water treatments used for clean air and health. This would mainly be machines that don't need difficult maintenance or parts such as : a mower- crimper machine for composting weeds, small machinery used to extend hand labor on small plots, no-till seeders and small solar generators. Major steps would also be farm credit, crop insurance, land tenure and price stability. Those are interventions that could be cooperative- or government-sponsored. Several southeast Asian countries are trying to develop a regional grain storage process that would buffer price shocks. Efforts along that approach have been resisted by agribusiness lobbyists: the global World Trade Organization and the current fast tracked secret trade agreements are stacked for the northern interests.

The role faith-based communities could play to mitigate the coming food crisis might be to address the root causes of hunger. A good start might be that which is spelled out the Quaker Institute for the Future pamphlet Climate, Food and Violence. One section is labeled Deflate the Power of Corporations. It attacks corporate personhood, the citizens united decision, and supports benefit corporations laws. That section focuses the way the economy and politics are not allowing the world to feed itself, The pamphlet also advances resilient and ecological farming. That pamphlet is what got me started on this project.

World Food was a 15 minute paper given as part of a panel including Global Warming and becoming a vegan by members of the Strawberry Creek Quaker Meeting in Berkeley, CA on May 31, 2015



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Super PACs bring US into 'Wild West Era' of campaign spending

DEIRDRE FULTON

Amid early fundraising disclosures from 2016 presidential candidates—especially the staggering \$114 million haul announced Thursday by Jeb Bush's campaign—political observers are warning that the U.S. has "officially ushered in the super PAC era of presidential politics."

Super PACs, or political action committees, are outside spending groups that can raise unlimited donations from corporations and individuals alike, though candidates are not allowed to coordinate with them. They arose partly out of the 2010 *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision.

The super PAC supporting Bush, called Right to Rise, reported raising more than \$103 million between January 6 and June 30 of this year. According to the Center for Responsive Politics and OpenSecrets.org, that's four times as much money as all super PACs—combined—raised during the same period in 2011. Bush's official campaign committee, which is limited to maximum donations of \$5,400 per person, brought in a mere \$11.4 million.

Those numbers leave little doubt that Bush is at the front of the pack among his Republican rivals for the party's presidential nomination. But for *Politico* journalist Kenneth Vogel, they indicated something else, as well: "Any lingering doubts have been erased about whether the lure of seven-figure checks would be powerful enough to offset concerns about a patchwork of recently gutted – and loosely enforced – laws intended to restrict the effectiveness of unlimited political spending. In this new reality, there's less incentive for prospective commanders in chief to invest time and money in building an army of small- and medium sized donors for their campaigns, and more incentive to

cultivate a handful of billionaire backers to pour cash into supportive big-money vehicles like super PACs."

"Jeb Bush has truly taken us into the Wild West era of campaign spending, where existing campaign finance rules are to be mocked, ignored and circumvented with a wink and a nod, and where there is no limit on giving—and presumably no limit on what's being promised to the donors," echoed Public Citizen president Robert Weissman. "We can't have a functioning democracy where leading presidential candidates operate in this fashion."

The first Federal Election Commission filing deadline for presidential candidates is Wednesday, July 15, but some organizations have released their totals early. Democrat Hillary Clinton, for example, has reportedly raised \$45 million through her campaign and \$15.6 million through her super PAC. Republican Ted Cruz has racked up \$14.5 million through his campaign, and an additional \$38 million from super PACs.

Meanwhile, campaign finance reform advocate Bernie Sanders—who has said a central consideration for Supreme Court nominees should be their position on *Citizens United*—has refused a super PAC. Sanders has raised \$15 million in small contributions from 250,000 donors.

And with *Politico* reporting that "not just the money, but also the power and clout are migrating to the super PACs and away from the campaigns and especially the party committees," the call to get big money out of politics is becoming increasingly urgent.

As Public Citizen's Weissman said: "It is clearer by the day that we need a fundamental overhaul of campaign finance rules, starting with a constitutional amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United*

ruling and reestablish commonsense rules, so everybody's voice is heard." In its "2016 Money Chase" explainer published in late June, *NBC News* offered this list of the major Super PACs and which candidate they're backing:

REPUBLICANS:

Jeb Bush: Right to Rise PAC

Ben Carson: Run Ben Run and One Vote

Chris Christie: America Leads

Ted Cruz: Keep the Promise PAC, Keep the Promise PAC I, Keep the Promise PAC II, Keep the Promise PAC III

Carly Fiorina: Conservative, Authentic, Responsive, Leadership for You and America (CARLY For America)

Lindsey Graham: Security Is Strength PAC

Mike Huckabee: Pursuing America's Greatness

John Kasich: New Day for America

George Pataki: We the People - Not Washington PAC

Rand Paul: America's Liberty PAC

Rick Perry: Opportunity and Freedom PAC

Marco Rubio: Conservative Solutions PAC

Donald Trump: Citizens for Restoring USA

Scott Walker: Unintimidated PAC

DEMOCRATS:

Hillary Clinton: Priorities USA

Martin O'Malley: Generation Forward

Source: Common Dreams 7/10/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>



US: adopt new criminal justice bill

A major criminal justice reform bill introduced in the US Congress on June 25, 2015, could improve the fairness of federal prison sentencing and better protect the rights of prisoners, Human Rights Watch said today. The bill, the Safe, Accountable, Fair, Effective (SAFE) Justice Act, is sponsored by Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin and Bobby Scott of Virginia.

"Federal prisons are filled beyond capacity with people serving grotesquely long sentences," said Antonio Ginatta, US advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. "The SAFE Justice Act proposes thoughtful reforms that address some of the abuses of the 'tough on crime' era."

The SAFE Justice Act proposes reforms throughout all stages of the criminal justice process, from pretrial detention to post-confinement probation. It embraces general criminal justice principles supported by Human Rights Watch, including, for example, eligibility for retroactive application of sentence reductions. Several sections of the bill specifically propose reforms that were analyzed in several recent Human Rights

Watch reports:

- The SAFE Justice Act would reform federal sentencing statutes to promote fairer results. It would modify mandatory minimum sentences so that they exclude people whose role in a drug trafficking offense is low-level or minimal. The bill also would give judges more discretion through "safety valves" to impose sentences on drug offenders shorter than those required by mandatory minimums. And it would narrow sentencing enhancements that currently can turn a 10-year sentence into a life sentence due to prior drug crimes. With these reforms, prosecutors would no longer be able to threaten disproportionately long and unfair sentences in federal drug cases, as Human Rights Watch documented in a 2013 report.

- The bill would also make much needed changes to the federal compassionate release program. As Human Rights Watch reported in 2012, the US Bureau of Prisons has underused the compassionate release program, which allows for people in prison to be released for "extraordinary and compelling" reasons. The SAFE Justice Act

would give people in prison the right to petition a court directly for compassionate release – without requiring Bureau of Prison approval as is currently the case – and allow for a prisoner to seek compassionate release in cases involving the death or incapacitation of their child's primary caregiver.

- The SAFE Justice Act would require the US Attorney General to provide training to federal correctional staff on how to better identify and respond to people with mental disabilities under their custody as well as on de-escalation techniques for their responses. This provision is consistent with a key recommendation from a recent Human Rights Watch report on use of force against inmates with mental disabilities.

The introduction of the SAFE Justice Act in the House of Representatives follows the introduction of several reform-minded bills in the Senate, including the Smarter Sentencing Act – which would cut the length of certain mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses in half – and the flawed CORRECTIONS Act, which, as introduced,

fails to address mandatory minimum sentences and sentencing enhancements at all.

Congress should pass the SAFE Justice Act as well as additional reforms to bring federal sentencing in line with principles of proportionality, fairness, and respect for human dignity, Human Rights Watch said. "The SAFE Justice Act is not a cure-all, but a smartly crafted bill that would better align the federal prison system with its human rights obligations," Ginatta said. "It's a promising vehicle for change."

Human Rights Watch is one of the world's leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights. By focusing international attention where human rights are violated, we give voice to the oppressed and hold oppressors accountable for their crimes.

Source: Human Rights Watch (HRW) 7/2/15 <http://www.hrw.org>



Can the 2016 election be about making it work for US families?



ELAINE WEISS

As election season heats up, it's encouraging to see not only education policy in general, but early childhood education, in particular, getting serious attention. With New York City leading the way, and cities from Boston to Seattle and San Antonio working toward universal pre-k, it's becoming clear that it is, indeed, possible to scale up quality prekindergarten programs fairly quickly. We must anticipate bumps in the road, and pay close attention to ensure sustained quality. But the bottom line is that these public investments are both wise and workable.

Given the rapid changes in our country's demographics in recent years, however, and shockingly high rates of child and community poverty, conversations about early childhood investments need to be ratcheted up a few notches.

Millions of parents in states across the country work jobs that provide no time off at all to take care of their new babies. It is hard to fathom how this lays the foundation for healthy child development, let alone stable family life. Others who are searching for jobs at a time when there are five, ten, or even fifty people applying for an open position are hampered by their inability to pay for the child care that makes job hunting feasible. And if they do get the job, it is unlikely to pay enough to cover the cost of that care, which in some states now exceeds in-state college tuition rates.

Not to mention the trade-offs among such basics as food, clothing, and rent that those families will be forced to make because wages are so far behind the cost of living.

In other words, as President Obama and Hillary Clinton hint, and Bernie Sanders loudly proclaims, the United States has spent the past few decades gradually becoming the least

...a strong early start for children, sensitive and well-targeted supports for struggling parents, and new hope, with reason to believe in it — are key to reviving the middle class that is the basis for a thriving democracy...

family- and child-friendly nation in the Western world. Indeed, findings from a study of a recent cohort of kindergarten entrants — children who began school in 2010-2011, and who spent their formative early years in the throes of the Great Recession — provide stark evidence of that sobering reality. When children step foot into their kindergarten classrooms for the first time, gaps in both reading and math skills between those in the highest and lowest social class quintiles are already a full standard deviation in size. To get a sense of how enormous those gaps are, the What Works Clearinghouse estimates that it would take at least four independent, highly effective interventions to close them. Before school even starts.

This election must be about changing that reality and giving our children and their families a real future.

One initiative that is out to do just that is the Make it Work Campaign. Recognizing the depth and breadth of the day-to-day struggles millions of working American families face, Make it Work developed a three-pronged, evidence-based policy agenda to help put our country back on the right public policy footing, laying the foundations to rebuild the middle class we've been systematically chipping away at since the early 1980s.

Together, the campaign's three policy buckets — Equal Pay, Caregiving, and Work and Family — would provide a web of supports that enable parents to live dignified, productive lives, including caring for their children well. In particular, Make it Work's ambitious goals of affordable child care and accessible high-quality pre-kindergarten for all children, bolstered by living wages for the providers and educators who work with them, alleviate critical stressors for working parents and ensure that all kids get the help they need to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

While the main focus of this election must be on raising the floor for everyone, however, we can make smart, targeted investments that start to boost those with the greatest needs today. Educare Schools, which now number 18 across 14 states and Washington, DC, offer valuable lessons on how to build comprehensive birth-to-five systems of care and supports for children and their families. From Omaha, where it got its start, to

Silicon Valley, where the newest Center opens later this year, Educare "[e]mpowers some of our poorest, most vulnerable children and families to succeed through a coordinated system of home visits, high-quality care and pre-kindergarten, health and nutrition supports, and parent

engagement, all centered within those families' communities."

And these investments pay off in a big way. Research shows that children who experience Educare for a full five-year course enter elementary school with far more extensive vocabularies and stronger social skills, including self-confidence, persistence, and self-regulation, than their peers. Less touted but also critical are the benefits for parents. As one couple in Omaha described Educare to the filmmakers who produced *Ready for Kindergarten*, "This place is not just day care. It's an educational palace. ... They are providing a glimpse of hope for us to stand on our own. And one day, we will provide that same help."

These ingredients — a strong early start for children, sensitive and well-targeted supports for struggling parents, and new hope, with reason to believe in it — are key to reviving the middle class that is the basis for a thriving democracy. As we enter this election season, we must stand with candidates who call out the policies and policymakers that have devastated that middle class for too long. We must urge them to Make it Work for all of us. And we must insist on more investments in programs like Educare. Anything less would constitute a loss before the first vote is cast.

ELAINE WEISS IS A CONTRIBUTOR TO CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE.

Source: Campaign for America's Future 7/5/15 <http://ourfuture.org>



Contact Your Reps

Pres. Barack H. Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202-456-1414; www.whitehouse.gov ; Twitter: @BarackObama, @whitehouse

Sen. Barbara Boxer, 70 Washington Street, Suite 203, Oakland, CA 94607, 510-286-8537, fax 202-224-0454; 112 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510. 202-224-3553, senator@boxer.senate.gov ; Twitter: @senatorboxer

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 ; Twitter: @senfeinstein

Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-9th District) 2222 Grand Canal Blvd #7, Stockton, CA 95207. 209-476-8552. Fax 209-476-8587. 1210 Longworth HOB, Washington DC 20515; info@jerrymcnerney.org, 202-225-1947, <http://www.JerryMcNerney.org> ; Twitter: @RepMcNerney

Rep. Tom McClintock (R-District 4), 8700 Auburn-Folsom Road, Suite 100, Granite Bay, CA 95746, 916, 786-5560, fax 916-786-6364; 434 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC, 20515, Fax 202-225-5444, Fax 202-225-544 ; Twitter @RepMcClintock

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

State Sen. Cathleen Galgiani (District 5), 31 E Channel St, Room 440, Stockton, CA 95202. 209-948-7930; State Capitol, Rm 4082, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-651-4005

Assemblyperson Susan Talamantes Eggman (District 5), 31 E. Channel St., Rm. 306, Stockton CA 95202, 209-948-7479



Saturday, Aug 22 | 11am to 7pm

Stockton Pride Festival in its Fourth Year at Oak Grove Regional Park

Free for all ages. In its 4th year, the Stockton Pride Festival will once again have a full day of entertainment at Oak Grove Regional Park, Saturday, August 22, 2015 from 11am - 7pm. Come out and show your pride with the rest of the community. This year's festival features local and national vendors, kids activities, free entertainment all day, food, drinks, and so much more. To emphasize the community's strength through diversity, this year's organizing committee has put together an event that highlights the best of San

Joaquin County.

CELEBRATING FAMILY

For the first time ever, Stockton Pride will feature a Rainbow Reading session with regional LGBT authors and local celebrities reading empowering books with subjects ranging from diversity, being bullied and finding acceptance for one's uniqueness. Rainbow Reading will feature Lodi author Mags Baker (author of Michael and Me), John Paul Padilla (author of Johnny Big-Ears and Suzy Chunkles) and Gayle E. Pitman (author of This Day in June, a book concept inspired during Pitman's time attending Stockton's very first pride festival).

CELEBRATING REGIONAL WINE

Each year we attempt to improve our festival experience and this year we think we are bringing the right amount of sophistication and unique Valley experiences by teaming up with a host of local vintners and offering wine tasting and pairing them with delicious treats that complement the best wine our region has to offer.

CELEBRATING ONE BEAT, ONE LOVE

Stockton Pride is excited to partner up with SF Bay Area's Plural Music to create a unique live dance cage experience

that will run from 1 pm to 6 pm. A very special guest during Plural's session will be local DJ legend Ricco Rossi from Club Paradise of yesteryear.

San Joaquin Pride Center Executive Director, Nicholas Hatten, says, "This year, I am excited to announce KWIN as a new festival partner. With KWIN's participation, our new features like the wine tasting and Rainbow Reading, plus our soon to be announced entertainment roster, 2015 is going to be our best festival yet. Emphasizing our diversity means we highlight the best of Stockton and San Joaquin County. I can't wait."

ABOUT STOCKTON PRIDE

Stockton Pride is the 4th Annual LGBT Pride Festival for the City of Stockton, County of San Joaquin and surrounding areas. The purpose of the festival is to celebrate diversity and educate the public about the importance of respect, tolerance and equality. Produced by the nonprofit organization, San Joaquin Pride Center, all proceeds from the festival go to accomplishing the Pride Center's goals of providing the tools and resources needed for LGBT people to overcome the challenges they face, flourish to their highest potential, and reach out to the larger community to promote acceptance and equality for all.

Delta Sierra-Group general meetings

Caring for water and hiking the Sierra



Note: Monthly Sierra Club meetings are really interesting, open to everyone (whether you are a Sierra Club member or not), and are always held in the Fireside Room of Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton across from the UOP Tower. Welcome!

Monday, August 24, 2015 7:00 pm

Caring for our Waterways

Kathy Grant, Coordinator of the City of Lodi's Watershed Program, will present an evening program focused on the importance of citizen participation and involvement in the stewardship of our local waterways. Beginning with an overview of storm water permit requirements that all California cities face, participants will learn how they can help their community cleanup their rivers and beaches at the largest international cleanup event, known locally as the California Coastal Cleanup, held the third Saturday of every September. Please join us to learn more.

Monday, September 28, 2015

Hiking the Highway 108 Corridor

Kathi Joye will be sharing her hiking experiences at a presentation about the area included in her book, Day Hikes Along the Highway 108 Corridor. She highlights trails in the area from Knights Ferry to the East side of Sonora Pass and includes not only trails in the high Sierra Nevada (along Highway 108), but lower elevation trails found in Sonora, Jamestown, Chinese Camp and Knights Ferry. She covers hikes that are all located near features such as waterfalls and peaks, and historical or geologic points of interest. Kathi has been an avid hiker since high school, and has hiked and backpacked in this area since 1985. She has taught science courses to students from 4th grade up through college.

September 20, 2015

Second Annual Celebrate International Day of Peace in Stockton

The United Nations General Assembly declared, in a resolution sponsored by the United Kingdom and Costa Rica, the International Day of Peace, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace. The initial celebration was September 21, 1982.

Friends for Peace, a Peace and Justice Network of San Joaquin affiliate group, created the first annual Celebrate International Day of Peace in Stockton on Sunday, September 21, 2014. 150 people meditated at noon in several locations, and many attended the afternoon Community Rhythm Circle and Peace Potluck.

Sunday, September 20, 2015 will be our second annual Celebrate International Day of Peace in Stockton. Here is the schedule; all activities are free.

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Meditation and Prayer in many locations throughout Stockton. The first step to creating world peace is for each individual to develop inner peace. As one person's inner peace grows, she or he starts to interact differently with others and they benefit too; and this ripples outward, spreading peace. Meditation and prayer build inner peace and are familiar to many people, so we have chosen them for our focus. At the end of this article is a list of meditation locations that are already confirmed; more will be added later and announced on the Facebook page Friends for Peace.

We are also reaching out to many places of worship with the hope that they will include a prayer for international peace in their service.

The rest of the day's activities will be at New School Aikido, 1010 W. Fremont St., Stockton. You are welcome for part or all of the afternoon.

12:45 PM Peace Potluck. Bring a dish to pass if you can. Enjoy the fellowship of others who are also interested in inner peace and world peace. Bid in our silent auction, which will offer primarily local holistic healing sessions.

1:30 PM Welcome. Friends for Peace focuses on creating opportunities for people of all ages in our community to engage in activities that nurture inner peace. We'll tell you about other activities we sponsor, share brief excerpts from our 2015 Peace Essay contest at two local elementary schools, and introduce our special speaker, John Kinyon.

2:00 PM John Kinyon. John is a speaker, author, and teacher of communication that integrates compassion and mindfulness. He is co-founder and developer of the Mediate Your Life training program, which is based in the international work of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), developed by Marshall Rosenberg. The essence of the training is to facilitate empathic connection in

conversations within oneself, with others, and between others that leads to collaboration and peaceful resolutions. John is co-author of the book, Choosing Peace: New Ways to Communicate to Reduce Stress, Create Connection, and Resolve Conflict. He leads trainings in different parts of the U.S. and also internationally in Asia, Europe, and Australia. We are very excited to have him with us in Stockton for the International Day of Peace.

4:00 PM Community Rhythm Circle. Bring a drum or other rhythm maker if you have one, we will have extras there in case you don't. No experience is necessary. Follow the rhythm of your drum and your own heart to your inner place of peace!

If you have any questions, we can reach us at friends4peace.stockton@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing many of you! Peace, Friends for Peace.

MEDITATION LOCATIONS CONFIRMED TO DATE:

New School Aikido, 1010 W. Fremont, Stockton, CA.

The Studio behind Green's Nutrition, 1906 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA

Unity of Stockton, 2027 W. March, Stockton, CA

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, 2737 Pacific Ave., Stockton, CA



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

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

FRI-SUN

JULY 24-26

"The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" Fri, Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. Alfred H. Muller Studio Theatre, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Last Days tells the story of a courtroom drama set in Purgatory, aimed at determining whether or not Judas ought to be released from Hell. Directed by Greg Foro Recommended for ages 13 & up. \$10-12.

SAT, JULY 25

The Brothers Grimm 1 pm Tillie Lewis Theatre, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$6 general, \$3 under 13

SAT, JULY 27

Zoo Tots, 9:30-10:30 am, Micke Grove Zoo, 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd. Lodi. (209) 331-2138.

TUES, JULY 28

The Tunnels Public Hearing, 3-5:30 pm. Show Governor Brown how many people oppose the Delta Tunnels. Stockton bus leaves 1:30 209-475-9550

WED, JULY 29

Concerts in the Park: Valley Concert Band, Victory Park, 1001 North Pershing Ave, Stockton 6 - 8 pm. Spend an evening in Victory park with your favorite person, a picnic, and some free great music.

THURS, JULY 30

Medicare Turns 50 Rally. 11 am, Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. (see page 1) Info: (209) 242-2254 or savage1599@gmail.com

SAT, AUG 1

Run for Water, 8 - 10 am. UOP, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton All proceeds benefit Bear Creek Water, a continuous project to save the lives of children through raising money by recycling plastic bottles and aluminum cans to cover the cost of drilling wells in developing countries. A child dies every 22 seconds from preventable, water-related diseases. You can help! \$30 registration. 209-712-7868 Gleason Park Electric Violin Ensemble at The Haggin Museum, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, Students who live in the Gleason Park neighborhood have the opportunity to play the electric violin and be part of an ensemble that performs at public events throughout the year. Their motto is ?violins not violence.? 2 pm. First Saturday free admission. Info: 940-6315 or education@hagginmuseum.org

hagginmuseum.org

SUN, AUG 2

Toys for Critters, 9:30-10:30 am. Bring your family to make toys and treats for our family! Enrichments are items that help keep our zoo animal ambassadors happy, healthy, and engaged. Meet some of the education animals up close and with the help of education and zoo staff, create something special for the animals and watch your work be appreciated by the critters! Micke Grove Zoo, 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd. Lodi. \$8 member, \$10 non-member. \$5 parking. (209) 331-2138.

MON, AUG 3

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm. Family Resource & Referral Center, 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton.

WED, AUG 5

Concerts in the Park: RB/X, Victory Park, 1001 North Pershing Ave, Stockton 6 - 8 pm. Spend an evening in Victory park with your favorite person, a picnic, and some free great music.

THURS, AUG 6

Hiroshima 70th year comemoration event. Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, Vasco Road at Pattersib Pass Road, Livermore. 925-443-7148 (see page 3) Randi Sandoli Jazz Quartet at The Haggin Museum, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, 7 pm Jazz pianist and composer Randy Sandoli graduated from Pacific's Conservatory of Music in 2010 and has since been teaching at the Zion Academy of Music and performing in cities from Seattle to San Diego. Randy is currently sharing original music from his 2015 debut album release, Gettin' Goin'?. \$8 adult, \$7 senior over 64, \$5 youth 10-17. Under 10 free with adult. Info: (209) 940-6315 or education@hagginmuseum.org.

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

TUES, AUG 11

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 5:30 - 7 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

WED, AUG 12

Concerts in the Park: Nick Isaak, Victory Park, 1001 North Pershing Ave, Stockton 6 - 8 pm. Spend an evening

in Victory park with your favorite person, a picnic, and some free great music.

FRI, AUG 14

Lodi Blues and Brews Festival, 6 - 10 pm. Enjoy excellent music along with 20 plus craft brewers. Ticket includes commemorative beer glass, up to 8 samples of craft beer, light appetizers, access to great local food vendors and live blues music! Age 21 and up only. \$25 advance, \$30 door, \$10 sober driver. Hutchins Street Square, 125 S Hutchins St, Lodi 209-333-5550

SAT, AUG 15

Zoo After Dark, 8 -10 pm, Micke Grove Zoo, 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd. Lodi. Brings together the best parts of a camping trip: creative activities, exciting wildlife, sounds of the night under a starry sky, and hot cocoa and marshmallow toasted S'mores all topped off with fireside storytelling. For date night or the perfect family outing, it does not get any better than this fun-filled after hours program. Open to children ages 5 and up. Registration is required-- register online today. Parking is included in registration. Registration may be completed online through midnight the Thursday before each program date. Limited space is available. \$12 non-member, \$10 zoo member. (209) 331-2138.

WED, AUG 19

Concerts in the Park: Waterloo, Victory Park, 1001 North Pershing Ave, Stockton 6 - 8 pm. Spend an evening in Victory park with your favorite person, a picnic, and some free great music.

THURS, AUG 20

Folk and acoustic guitar with Tamara Phelan at The Haggin Museum, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, 7 pm. Blending lovely three part harmonies, poetic yet down to earth lyrics, and great acoustic instrumentation, Tamara Phelan's music is an artful distillation of life in America. With Tamara on tenor guitar, Steve McLane on six-string guitar, and Ken Rabirot on bass, this trio makes outstanding music. \$8 adult, \$7 senior over 64, \$5 youth 10-17. Under 10 free with adult. Info: (209) 940-6315 or education@hagginmuseum.org.

SAT, AUG 22

4th annual Stockton Pride at Oak Grove Regional Park, 11 am - 7 pm. Come stand proud and celebrate with us-

plenty of food, music, LGBT info booths, drag shows and emore. (see page 18). <http://www.stocktonpride.com/>

MON, AUG 24

Delta Sierra Club meeting presents: Caring for our Waterways, with Kathy Grant, Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton across from the UOP Tower. Open to everyone whether you are a Sierra Club member or not. (see page 18)

TUES, AUG 25

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 5:30 - 7 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

THUR - SUN SEPT 2 - 27

Young Frankenstein. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton. This electrifying musical comedy adaptation of Mel Brooks' legendarily funny film comes from the creators of the record-breaking Broadway sensation The Producers. Every bit as relevant to audience members who will remember the original as it will be to newcomers, Young Frankenstein is scientifically proven, monstrously good entertainment which will leave you in stitches! \$15 - \$25. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

THURS, SEPT 3

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 6:30 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

MON, SEPT 7

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm. Family Resource & Referral Center, 509 W. Weber Ave., Stockton.

TUES, SEPT 8

89.5 Valley Community Radio meeting, 5:30 - 7 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

SUN, SEPT 13

Stockton Symphony Preview with Peter Jaffe at The Haggin Museum, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, 3-4 pm. Maestro Peter Jaffe explores the origins of orchestral masterpieces with musical sketches and insights into this season's selections. The season includes an all-Beethoven program, Copland's Rodeo, Dukas' The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Mozart's Eine kleine Nachtmusik as well as

Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Respighi, and Mendelssohn's confection A Midsummer Night's Dream. A post-talk question and answer session is always an engaging portion of this Haggin tradition. \$8 adult, \$7 senior over 64, \$5 youth 10-17. Under 10 free with adult. Info: (209) 940-6315 or education@hagginmuseum.org.

THURS, SEPT 17

Ms. Lizzie and Her Cadillac Kings at The Haggin Museum, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, 7 pm. Ms. Lizzie & Her Cadillac Kings have quickly become a favorite on the Central Valley music scene. With their selection of pop hits, jumping blues and red hot rockabilly, this group of musicians is always a crowd-pleaser. \$8 adult, \$7 senior over 64, \$5 youth 10-17. Under 10 free with adult. Info: (209) 940-6315 or education@hagginmuseum.org.

SUN, SEPT 20

Second Annual Celebrate International Day of Peace, 11:30 am - 4 pm. Various locations in Stockton (see page 20).

THURS, SEPT 24

2015 Peace Potluck at Pacific: An International Peace Feast, 5 pm to 6:15 pm Bechtel International Center, 3547 Baxter Walkway, Stockton. Join us for an internationally inspired, multi-ethnic potluck dinner and hear moving stories about the challenges and triumphs of working for peace around the world. Admission is free. All are welcome. Bring a dish, a donation or both. All proceeds will go to charitable peace organizations. Sponsored by Religious and Spiritual Life, the Council of University Social Entrepreneurs, and the Newman Catholic Community

SAT, SEPT 26

San Joaquin Bike Festival, UOP DeRosa University Center, 3600 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Join hundreds of families and singles for this fun, family tradition. 9 am - 2 pm (details on page 18). Info: www.sjbikefest.org; or call (209) 969.3875.

MON, SEPT 28

Delta Sierra Club meeting presents: Hiking the Highway 108 Corridor, with Kathi Joye, Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton across from the UOP Tower. Open to everyone whether you are a Sierra Club member or not. (see page 18)

FIRST MONDAY

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, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

THIRD TUESDAYS

CA Disclose group - getting the money out of politics. 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

FOURTH TUESDAYS

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

SECOND THURSDAYS

Single Payer San Joaquin meeting, 6:30 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. bailey_hcasj@sbcglobal.net Stockton Astronomical Society, 7:30 pm. Olson Hall, Room 120, UOP, Stockton.

THIRD THURSDAYS

Central Valley Wellstone Progressives, Meeting info: Rose Roach, 209-474-8496

FOURTH SATURDAYS

Greater Lodi Area Democrats (GLAD) Breakfast 8:15am, meeting 8:45am, Richmaid Restaurant, 100 N. Cherokee Lane, Lodi, info 209-747-8339 or Cindy.harris.ca@gmail.com

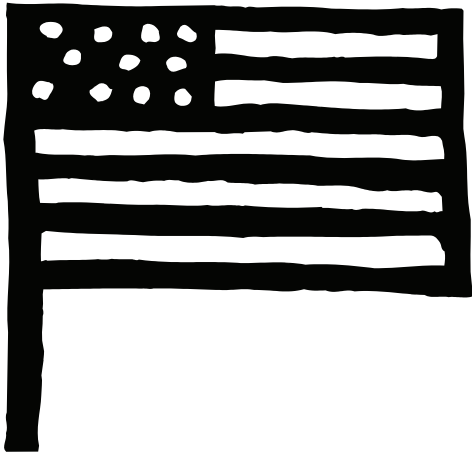
MONDAYS

Student jam sessions hosted by the Pacific Jazz Combos, 7-9 pm, Valley Brew, 157 Adams St, Stockton. Free.

THURS-SAT

Live Music at Mile Wine Company, 2113 Pacific Ave, 7:30 - 10:30 pm. From sultry jazz to a guy with a guitar, we mix it up at Mile Wine Company. 465-9463. paul@milewinecompany.com

Why not?



BERNIE SANDERS

Our job is not to think small. It is to think big.

The United States is the wealthiest nation in the history of the world. Why are we so far behind so many other countries when it comes to meeting the needs of working families and the American middle class?

Why doesn't every American have access to healthcare as a basic right?

Why can't every American who is qualified get a higher education, regardless of family income?

Why can't we have full employment at a decent living wage?

Why must many older Americans be forced to choose between paying for food, shelter, or medical care?

Why can't working parents have access to affordable, high-quality childcare?

We should be asking questions like these every day. We have more billionaires in this country than any other nation on earth. We also have more child poverty than any other major industrialized nation. We have the highest rate of student debt. We have more prisoners, more homeless people and more economic inequality.

It doesn't have to be this way. These conditions are the result of deliberate policy decisions. We provide outrageous tax loopholes for billionaires and large corporations. The top tax rate is less than half of what it was during the postwar economic boom. The real minimum wage has fallen dramatically since the 1960s. We can make better choices. Let's look at some of the issues that matter most to the American people:

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

35 million Americans still lack health insurance. Millions of others are under-insured, with high deductibles and copayments that can make needed medical treatment unaffordable.

We are the only major industrialized country in the world that does not provide universal health care for all its citizens. Medicare is much more cost-effective than private insurers, and could serve as the foundation for a single-payer system like those in Great Britain, Spain, Norway, Italy, Iceland and Portugal. Other countries, including Japan, France, Germany, Canada and Denmark, provide universal coverage without a single-payer system but with better controls on costs and service. If these countries can provide universal health care, why can't we?

TUITION-FREE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Student debt has reached crisis proportions in this country. 41 million Americans are burdened with student debt. Student debt has surpassed credit card debt and is now the second-largest source of personal indebtedness in this country. People who graduated in 2014 with student debt

owed an average of \$30,000 each. That's unsustainable, and unforgivable. College tuition is free in Germany, even for citizens of other countries. It's also free in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Iceland, and Mexico. If they can do it, why can't we? Why do we accept a situation where hundreds of thousands of qualified people are unable to go to college because their families don't have enough money?

PAID FAMILY LEAVE

We are the only major nation in the world that doesn't guarantee paid time off for new parents. Of 182 nations that do provide paid leave, more than half guarantee at least 14 weeks off. In Great Britain, new mothers get 40 weeks of paid leave. 70 percent of countries offer paid leave to new fathers as well. Dads get two weeks of paid leave in Great Britain, Denmark, and Austria. We are a nation that prides itself on its dedication to family values. Why can't we ensure that new parents have time to bond with their children?

SICK LEAVE

Even when working Americans face a serious disease like cancer, they have no guarantee of paid sick leave. The average worker in other developed countries is guaranteed paid sick leave for long-term cancer treatment, for periods that range from 22 days in Canada to 44 days in Germany and 50 days in Norway. We are the only one of 22 wealthy nations that does not guarantee some type of paid sick leave. When will we join the rest of the world in ensuring that ailing workers can get well without going broke?

PAID VACATION

We are the only advanced economy, and one of only 13 nations in the entire world, that doesn't guarantee workers a paid vacation. Workers in France get an entire month of paid time off every year. Scandinavian workers are guaranteed 25 paid vacation days per year. In Germany the figure is 20 days, and Japan and Canada each guarantee 10 paid vacation days per year. It's common (although not guaranteed) for higher-paid American workers to get some vacation time. But half of all low-wage workers in this country get no paid time off at all.

OVERWORK

Americans are overworked in other ways, too. Despite huge increases in productivity over the last 100 years, Americans continue to work some of the longest hours on earth. Vast majorities of working people (85.8 percent of men and 66.5 percent of women) work more than 40 hours per week. Compare that to a country like Norway, where only 23 percent of males and 8 percent of females work more than 40 hours per week.

Every year Americans work 137 hours more than Japanese workers, 260 hours more than British workers, and 499 hours (62.3 days) more than French workers -- despite the fact that productivity has risen 400 percent since 1950!

Other countries are moving in the opposite direction. Spain, Norway, and the Netherlands have all shortened their workweeks to 35 hours. Interestingly, those countries have higher productivity than those with a 40-hour workweek.

We're also spending more years of our life at work. Millions of Americans are delaying retirement -- and, in some cases, working until the day they die. Polls have shown that a third of Americans are afraid they will never be able to retire.

INEQUALITY

We're lagging behind in other areas too, ranging from childcare costs to internet access. We can and must do better. That means addressing the great economic, political, and moral issue of our time: wealth and income inequality. We have more inequality today than at any time since 1928. That is unacceptable. We must send a simple message to the billionaire class: You can't have it all. They will argue, of course. So will the politicians who serve them. They will insist that we can't do better, that we can't have the same basic rights as citizens of other countries. It's time to ask them, and ourselves, a simple but very important question: Why not?

Source: Reader Supported News 7/1/15 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

AUG/SEPT CALENDAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

WEDNESDAYS

Concerts in the Park: Victory Park, 1001 North Pershing Ave, Stockton 6 - 8 pm. Free. 7/22 Swingaires; 7/29 Valley Concert Band; 8/5 RB/X; 8/12 Nick Isaak; 8/19 Waterloo

THURSDAYS

Peace demonstration, 5-6 pm, edge of Delta campus on Pacific, across from Macy's. Free parking at mall. Weekly since 2003. We have signs, or bring your own. We get LOTS of honks! Info 464-3326.

Take Five Jazz club, 7 - 9 pm, Valley Brew

FRIDAYS

Jazz Jam at Whirlow's, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. Enjoy a live jazz jam session! Bring your

instruments and join the jam! Featuring Philip Bailey. 1926 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 466-2823 whirlowl@aol.com Free cover.

SATURDAYS

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

Free Yoga in Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton. Bring your yoga mat or beach towel and positive attitude for a free yoga experience every Saturday! khubaka@yahoo.com

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