



YOU DO NOT BECOME A DISSIDENT JUST BECAUSE...

"You do not become a 'dissident' just because you decide one day to take up this most unusual career," Vaclav Havel said, when he battled the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. "You are thrown into it by your personal sense of responsibility, combined with a complex set of external circumstances. You are cast out of the existing structures and placed in a position of conflict with them. It begins as an attempt to do your work well, and ends with being branded an enemy of society. ...

The dissident does not operate in the realm of genuine power at all. The dissident is not seeking power. The dissident has no desire for office and does not gather votes. The dissident does not attempt to charm the public. The dissident offers nothing and promises nothing. The dissident can offer, if anything, only his or her own skin -- and the dissident offers it solely because the dissident has no other way of affirming the truth he or she stands for. The dissident's actions simply articulate his or her dignity as a citizen, regardless of the cost."

We have the capacity to say no, to refuse to cooperate. Any boycott or demonstration, any occupation or sit-in, any strike, any act of obstruction or sabotage, any refusal to pay taxes, any fast, any popular movement and any act of civil disobedience ignites the soul of the rebel and exposes the dead hand of authority. It is only this refusal to cooperate that will save us.

"There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop," Mario Savio said in 1964. "And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all."

Rebellion in the face of tyranny is its own justification. Rebellion allows us to be free and independent human beings. Rebellion chips away, however imperceptibly, at the edifice of the oppressor and sustains the flames of empathy, solidarity, hope and finally love. And in moments of profound human despair these flames, no matter how dim, are monumental. They keep alive the capacity to be human. We must become, as Camus said, so absolutely free that "existence is an act of rebellion." Once we attain that freedom we discover that rebellion is not defined by what it achieves, but by who we become. Those who do not rebel in our age of totalitarian capitalism, those who convince themselves that there is no alternative to collaboration with corporate tyranny are complicit in their own enslavement. They commit spiritual and moral suicide. They extinguish hope. They become the living dead. No one Ottawa or Washington will halt the rise of the most sophisticated security and surveillance state in human history. The corporate coup is over. And they have won.

It is up to us. We are the people we have been waiting for. I do not know if we can build a better society. I do not

even know if we will survive as a species. But I know these corporate forces have us by the throat. And they have my children by the throat. I do not fight fascists because I will win. I fight fascists because they are fascists. And this is a fight that in the face of the overwhelming forces against us requires us to find in all acts of sustained rebellion the embers of life, an intrinsic meaning that lies outside of certain success. It requires us to at once grasp reality and then refuse to allow this reality to paralyze us. It is, and I say this to people of all creeds or no creeds, to make an absurd leap of faith, to believe, despite all empirical evidence around us, that good always draws to it the good, that the fight for life always goes somewhere. We do not know where. The Buddhists call it karma. And in these sustained acts of resistance we make it possible to reclaim a future for the generations that come after us, a future that the corporate state, if not overthrown, will obliterate.

SUBMITTED BY ALAN WILLARD

Second Fridays  
Summer ArtSplash

The Summer ArtSplash returns for its fourth year this Friday, May 8 from 5 pm - 8 pm. The ArtSplash takes place on the second Friday of May - October in downtown Stockton at various venues. Admission is free!

Venues include:

- Mexican Heritage Center, 111 S. Sutter
- Kress Lobby, 20 N. Sutter Street
- Elks Building (2nd floor patio), 42 N. Sutter
- The Downtown Transit Center, 421 E Weber Ave
- San Joaquin Pride Center, 109 N. Sutter St
- County Admin Building, 44 N. San Joaquin St
- B& M Building by Janet Leigh Plaza (west and north sides), 125 Bridge Place

Dates:

- Friday, June 12
- Friday, July 10
- Friday, August 14
- Friday, September 11
- Friday, October 9

For more info, contact  
dibsonart@yahoo.com or 464-6868

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

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

SAVE THE DATES

JUNE 13 2ND SATURDAY BIKE RIDE	P9
JUNE 20 JUNETEENTH	P18
MAY 3 DELTA FUSION	P18

CONTENTS

TRADE A BIG DEAL	P4-5
SUPPORT IRAN TALKS	P6-7
END GOV'T SPYING	P8

POVERTY PROGRAMS WORK	P8
SHELL INTO THE ARTIC	P10
A SANDERS MOVEMENT	P16
REDUCE GLOBAL INEQUALITY	P20

# A progressive voice for change



BRUCE GIUDICI

## Editors Letter

Like well-worn movie plots, the issues of the day are predictable and enduring. Police brutality, corporate control of trade, war in the Middle East, government spying, drilling for oil in the wilderness, income inequality - the headlines are timeless, from anytime in the past 50 years. We are so familiar with the issues, we recognize the common theme running through it all, the theme of control by a few powerful actors over nature and people. It is a disempowerment of the majority that persists through the workings of a market economy driven by profit. In the process of efficiently dispatching the weak, market forces decide who lives or dies, either as individuals or as part of living communities.

Our protection against

the harsh market lies in communities that organize to counter the overwhelming strength of financial power. Rarely does any individual with conviction, intelligence and courage step forward to lead the less powerful majority into battle. Such individuals are generally shut down by media ridicule, personal shortcomings or - in extreme cases - assassination, before their message can be fully delivered. The message delivered by such individuals - Martin Luther King Jr, Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy, George McGovern, Jesse Jackson, Ralph Nader, and now, Bernie Sanders - is one of community empowerment. Calling the beast by name, the current flag bearer Sanders can remind citizens of the reason behind much of the world's problems. Yes - we can feed the world, save endangered

habitats and species, stop war and live in peace; these are choices that can be made communally, through negotiation and agreement between mutually respectful parties. It happens in a world where the wealth, income and decision-making power is more equally shared than is now the case - not in a world in which the top .1% holds 50% of the world's wealth. Democratic empowerment begins with financial empowerment - themes that run through every story in this Connections issue.

Change is possible - and it starts by naming the problems. With a principled spokesperson like Bernie Sanders, progressives have a voice in the 2016 presidential discussion. That voice deserves to be heard, for this is not merely a political campaign, but the beginning of a movement addressing enduring issues of peace and justice. Keep it alive - and continue the push forward.

*Happy Summer!*

## May 26

## Masood Cajee to speak at LCW event

Annual meeting members and the public are invited to the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County (LWVJC) on Tuesday May 26, 2015 at 5:30p.m. at the Stockton Hilton, 2323 Grand Canal Boulevard, Stockton CA 95207.

The guest speakers will be local dentist Dr. Masood Cajee, who will speak on behalf of the Library and how the community can get involved in strengthening the Library after years of fiscal difficulties. On the the board of the Library & Literacy Foundation for San Joaquin County and as Chair of Strong Libraries Strong Communities, Masood is working toward a ballot measure that will support Stockton's county library system. During the 41st annual National Library Legislative Day, Masood was awarded the 2015 White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIST) Award.

Suzy Daveluy, newly appointed Deputy of Community Services for the Library (called City Librarian?), will talk about her vision for the Library now that the City is emerging from bankruptcy.

The schedule of the evening is 5:30 registration, 6:00 dinner, 6:30 speakers followed by a business meeting. Please refer to our website: [www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org) for cost, reservation and meal choices. The cost of the event is \$40.00 for each person attending. Checks may be made payable



to LWVJC and mailed to: The League of Women Voters of Joaquin County, PO Box 4548, Stockton CA 95204. All reservations made must be paid or cancelled by May 20, 2015

The Stockton Hilton is located between Pershing Avenue and I-5 (E/W) and March Lane and Alpine (N/S). Adequate parking either in the parking lot or on the street. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County, PO Box 4548, Stockton CA 95204



## 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>

## CONNECTIONS

**Editor:** Bruce Giudici, 786-3109; [bgiudici@caltel.com](mailto:bgiudici@caltel.com)

**Layout:** Luis Gonzalez, [lrg.lxxxvii@gmail.com](mailto:lrg.lxxxvii@gmail.com)

**Proofreader:** Debbie Cousyn

**Ad Rep:** Vacant

**Distribution Coordinators:** Deane and Marcia Savage, 209-242-2254

**Distribution Site:** Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton

**Distributors:** Suzy Arnett, Harold Bell, Antoinette Celle, Caly Chhin, Clarence Edwards, Daniel Fong, Catherine Hourcade, Christie Kelley, Tenaya Ledeux, Catherine Mathis, John Minnehan, Heather Ryan, Deane and Marcia Savage, Richard Slezak, Julie Vaughn, Patrick Wall, Jim Walsh

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

**Circulation:** 8,000

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



## Peace & Justice Network Board of Directors

**Chair:** Richard Blackston

**Vice-Chair:**

Christie Kelley

**Treasurer:** Deane Savage

**Secretary:** Cathy Mathis

**Members—at-large:**

Margie Brown, Daniel Fong, Tenaya Ledeux, Paula Leveck, Bruce Giudici

**Organizational members:**

89.5 Stone Soup Radio (Cathy Mathis), Fathers & Families (Jim Walsh), Puentes (Richard Blackston), Single Payer San Joaquin (Suzy Arnett), CARA (Jerry Bailey)

"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."





# Suddenly, Baltimore – wonder why?

RALPH NADER

Suddenly, The Atlantic pays attention to the reporting by the Baltimore Sun of police brutality in Baltimore against people and communities of color. "A grandmother's bones were broken. A pregnant woman was violently thrown to the ground. Millions of dollars were paid out to numerous victims of police brutality."

Suddenly, the Washington Post reports that life expectancy in 15 Baltimore neighborhoods, including the one where the innocent, young Freddie Gray lived (slain by the police for making eye contact and running) is shorter than in North Korea! The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health gets press for concluding that Baltimore teens between 15 and 19 years old face poorer health conditions and a bleaker economic outlook than those in economically distressed cities in Nigeria, India, China and South Africa.

Suddenly, the aggressive arresting

practices of the local police and their climate of constant fear are the subject of detailed media presentations. Interviews with grieving, frightened residents in the neighborhoods shock viewers who are unfamiliar with Baltimore. Suddenly, viewers and readers come to the realization that these people of color are all human beings who for too long have had their plight overlooked and ignored.

Baltimore is an example of the harsh conditions created by a combination of white flight and loss of economic opportunities due to a shift of manufacturing off our shores to those of other countries that will allow their citizens to work for a smattering of pennies (facilitated by trade agreements like NAFTA and the World Trade Organization). The gap between rich and poor, between visibility and invisibility, is one of the largest in the country—a recurrent tale of two cities in modern America.

Suddenly, we see major reporting on the thousands of lead-poisoned children

in Baltimore. Ruth Ann Norton, executive director of the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, says "a child who was poisoned with lead [from lead-based paint] is seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system."

Our first black president laments the cycle of poverty, but calls protestors who destroyed property, not lives, "thugs." This is the same president who has spent tens of billions of dollars illegally attacking communities with civilians ("collateral damage") in foreign countries. Such monies could have rebuilt our devastated cities, promoted programs and employment to help those in need in these very cities, and enforced laws against the corrupt political officials, and commercial and street predators who profit from the powerless poor and exploit poverty programs.

West Baltimore received a visit from the new Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, who said "we're here to hold your hands and provide support," without specifying resources beyond helping the city improve its police department.

Hundreds of pages in newspapers and hundreds of hours of television time were devoted to cover what the Reverend Donte L. Hickman Sr. called "the deterioration, dilapidation and disinvestment."

And what brought the media attention? A couple hundred young men smashing windows and burning some stores, buildings and cars. Young men like Freddie Gray die

often at the hands of some violent police in America's inner cities without any subsequent media coverage or remedial action, but it took protests, civil unrest and fires to finally illuminate the interest of the nation's media. How shameful! And how predictable will be the inevitable official inaction by the ruling classes once the embers dim, leaving the neighborhoods in despair.

When the poor neighborhoods of Washington, D.C. erupted in 1968, the great FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson said: "a riot is somebody talking. A riot is a man crying out: listen to me, mister. There's something I've been trying to tell you, and you are not listening."

If the plutocrats of America do not wake up to the daily, acidic results of excessive greed coupled with excessive concentration of power over the people, they will be fomenting what they abhor the most—cascading instability and disruption. In their parlance—that's bad for business.

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 5/9/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

## White and black and blue: in 49 of 50 cities, cops whiter than the communities they "serve"

ABBY ZIMET

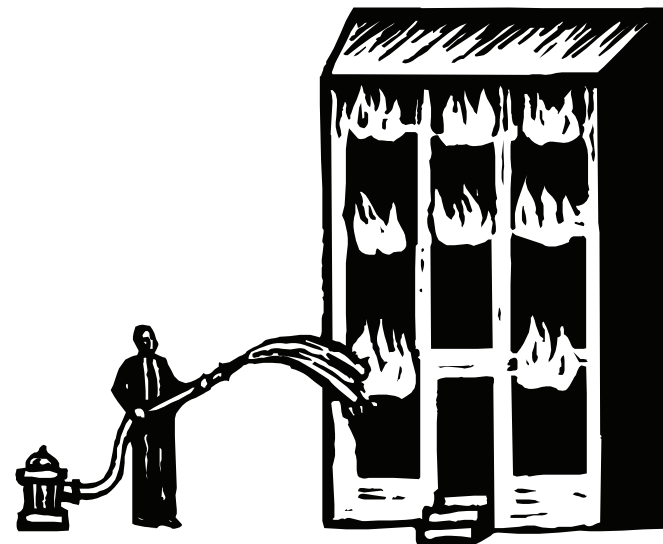
Stunning visuals in a sweeping new report from the Center for Public Integrity offer one vital if unsurprising reason that police abuses - in Chicago, Cleveland, and Baltimore - are rampant across the country: In all but one of 50 big American cities, largely white cops are policing largely black communities, with all the ensuing ethnic and racial differences that demographic gap suggests. The one exception is Atlanta, where reverse racial ratios - 35% of cops are white and 58%, slightly higher than the population, are people of color. The report features charts that show the most notable discrepancies in cities with large communities of people of color. In Baltimore, whites are 28% of the population but 50% of police; Philadelphia has 37% white population but 58% white cops; in Sacramento, whites comprise just 36% of residents but 72% of police. Another study finds another key source of racial estrangement: Out of the 75 largest cities, about half

of African-American and Latino police live in the cities they serve, while just 35% of white cops - in Detroit, make that 8% - do. So much for any shared sense of empathy, commonality or community.

Police departments, it's often noted, have made some strides toward education and diversity. And in an admittedly backhand sort of accommodation, they have proved to be equal-opportunity abusers - of the mentally ill, including "combative" children, of other cops who happen to be black, and of poor whites. Thus do white residents of Baltimore's so-called Pigtown say of police who don't necessarily see color, "We all get treated the same - badly....It's a poverty thing." At the same time, many charge the institutional racism of the policing culture is so powerful it often even poisons black cops, to whom "the color blue becomes more important than black and white." Meanwhile, the sometimes Israeli-trained forces to whom they give their allegiance become ever more militarized into a modern-day domestic counter-

insurgency army that views the residents they "serve" as enemy combatants. The 1968 Kerner Commission, appointed after riots in Los Angeles, Chicago, Newark, and Detroit, reported that to many blacks, "police have come to symbolize white power, white racism and white repression." It further warned that an "abrasive relationship between police and the minority communities has been a major - and explosive - source of grievance, tension, and disorder." After 45-plus years, after Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray ad nauseum, heartbreakingly little has changed. At her fiery press conference, Baltimore state's attorney Marilyn Mosby told the righteously furious of her community, "Our time is now." And really, if not now, when?

Source: Common Dreams 5/6/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>



## Talking It Through

EDUCATION • ENVIRONMENT • POLITICS • CULTURE

Peace & Justice Network Sponsors two Half-Hour Shows:

"Let's Talk" documentaries of important community meetings and events. **Mondays, 6pm.**

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

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

For up to the minute listings of current shows, see our website [www.pjnsjc.org](http://www.pjnsjc.org), click on Talking it Through.



# Trans-Pacific Partnership and the trade deficit

DEAN BAKER

The jump in the March trade deficit, coupled with the weak job numbers for the last two months, should highlight the importance of including rules on currency in trade agreements. Such rules could ensure that the dollar does not remain over-valued and prevent the economy from reaching full employment.

## ECONOMICS BACKGROUND

The basic story would be fairly simple if so many people did not deliberately try to confuse issues. There are four types of demand in the economy, consumption, investment, government spending and net exports. Note that the category is "net exports," not exports.

The point is that we create demand for the economy as a whole when we export more goods and services than we import. If we import more than we export, which means we run a trade deficit, then we are actually losing demand from trade. Our current trade deficit of more than \$500 billion a year has the same effect on demand in our economy as if consumers took \$500 billion from their paychecks each year and stuffed it under their mattress rather than spend it. This money is creating demand in other countries, not in the United States.

This trade deficit takes on more importance in light of the recent GDP and jobs data. There were many economists who were convinced that the economy was taking off. They were looking at the strong GDP growth of the second and third quarter of 2014 and the 300k rate of monthly job growth in the last four months of 2014. Looking at these data, many economists argued the Fed would soon have to raise interest rates to slow growth and prevent inflation.

Fewer people would likely make this case today. GDP

growth in the first quarter was just 0.2 percent. Furthermore, with the March trade deficit coming in much higher than had been expected, the growth number will almost certainly be revised downward into negative territory. While weather clearly was a big factor, it is difficult to imagine first quarter growth would have been very strong even with better weather.

The jobs numbers have also been considerably weaker than in the fall. While weather was also a big factor behind weak March job numbers, even taking March and April together the pace of job growth was just over 150,000 a month. It will take us several more years to get back to full employment with this rate of jobs growth.

This is relevant to the Trans Pacific-Partnership (TPP) because it is difficult to see any force in the domestic economy that can spur enough growth to offset a high and rising trade deficit. In spite of what you hear from many economists (you know, the type that couldn't see an \$8 trillion housing bubble), consumption is actually high relative to income. The share of income that is being consumed is higher now than at any point in the last seven decades, except when consumption was driven by the ephemeral wealth from the stock and housing bubbles.

Investment is also near its long-term average as a share of GDP. It is difficult to tell a story as to why we should expect a large uptick in investment from current levels, although there is some room for growth in housing construction.

We could see more government spending, which would boost economic growth, but for political reasons that doesn't appear likely. If Congress were prepared to embrace a plan for major spending on infrastructure, health care and clean energy, that could get us back to full employment, but not many people would bet on that prospect.

This leaves us with trade. If we don't see a large reduction in our trade deficit there is no plausible way in which labor

markets will tighten enough to allow workers to see real wages and get their share of economic growth. The TPP matters in this story because it provides a venue through which we could see a reduction in the trade deficit, if the deal included rules on currency values.

Currency values are central in the story of trade. When the dollar rises in value against other currencies, it makes goods and services produced in the United States more expensive. As a result we buy more imports because they are cheaper and our exports fall because they are more expensive. This is why the trade deficit has grown. The rise in the dollar in the second half of 2014 has priced many of our goods out of the market.

The TPP gave the United States an opportunity to address the problem of an over-valued dollar, but President Obama chose not to take it. This failure would likely condemn us to many more years of weak labor markets in which workers lack the bargaining power to secure their share of economic growth.

President Obama may pretend to be outraged that his allies on other issues are not supporting him on the TPP, but he surely knows basic economics. His trade deal is a step towards locking in large trade deficits and high unemployment. No one should be surprised that those who care about working people don't want to go along for this ride.

DEAN BAKER IS A MACROECONOMIST AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH IN WASHINGTON, DC. HE PREVIOUSLY WORKED AS A SENIOR ECONOMIST AT THE ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE AND AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY. HE IS A REGULAR TRUTHOUT COLUMNIST AND A MEMBER OF TRUTHOUT'S BOARD OF ADVISERS.

Source: Truthout 5/11/15 <http://truth-out.org>

# Trans Pacific Partnership fiasco hurts American workers: Obama and Nike

ROBERT REICH

In early May, President Obama chose Nike headquarters in Oregon to deliver a defense of his proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. It was an odd choice of venue. Nike isn't the solution to the problem of stagnant wages in America. Nike is the problem.

It's true that over the past two years Nike has added 2,000 good-paying professional jobs at its Oregon headquarters, fulfilling the requirements of a controversial tax break it wrangled from the state legislature. That's good for Nike's new design, research and marketing employees.

Just before the President spoke, Nike announced that if the Trans Pacific Partnership is enacted, Nike would "accelerate development of new advanced manufacturing methods and a domestic supply chain to support U.S. based manufacturing," thereby creating as many as 10,000 more American jobs. But that would still be only a tiny fraction of Nike's global workforce. While Nike makes some shoe components in the United States, it hasn't assembled shoes here since 1984.

Americans made only 1 percent of the value of Nike products that generated Nike's \$27.8 billion revenue last year. And Nike is moving ever more of its production abroad. Last year, a third of Nike's remaining 13,922 American production workers were laid off. Most of Nike's products are made by 990,000 workers in low-wage countries whose abysmal working conditions have made Nike a symbol of global sweatshop labor.

As wages have risen in China, Nike has switched most of its production to Vietnam where wages are less than 60 cents an hour. Almost 340,000 workers cut and assemble Nike products there.

In other words, Nike is a global corporation with no

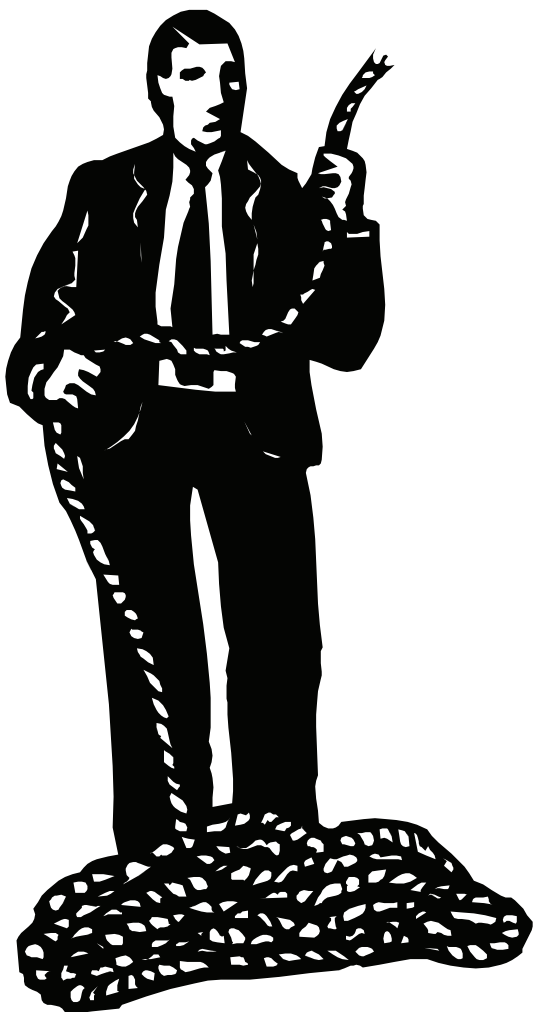
particular loyalty or connection to the United States. Its loyalty is to its global shareholders. I'm not faulting Nike. Nike is only playing by the rules. I'm faulting the rules.

In case you hadn't noticed, America has a huge and growing problem of inequality. Most Americans are earning no more than the typical American earned thirty years ago, adjusted for inflation – even though the U.S. economy is almost twice as large as it was then. Since then, almost all the economic gains have gone to the top.

The President is angry at Democrats who won't support this trade deal. He should be angry at Republicans who haven't supported American workers. Their obduracy has worsened the potential impact of the deal. Congressional Republicans have refused to raise the minimum wage (whose inflation-adjusted value is now almost 25 percent lower than it was in 1968), expand unemployment benefits, invest in job training, enlarge the Earned Income Tax Credit, improve the nation's infrastructure, or expand access to public higher education.

They've embraced budget austerity that has slowed job and wage growth. And they've continued to push "trickle-down" economics – keeping tax rates low for America's richest, protecting their tax loopholes, and fighting off any attempt to raise taxes on wealthy inheritances to their level before 2000. Now they – and the President – want a huge trade agreement that protects corporate investors but will lead to even more off-shoring of low-skilled American jobs.

The Trans Pacific Trade Partnership's investor protections will make it safer for firms to relocate abroad – the Cato Institute describes such protections as "lowering the risk premium" on offshoring – thereby reducing corporate incentives to keep jobs in America and upgrade the skills of



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





# TPP undermines rule of law, say 5 legal scholars



JUDITH RESNIK, CRUZ REYNOSO, HONORABLE H. LEE SAROKIN, JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ AND LAURENCE H. TRIBE

*Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leader Pelosi:*

We write out of grave concern about a document we have not been able to see. Although it has not been made available publicly, we understand that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement currently being negotiated includes Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions. ISDS allows foreign investors—and only foreign investors—to avoid the courts and instead to argue to a special, private tribunal that they believe certain government actions diminish the value of their investments.

Courts are central institutions in the rule of law. Americans have much to be proud of in the evolution of our court system, which has evolved over the centuries and now provides equal access for all persons. Courts enable the public to observe the processes of development of law and to watch impartial and accountable decision-makers render judgments.

## ALTERNATIVE "JUSTICE"

We write because of our concern that what we know about ISDS does not match what courts can provide. Those advocating using this alternative in lieu of our court system bear the burden of demonstrating why such an exit is necessary, and how the alternate system will safeguard the ideals enshrined in our courts. Thus far, the proponents of ISDS have failed to meet that burden. Therefore, before any ISDS provisions are included in the TPP or any future agreements, including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), their content should be disclosed and their purposes vetted in public so that debate can be had about whether and if such provisions should be part of proposed treaties. Below, we detail the ways in which ISDS departs from the justice opportunities that U.S. courts provide.

Our legal system rests on the conviction that every individual, regardless of wealth or power, has an equal right to bring a case to court. To protect and uphold the rule of law, our ideals of fairness and justice must apply in all situations

and equally to everyone. ISDS, in contrast, is a system built on differential access. ISDS provides a separate legal system available only to certain investors who are authorized to exit the American legal system. Only foreign investors may bring claims under ISDS provisions. This option is not offered to nations, domestic investors, or civil society groups alleging violations of treaty obligations. Under ISDS regimes, foreign investors alone are granted legal rights unavailable to others – freed from the rulings and procedures of domestic courts.

ISDS also risks undermining democratic norms because laws and regulations enacted by democratically-elected officials are put at risk in a process insulated from democratic input.

Equal application of the law is another critically important hallmark of our legal system—one that is secured through the orderly development of law. Court decisions are subject to appeal, ensuring that conflicting lower court decisions are resolved by a higher authority. Judges also must follow legal precedent. The goal is uniform application of the law regardless of which judge or court hears a case. This law development allows people, entities, and nations alike to order their behavior according to well-established legal principles.

In contrast, ISDS does not build in the development of the law. An ISDS arbitral panel's decision cannot be appealed to a court. The ISDS provisions of which we are aware provide only limited—private—review through a process called annulment that does not permit decisions to be set aside based even on a “manifest error of law.” Moreover, ISDS arbitrators, like other arbitrators, do not make law because their decisions have no precedential value, and ISDS arbitrators in turn are not obliged to follow precedent in reaching their own decisions.

None of the hallmarks of our court system would be possible without a fair and independent judiciary. Federal judges take an oath to uphold the Constitution and are nominated and confirmed by our democratically elected representatives. State judges likewise commit themselves to upholding the constitutional order. In contrast, ISDS arbitrators are not public servants but private arbitrators. In many cases, there is a revolving door between serving on ISDS arbitration panels and representing corporations bringing ISDS claims. Yet, although such a situation would seem to call for more—not less—oversight and accountability, ISDS arbitrators' decisions are functionally unreviewable.

## PAST ERRORS

As noted at the outset, we have not been able to read the terms of the proposed ISDS chapters for the upcoming TPP and TTIP treaties. But what we know from the past gives us many grounds for concern. During the past few years, foreign investors have used ISDS to challenge a broad range of policies aimed at protecting the environment, improving public health and safety, and regulating industry. These challenges have been around the world, including under trade agreements to which the United States is a party. The publicly available information about these challenges raises serious questions as to whether the United States should be entering into more ISDS agreements with a broad array of

nations.

Pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly's pending ISDS proceedings against Canada provide an example of how corporations have used ISDS to challenge a nation's laws outside the courtroom. After a Canadian court invalidated one of Lilly's patents, the company initiated ISDS proceedings against Canada under Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).<sup>2</sup> In seeking \$500 million (Canadian), Lilly has challenged as violative of NAFTA the standard the nation uses for granting patents.

Although ISDS tribunals are not empowered to order injunctive relief, the threat and expense of ISDS proceedings have forced nations to abandon important public policies. In the third ISDS proceeding brought under NAFTA, Ethyl Corporation brought an ISDS proceeding against Canada for \$251 million for implementing a ban on a toxic gasoline additive. The proceeding took place not in a court, but before an arbitration panel of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). After the arbitration panel rejected Canada's argument that Ethyl lacked standing to bring the challenge, Canada settled the suit for \$13 million. Moreover, Canada lifted the ban on the toxic additive as part of the settlement.<sup>3</sup>

It is particularly noteworthy that the three NAFTA countries are each in the top 11 most-challenged countries under the ISDS system. This high rate of challenge in our view has little to do with a rule of law deficit in the U.S. and Canada. Instead, it represents investors taking advantage of easy access to a special legal right available only to them in an alternate legal system.

ISDS weakens the rule of law by removing the procedural protections of the legal system and using a system of adjudication with limited accountability and review. It is antithetical to the fair, public, and effective legal system that all Americans expect and deserve.

Proponents of ISDS have failed to explain why our legal system is inadequate to the task. For the reasons cited above, we urge you to uphold the best ideals of our legal system and ensure ISDS is excluded from upcoming trade agreements.

*Sincerely,*

**Judith Resnik, Arthur Liman Professor of Law, Yale Law School**

**Cruz Reynoso, Professor of Law Emeritus, UC Davis School of Law, Former Associate, Justice of the California Supreme Court**

**Honorable H. Lee Sarokin, Former United States Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit**

**Joseph E. Stiglitz, University Professor, Columbia University**

**Laurence H. Tribe, Carl M. Loeb University Professor, Harvard Law School**

*Source: Reader Supported News 5/9/15 <http://readersupportednews.org>*

# Obama and Nike

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Americans. Those same investor protections will allow global corporations to sue the United States or any other country that raises its health, safety, environmental, or labor standards, for any lost profits due to those standards. But there's nothing in the deal to protect the incomes of Americans.

We know that when Americans displaced from manufacturing jobs join the glut of Americans competing for jobs that can't be replaced by lower-wage workers abroad – personal service jobs in retail, restaurant, hotel, hospital, child care, and elder care – all lower-skilled workers face downward pressure on wages.

Jobs being lost to imports pay Americans higher wages

than the jobs left behind. Government data show wages in import-competing industries (e.g. manufacturing jobs) beat those in exporting industries overall.

Without a higher minimum wage, an expanded Earned Income Tax Credit, affordable higher education, and a world-class system of job retraining – financed by higher taxes on the wealthy winners in the American economy – most Americans will continue to experience stagnant or declining wages.

Instead, the Trans Pacific Partnership – which includes twelve nations, including Vietnam, but would be open for every nation to join – would lock us into an expanded version of the very policies that have failed most American for the past twenty years.

No doubt Nike is supporting the TPP. It would allow

Nike to import its Vietnamese and Malaysian-made goods more cheaply. But don't expect those savings to translate into lower prices for American consumers. As it is, Nike spends less than \$10 for every pair of \$100-plus shoes it sells in the U.S.

Needless to say, the TPP wouldn't require Nike to pay its Vietnamese workers more. Nikes' workers are not paid enough to buy the shoes they make much less buy U.S. exported goods. Nike may be the perfect example of life under TPP, but that is not a future many Americans would choose.

*Source: Robert Reich's Blog 5/9/15 <http://robertreich.org>*



# Non-violent protests against Israeli war



GLORIA FEARN

Samira and Dr. Ayman Damen opened their home in Stockton and served an elegant Palestinian dinner for an appreciative crowd of about 70 or 80 Palestinian rights activists on Saturday, April 11th. The guest of honor, Iyad Burnat, spoke about current conditions in his home village of Bil'in, Palestine.

Iyad talked about the "war against children." He related how Palestinian children as young as 10 are often taken from their beds in the middle of the night by the IDF and held in adult prisons where their parents cannot visit. Iyad believes that this is done to terrify children and their parents so that they will be more passive.

Two days earlier when Iyad arrived at SFO, he heard that his brother had been arrested and his nephew beaten. The soldiers came into the village at night, shot tear gas canisters at Iyad's house and other homes in the area. Then they filled the area with a foul smelling 'skunk spray,' shot from water canons. Iyad emphasized that the tear gas canisters are made in the United States and paid for with American taxes. They are often shot at close range directly at people, both adults and children. These canisters have been responsible for many Palestinian deaths.

This year, live ammunition and rubber-coated bullets are also causing many civilian deaths. His own young son was recently injured near his home while returning from a demonstration. The child now needs expensive medical support services. His son's

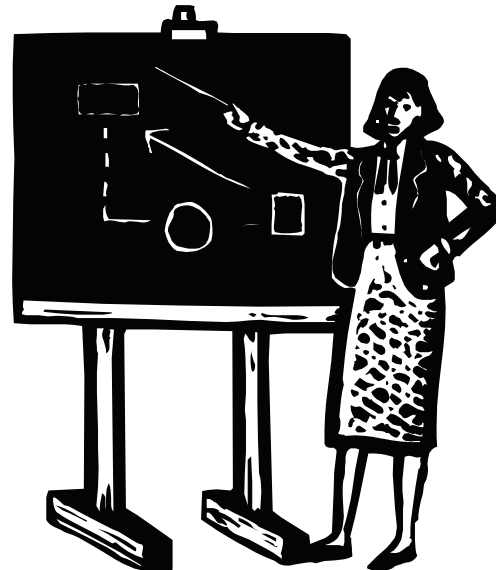
initial treatment was delayed because the ambulance could not cross the border into Israel, and he was strip searched by border guards.

Iyad is the head of Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall and brother of Emad Burnat, who filmed 5 Broken Cameras. In 2012 his film, won 'Best Documentary' at the Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Oscar. 5 Broken Cameras chronicles the first five years of weekly nonviolent protests against the building of the Separation Wall through Bil'in, the confiscation of village land and destruction of 1,000 village old-growth olive trees. The weekly protests are still on going. Iyad, a leading character in the documentary has been arrested and jailed for peaceful protests 10 times.

Over the last five years Bil'in's peaceful protests have spread to many villages throughout Palestine, Kafr Qaddum, Ni'lin, Nabi Salih, Dir Nizam, and Wadi Foquin to name just a few. While many of these protests are met with force, the people are building solidarity and the story is getting out, especially in Europe where the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement has gained traction.

Iyad's speaking tour was sponsored by Jewish Voice for Peace, a US based non-profit that works to achieve a lasting peace that recognizes the rights of both Israelis and Palestinians for security and self-determination.

# A summer of war or peace with Iran



JAMAL ABDI &amp; TRITA PARSI

This summer, the US Senate will choose between war and peace with Iran. If the right decision is made, Obama's pending nuclear deal with Iran will be sustained and both a war and an Iranian nuclear bomb will be avoided. If the wrong vote is cast, diplomacy will collapse and the US and Iran will once again be on a path towards a disastrous war that will make the Iraq war look like the cake-walk it was promised to be. The good news is: If Americans speak up in large numbers, the Senate will choose peace.

This crucial vote will likely take place in July after a deal has been reached and before Congress leaves town for the summer recess. It's the result of the Senate passing the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act 98-1 this past Thursday. The House is expected to take up the legislation as soon as this week, and the President will sign it into law thereafter -- assuming no "poison pill" amendments are inserted.

In essence, the bill restricts the President's authority to waive sanctions while Congress considers whether or not to reject an agreement. A vote of disapproval would permanently revoke the President's authority to offer substantial sanctions relief and thus block the US from implementing the deal. If Congressional hawks were to succeed in blocking a deal that our negotiators had

agreed to, it would not just set a devastating precedent for any future US diplomatic efforts, it would unravel nuclear constraints and international sanctions on Iran and put war on the front burner.

A vote of disapproval would require 60 votes to pass the Senate and a simple majority to pass the House. If supporters of peace lose this vote, the president will have no choice but to veto the resolution. The other side will then seek to override Obama's veto - and for that they will need two-thirds of both the Senate and House, i.e. 67 Senators and 290 Representatives.

## A VOTE WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE

At the moment, it appears that supporters of a deal have sufficient numbers to uphold a veto and protect the deal. At the same time that the Senate passed the review bill, 151 Democrats in the House of Representatives sent a letter to the President commending the framework nuclear agreement and urging that our diplomats seal a final deal. Given that the letter was signed by more than a third of the House, if the same number of representatives refuse to reject a final deal, a Presidential veto would hold. That letter, led by Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and David Price (D-NC), will undoubtedly boost perceptions in Iran that President Obama can uphold America's end of the nuclear bargain.

However, nothing is certain -- especially for a showdown vote that powerful interest groups like AIPAC have been preparing for over a decade, according to a former lobbyist from the organization.

Furthermore, if the President is only able to protect a deal by veto, it could encourage opponents to cry foul and pursue additional efforts to block and undermine the deal. Unless the attempt to kill an agreement is soundly defeated this summer, there could be further efforts to re-litigate the deal in Congress, limit the President from implementing it, and pass new sanctions to kill the agreement.

The endgame is now fast approaching. Iran and the United States will likely convert their agreement in principle into a historic deal this summer. Then, Congress will take a critical vote to determine whether the U.S. continues down the path toward peace or marches down the road to war. If accepted, it can be the beginning of the end of more than three and a half decades of US-Iran enmity. In the weeks ahead, it is imperative that the American people make sure that Congress ends up on the right side of history.

JAMAL ABDI IS THE POLICY DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL IRANIAN AMERICAN COUNCIL, THE LARGEST GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING THE IRANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN THE US. HE IS BASED IN WASHINGTON, DC AND BLOGS AT [HTTP://WWW.NIACINSIGHT.COM/](http://WWW.NIACINSIGHT.COM/)

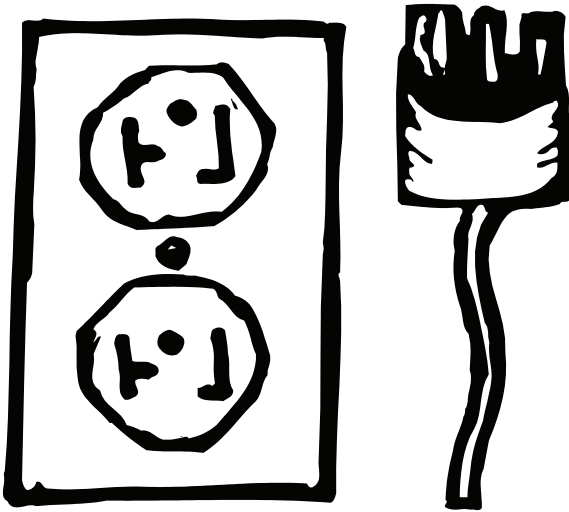
TRITA PARSI IS FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL IRANIAN AMERICAN COUNCIL AND AN EXPERT ON US-IRANIAN RELATIONS, IRANIAN FOREIGN POLITICS, AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. HE IS AUTHOR OF \*A SINGLE ROLL OF THE DICE - OBAMA'S DIPLOMACY WITH IRAN AND \*TREACHEROUS ALLIANCE: THE SECRET DEALINGS OF ISRAEL, IRAN, AND THE UNITED STATES.

Source: Common Dreams 5/15/15  
<http://www.commondreams.org>





# From drones abroad to police brutality at home, UN slams US human rights record



LAUREN MCCAULEY

The United States' human rights record faced fierce criticism on May 11 during a hearing of the United Nations Human Rights Council, when a panel of more than 100 international leaders voiced concern over violations spanning from police brutality and the continued use of the death penalty to the torture of detainees at Guantanamo Bay prison.

According to those present at the hearing in Geneva, Switzerland, the subject of police brutality against people of color and, more broadly, discrimination within the U.S. criminal justice system dominated the critique. Monday marked the United States' second Universal Periodic Review, a process created by the Human Rights Council to peer-review other member states.

"I'm not surprised that the world's eyes are focused on police issues in the U.S.," Alba Morales, who investigates the U.S. criminal justice system for the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch, told *Al Jazeera*. "There is an international spotlight that's been shone [on the issues], in large part due to the events in Ferguson and the disproportionate police response to even peaceful protesters."

As Morales notes, the focus of the international

delegates echoed the concerns of thousands of U.S. citizens who in recent months have expressed outrage over what they say is a racist and discriminatory system of justice. Other areas of concern raised by UN member states included the "failure to close the Guantánamo Bay detention facility, the continued use of the death penalty, the need for adequate protections for migrant workers and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. Member states also called on the U.S. to end child labor, human trafficking and sexual violence against Native American and Alaska Native women and to lift restrictions on the use of foreign aid to provide safe abortion services for rape victims in conflict areas," *Al Jazeera* reports.

In addition, Pakistan Ambassador to the UN Zamir Akram raised issue with the illegal use of armed drones, calling for the U.S. to compensate innocent victims of drone strikes. Morales, writing at Human Rights Watch, notes that at least 36 of the 117 nations present criticized the continued use of the death penalty, with many raising concern over the disproportionate number of African Americans given capital sentences.

"These two issues – police brutality and the death penalty – represent, in some ways, very different ends of the criminal justice continuum in the U.S.," Morales writes. "Very few in the U.S. will ever be charged with a capital crime, while millions each year come into contact with police. In both cases, sadly, the U.S. has a lot of work to comply with international human rights standards."

In prepared remarks in anticipation of the critique, James Cadogan, senior counselor to the assistant attorney general, told the Council that recent deaths of innocent Black citizens at the hands of police highlight the need to "rededicate ourselves to ensuring that our civil rights laws live up to their promise."

"The tragic deaths of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Michael Brown in Missouri, Eric Garner in New York, Tamir Rice in Ohio, and Walter Scott in South Carolina have renewed a longstanding and critical national debate about the even-handed administration of justice: these events challenge us to do better and to work harder for progress – through both dialogue and action," Cadogan said.

Source: *Common Dreams* 5/12/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

## Peace Action hails 150 reps letter to Obama supporting Iran diplomacy

PAUL KAWIKA MARTIN

In reaction to the letter organized by Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and David Price (D-NC) praising the Obama administration's diplomacy work with Iran on its nuclear program, Peace Action released the following statement :

This House letter to the President shows the overwhelming support in Congress for diplomacy with Iran and to finalize an agreement that verifiably thwarts Iran from building a crude nuclear weapon. Most in Congress realize there are no better options than reaching a strong accord with Iran on its nuclear program. Clearly Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and David Price (D-NC) and the other 147 signers of the letter understand that successful diplomacy with Iran on its nuclear program will

make Americans safer.

Now the Senate should take some advice from the House and ditch the unhelpful Corker bill and wait until a final agreement is reached before taking legislative action.

Though 150 signatures are significant by representing over a third in the House, many in Congress want to see a final agreement before making their views known. Once a strong final accord is reached with Iran, support in Congress will grow. A vote to approve or disapprove the agreement will likely be close but nowhere near enough to override an Obama veto. There are likely a handful of Republicans that would join those on this letter by Democrats.

Even in this more conservative House, this is the largest public support of diplomacy with Iran to date. It shows the importance of supporting the

administration's efforts to reach a final deal with Iran on its nuclear program.

Peace Action affiliates across the nation generated calls, letters and emails to Representatives urging them to sign on to the letter and will continue to pressure Congress until a final agreement is reached and implemented.

FOUNDED IN 1957, PEACE ACTION, THE UNITED STATES' LARGEST PEACE AND DISARMAMENT ORGANIZATION WITH OVER 100,000 MEMBERS AND NEARLY 100 CHAPTERS IN 34 STATES, WORKS TO ACHIEVE THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, PROMOTE GOVERNMENT SPENDING PRIORITIES THAT SUPPORT HUMAN NEEDS AND ENCOURAGE REAL SECURITY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

Source: *Peace Action* 5/7/15 <http://www.peace-action.org/>



### PACIFIC COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE CENTER

*serving Stockton since 1984*

Yi-Po Anthony Wu, M.D., M.P.H.  
Medical Director, Internal Medicine

Teresa M. Chen, Ph.D.  
Program Coordinator

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

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

### Shop at the Herb Store

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

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

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

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

Make checks payable to ... National Audubon Society.

Send to: Audubon

PO Box 7755, Stockton, CA 95207

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PH# \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Questions about Audubon? Call Dave Wagner 943-6997.  
[www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org](http://www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org)

Join our  
LOCAL

## Audubon



### Roger K.Lang, D.D.S., Inc.

3031 W. March Lane, Suite 318E  
(Go north on I-5, exit March Lane, go  
west to "The Fountain" and turn right)  
(209) 956-0601  
Fax: (209) 952-8845  
Email: [info@drkangdds.com](mailto:info@drkangdds.com)  
Web: [www.drkangdds.com](http://www.drkangdds.com)

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



# Congress should end metadata collection

MARJORIE COHN

Just as Congress was debating whether to reauthorize Section 215 of the Patriot Act, which the government has used to collect data on every telephone call we make, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously struck it down in *ACLU v. Clapper*. Congress has four days left in its current session to decide whether to reauthorize Section 215, amend it or let it die a natural death on June 1, 2015.

The controversial section authorizes the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) to issue orders mandating phone companies, internet service providers, banks, credit card companies etc. to provide their records to the government if the FISC finds "there are reasonable grounds to believe" the records "sought are relevant to an authorized investigation" aimed at protecting the country "against international terrorism."

Thanks to Edward Snowden, we know that the FISC used Section 215 to issue an order mandating Verizon to provide "on an ongoing daily basis ... all call detail records or 'telephony metadata' ... for communications (i) between the United States and abroad; or (ii) wholly within the United States, including local telephone calls." The National Security Agency (NSA) has been collecting metadata on our phone communications, including the identities of the caller and the person called, the phone numbers of both parties, as well as the date, time, duration and unique identifiers of the communication.

The "data archive" could be accessed only "when the NSA has identified a known telephone number for which ... there are facts giving rise to reasonable, articulable suspicion that the telephone number is associated with [Redacted]." The Court of Appeals speculated that the Redacted portion "presumably" includes "terrorist activity or a specific terrorist organization."

So the government is collecting data that is not "relevant to an authorized investigation," but it argues that it might be of use later when a specific terrorist suspect or terrorist plot is being investigated.

The government "does not seriously dispute [the] contention that all significant service providers in the United States are subject to similar orders," Judge Gerard E. Lynch wrote for the three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals in *Clapper*. That means all of our phone communications are being collected.

Judge Lynch began by citing *United States v. U.S. Dist. Court (Keith)*, in which the Supreme Court in 1972 struck down warrantless surveillance procedures that the government had argued were lawful as an exercise of the president's power to protect national security. The *Keith* Court remarked on "the inherent vagueness of the domestic security concept [and] the necessarily broad and continuing nature of intelligence gathering."

Lynch went on to describe the Senate's Church Committee, established in response to *Keith* and alleged abuses in the intelligence-gathering and surveillance activities of the NSA, FBI and CIA during "the early 1970s, in a climate not altogether unlike today's." The committee concluded that the privacy rights of US citizens had been violated by

activities conducted under the rubric of foreign intelligence collection.

It was the *Keith* case together with the findings of the Church Committee that led Congress in 1978 to enact the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and establish the FISC to review the government's applications for wiretap orders. The FISC, which functions in secret, has authorized just about every wiretap the government has asked for since its creation.

Shortly after the September 11, 2001, attacks, Congress amended FISA by passing the USA Patriot Act, and subsequently amended Section 215. An application for a wiretap order must contain "a statement of facts showing that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the tangible things sought are *relevant* to an authorized investigation (other than a threat assessment) ... to obtain foreign intelligence information not concerning a United States person or to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities."

In construing the phrase, "relevant to an authorized investigation," Lynch notes, "The records demanded are all-encompassing; the government does not even suggest that all of the records sought, or even necessarily any of them, are relevant to any specific defined inquiry."

The government argued that although the vast amount of information does not contain directly "relevant" information, the data should be collected as it may allow the NSA sometime in the future to identify relevant information. Lynch disagreed, noting, "We agree with appellants that such an expansive concept of 'relevance' is unprecedented and unwarranted."

Lynch observed, "The sheer volume of information sought is staggering; while search warrants and subpoenas for business records may encompass large volumes of paper documents or electronic data, the most expansive of such evidentiary demands are dwarfed by the volume of records obtained pursuant to the orders in question here."

But, Lynch noted, "§ 215 does not permit an investigative demand for any information relevant to fighting the war on terror, or anything relevant to whatever the government might want to know. It permits demands for documents 'relevant to an authorized investigation.'"

"The overwhelming bulk of the metadata ... concerns ... individuals who are not targets of an investigation or suspected of engaging in any crime whatsoever, and who are not even suspected of having any contacts with any such targets or suspects," Lynch wrote. The court was concerned about the slippery slope of allowing the government such expansive power to collect our data. "If the government is correct," Lynch noted, "it could use § 215 to collect and store in bulk any other existing metadata available anywhere in the private sector, including metadata associated with financial records, medical records, and electronic communications (including e-mail and social media information) relating to all Americans."

"Such expansive development of government repositories of former private records," according to Lynch, "would be an unprecedented contraction of the privacy

expectations of all Americans."

The court held that Section 215 does not authorize the government "to collect phone records only because they may become relevant to a possible authorized investigation in the future."

Therefore, the court decided that Section 215 "does not authorize the telephone metadata program." Since the Court of Appeals concluded that Section 215 does not allow the FISC order, it did not decide whether the metadata collection program also violates the US Constitution.

Because Section 215 is set to expire soon, and Congress is debating how to proceed, the Court of Appeals decided not to issue a preliminary injunction at this time. The court's opinion rejected the government's contention that Congress impliedly authorized the FISC order when it voted for extensions of Section 215. The court said that since the metadata

program was secret, members of Congress could not be said to have approved it.

Judge Robert D. Sack concurred with Lynch's opinion and wrote separately, "Because our decision is based on our reading of a federal statute, not the Constitution, Congress can in effect overrule it." If the Court of Appeals had instead concluded that the metadata collection program violated not just Section 215, but the Fourth and/or First Amendments to the US Constitution as well, Congress would be bound by that decision.

MARJORIE COHN IS A PROFESSOR AT THOMAS JEFFERSON SCHOOL OF LAW. HER MOST RECENT BOOK IS /DRONES AND TARGETED KILLING: LEGAL, MORAL, AND GEOPOLITICAL ISSUES/.

Source: Truthout 5/12/15 [www.truth-out.org](http://www.truth-out.org)

## Congress at odds over mass surveillance

NADIA PRUPIS

In the wake of Thursday's federal court ruling that the U.S. National Security Agency's mass data collection program is illegal, officials in Congress have been left at odds over surveillance reform. In the remaining six days of the legislative session, some Senate Republicans are rushing to find a short-term solution to keep the program in operation until it comes to the floor for a vote—one which is unlikely to pass in light of the court ruling. The government previously held that Section 215 of the Patriot Act, set to expire on June 1, justified the NSA's mass surveillance of U.S. citizens.

One option would be a one-month extension of the provision to get it past the deadline in exchange for Republicans allowing a vote on the USA Freedom Act—a bill aimed at reforming the NSA by replacing surveillance programs with a plan for phone companies to retain data instead. Some in Congress see the USA Freedom Act as their best chance to rein in the NSA's spying powers.

"I hope we can [pass a clean reauthorization] for at least a short period of time just so we can have this debate," majority whip Sen. John Cornyn of Texas told reporters. "It's an important debate and an important law, it's protected Americans and saved lives, and so we don't need to make this decision in haste."

That statement conflicted with Sen. Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) response to Thursday's court ruling, which he said should not impede a full reauthorization of the act. The provisions are "ideally suited for the terrorist threat we face in 2015," McConnell said.

However, the call to reject the Patriot Act has grown stronger, with allies from both sides of the aisle framing the court ruling as a turning point in the debate.

Even a short-term extension would amount to "reauthorizing for five years a

statute that right now is deeply flawed," Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) told the *Guardian*. "It fails to protect essential rights and clearly could be improved by having an adversarial system for example, changing the makeup of the [Fisa] court, reforming the system as needs to be done."

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), a presidential candidate for the 2016 election, wrote in an op-ed for *Time* that not even the USA Freedom Act is enough to reform the NSA and should be rejected alongside the Patriot Act. "Now that the appellate court has ruled that Section 215 doesn't authorize bulk collection, would the USA Freedom Act actually be expanding the Patriot Act?" he wrote. "That would be a bitter irony if the attempt to end bulk collection actually gave new authority to the Patriot Act to collect records."

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which brought the case to the federal court, has also noted that the USA Freedom Act does not go far enough to rein in the government's surveillance powers or ensure sufficient transparency from the FBI. "We can't help but worry that the vague language in the bill's key provisions will provide a new lease on life to surveillance programs that haven't yet been—and may never be—disclosed to the public," wrote ACLU deputy legal director Jameel Jaffer and ACLU staff attorney Patrick Toomey in a blog post last week, ahead of the ruling.

On Thursday, the ACLU called the court's decision a "resounding victory for the rule of law." Staff attorney Alex Abdo, who argued the case, said in a statement, "For years, the government secretly spied on millions of innocent Americans based on a shockingly broad interpretation of its authority.... Mass surveillance does not make us any safer, and it is fundamentally incompatible with the privacy necessary in a free society."

Source: Common Dreams 5/8/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>





# Obama order could require 70% of top companies to disclose political spending

If President Barack Obama were to issue an executive order requiring government contractors to disclose their political spending, it would reach at least 70 percent of the Fortune 100 companies, Public Citizen finds. Public Citizen reviewed government contracts that were held by the 100 largest companies in the United States – as ranked by Fortune Magazine for 2014 – and found that 70 of the Fortune 100 companies had federal contracts totaling

\$100,000 or more from April 2014 to April 2015. The companies represent a wide variety of industries, from defense to technology, energy to finance, entertainment to chemicals. They include companies such as Exxon Mobil, General Motors, AT&T, Bank of America, Boeing, Amazon.com, Google, Verizon Communications, Chevron and many more.

“Because the federal government buys everything from toothbrushes to nuclear

missiles, it is no surprise that most large companies are significant government contractors,” said Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen, which is one of the groups leading the push for Obama to issue an executive order requiring disclosure of political spending by contractors. “What we don’t know, thanks to the use of dark money, is exactly what these companies are spending on the political process, including for the potential purpose of

influencing government contracting decisions.”

Americans nationwide are demanding that Obama issue an executive order requiring corporations with government contracts to disclose their political spending. On April 2, activists held 60 events in 30 states calling for an executive order on contractor disclosure. That same day, a diverse coalition of public interest organizations rallied in front of the White House with more than 550,000

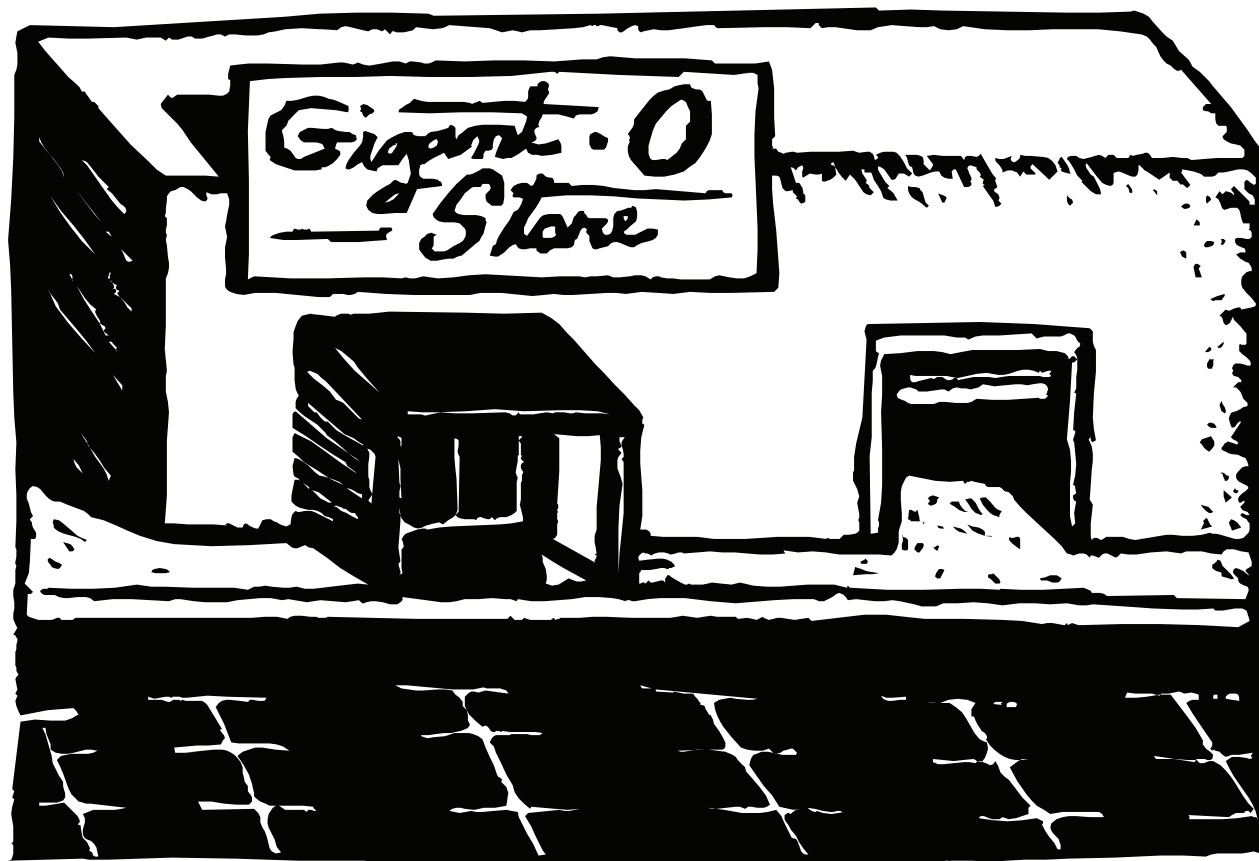
petition signatures in favor of an executive order. On April 16, more than 6,000 people flooded the White House phone lines urging Obama to take action.

“Thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court’s / Citizens United/ ruling, an unprecedented amount of dark money is flooding into our election system. This dark money spending is particularly insidious when it comes from government contractors, because they are helping those who stand

to help them win more contracts,” said Weissman. “President Obama can and should issue an executive order to help fix this corrupt pay-to-play system.” Find more information at <http://www.getmoneyoutaction.org/about-an-executive-order-on-disclosure-for-contractors>.

Source: Public Citizen release 4/27/15 <http://www.citizen.org>

## Break up the big banks



BERNIE SANDERS

We don't hear it discussed much in the media, but the reality is that the middle class of this country, once the envy of the world, is collapsing, 45 million Americans are living in poverty, and the gap between the rich and everyone else is growing wider and wider. Despite a huge increase in technology and productivity, median family income is almost \$5,000 lower today than it was in 1999.

There are 45 million people living in poverty and we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on earth. Half of the American people have less than \$10,000 in savings and have no idea how they will retire with dignity. Real unemployment is not 5.5 percent - it's close to 11 percent.

Today, 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. During the last two years, the 14 wealthiest Americans saw their wealth increase by \$157 billion, which is more wealth than is owned by the bottom 130 million

Americans. In the midst of all this grotesque level of income and wealth inequality comes Wall Street. As we all know, it was the greed, recklessness and illegal behavior on Wall Street six years ago that drove this country into the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Millions of Americans lost their jobs, homes, life savings and ability to send their kids to college. The middle class is still suffering from the horrendous damage huge financial institutions and insurance companies did to this country in 2008. It seems like almost every day we read about one giant financial institution after another being fined or reaching settlements for their reckless, unfair, and deceptive activities. In fact, since 2009, huge financial institutions have paid \$176 billion in fines and settlement payments for fraudulent and unscrupulous activities.

It should make every American very nervous that in this weak regulatory environment, the financial supervisors in this country and around the world are still able to uncover an enormous amount of fraud on Wall Street to this day. I fear

very much that the financial system is even more fragile than many people may perceive. This huge issue cannot be swept under the rug. It has got to be addressed. Although I voted for Dodd-Frank, I did so knowing it was a modest piece of legislation. Dodd-Frank did not end much of the casino-style gambling on Wall Street. In fact, much of this reckless activity is still going on today.

During the financial crisis of 2008, the American people were told that they needed to bailout huge financial institutions because those institutions were "too big to fail." Yet, today, three out of the four financial institutions in this country (JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo) are 80 percent larger today than they were on September 30, 2007, a year before the taxpayers of this country bailed them out. 80 percent!

No single financial institution should be so large that its failure would cause catastrophic risk to millions of Americans or to our nation's economic well-being. No single financial institution should have holdings so extensive that its failure would send the world economy into crisis. If an institution is too big to fail, it is too big to exist. The enormous concentration of ownership within the financial sector is hurting the middle class and damaging the economy by limiting choices and raising prices for consumers and small businesses. Today, just six huge financial institutions have assets of nearly \$10 trillion which is equal to nearly 60 percent of GDP. These huge banks handle more than two-thirds of all credit card purchases, write over 35 percent of the mortgages, and control nearly half of all bank deposits in this country.

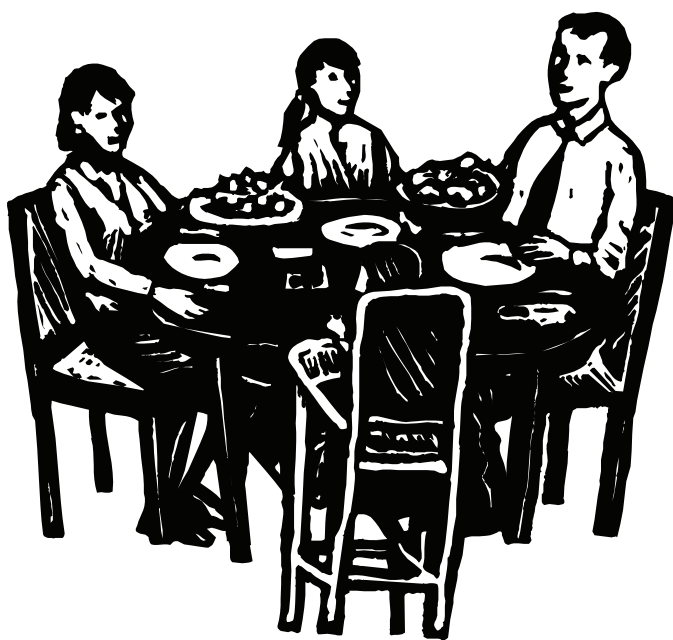
If Teddy Roosevelt were alive today, do you know what he would say? He would say break 'em up. And he would be right. And that's exactly what I plan to do. A bill that I've written would require financial regulators within one year to identify and break-up huge financial institutions like JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo and Morgan Stanley so that they can never again cause another financial crisis like the one that happened in 2008. I am delighted that this legislation has been endorsed by the Independent Community Bankers of America, representing more than 6,000 community banks. Their support is an important recognition that the function of banking should be boring and the current situation still contains too much risk and too much emphasis on profit-making.

The function of banking should be to provide affordable loans to businesses to create jobs. The function of banking should be to provide affordable loans to Americans to purchase homes and cars. Wall Street cannot be an island unto itself and we need to break up those largest banks to put the focus back on working class Americans.

Source: Reader Supported News 5/9/15 <http://readersupportednews.org>



# Safety net more effective against poverty than previously thought



ARLOC SHERMAN AND DANILO TRISI

Previous analysis of Census data showed that safety net programs cut the poverty rate nearly in half. Data released recently by the Urban Institute, which correct for underreporting of key government benefits in the Census survey, reveal an even stronger impact: the safety net reduced the poverty rate from 29.1 percent to 13.8 percent in 2012 and lifted 48 million people above the poverty line, including 12 million children. Correcting for underreporting reveals that the safety net also did more to reduce deep poverty than previously shown, although 11.2 million Americans remained below half the poverty line.

## WHICH PROGRAMS WORK BEST

Social Security lifts more Americans out of poverty than any other program. Using the corrected SPM, Social Security lifted 27.4 million Americans above the poverty line in 2012. This total includes 17.5 million seniors, who rely heavily on Social Security income in their retirement years. It also includes 1.6 million children, who may benefit from Social Security either directly (for example, by receiving the program's survivor payments if a working parent has died) or indirectly (if a family member receives retirement, disability, or survivor benefits).

After Social Security, SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - formerly food stamps) and refundable tax credits for working families had the largest poverty-reducing impacts. SNAP lifted 10.3 million Americans above the poverty line in 2012, including 4.9 million children. Similarly, the two refundable credits for low-income working families, the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, together lifted 10.3 million Americans - including 5.3 million children - above the poverty line.

When "means-tested" income-support programs - those that limit assistance to people with low or modest incomes -

are considered as a group, they lifted more than 27 million low-income Americans above the poverty line in 2012. These programs include SNAP, housing assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, cash assistance funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the EITC and the low-income (or refundable) component of the Child Tax Credit.

Housing programs reach relatively few eligible households due to limited funding but have strong antipoverty effects for those they do reach. In 2010, about 10 million Americans in 5 million low-income households received housing assistance, well below the number that received other major programs means-tested programs like SNAP or the EITC. Yet, housing assistance lifted out of poverty a larger share of those it assisted: 37 percent of housing assistance recipients would be considered poor without this assistance but were above the poverty line because of it.

Unemployment insurance (UI) lifted 2.7 million Americans above the poverty line in 2012. UI's poverty-reducing effects rise in times of high unemployment, particularly when Congress provides additional UI benefits through emergency legislation. In 2009, a year in which unemployment soared and Congress provided additional UI benefits, unemployment benefits lifted more than 5 million Americans above the poverty line, almost twice as many as in 2012.

The safety net also plays a crucial role in easing deep poverty, particularly for families with children. In 2012, public tax and benefit policies overall reduced the number of children living below half the poverty line by 86 percent, or 10 million. They reduced the number of children living below three-quarters of the poverty line by 75 percent, or nearly 13 million.

Social Security does more than any other single program to protect Americans from deep poverty, keeping 24.5 million people above half the poverty line in 2012, most of

them elderly retirees. SNAP kept 5.2 million people above half the poverty line, including 2.1 million children under 18. As noted, SNAP also kept more children out of deep poverty than any other program in 2012. After Social Security and SNAP, SSI kept the most people of all ages out of deep poverty (4.2 million) in 2012. (See Figure 4.) UI lifted 1.3 million people, including 300,000 children above half the poverty line in 2012.

## CORRECTING FOR UNDERREPORTING REVEALS STRONGER SAFETY NET

This analysis uses the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which, unlike the official poverty measure, counts government non-cash benefits such as food assistance and rent subsidies as income and subtracts from income various taxes paid, work expenses, and out-of-pocket medical expenditures. The SPM also makes other adjustments, such as using a poverty line that accounts for differences in living costs across the country. This study goes beyond the SPM, however, by correcting for the underreporting in Census data of income from key forms of government assistance.

Even after correcting for underreporting, however, 11.2 million people remained below half the poverty line in 2012: 1.7 million children, 4.9 million adult women, and 4.6 million adult men. The greatest number by race or ethnicity were non-Hispanic whites (5.8 million), compared with 2.6 million Hispanics and 1.7 million non-Hispanic African Americans, reflecting the large size of the white population overall. Minorities, however, faced a substantially higher likelihood of living in deep poverty: 4.8 percent of Hispanics and 4.5 percent of non-Hispanic African Americans lived below half the poverty line, compared with 3.0 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

Living below half the SPM's poverty line meant having income after non-cash benefits, taxes, and expenses for items like health care and child care of less than \$12,523 for a family of four (a couple with two children) renting a home in an average-cost community in 2012. A comparison illustrates the difficulty of making ends meet at such a low income level. In 2012, 68 percent of four-person families spent more than that on food and transportation alone, an imbalance that could leave a family living in deep poverty in debt before it begins to pay for shelter, clothing, or other basic needs.

## CONCLUSION

The safety net protects millions of Americans from poverty and especially from deep poverty, with the numbers lifted out of poverty seen to be even larger after correcting for underreported income. Nonetheless, 42.8 million people remained below the SPM poverty line in 2012 even after the corrections, including 11.2 million people living below half the poverty line.

DANILO TRISI IS A SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST IN THE FAMILY INCOME SUPPORT DIVISION. ARLOC SHERMAN IS A SENIOR FELLOW AT THE CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES.

Source: Center for Budget and Policy Priorities 5/12/15 <http://www.cbpp.org/>

# Where your tax dollars go: federal funds vs. trust funds

LINDSAY KOSHGARIAN

Of every dollar you pay in federal income taxes, about 27 cents goes to the military, a little less than 27 cents goes to health care, fifteen cents for payment on the national debt, and a little more than 30 cents goes to everything else.

Another way to look at it is that your federal income

taxes go into what's called "federal funds," which is the name for the pot of money the federal government collects for general purposes. In addition to federal funds, there are "trust funds," which the federal government collects for specific purposes.

Unlike your federal income taxes, payroll taxes - what likely appears on your paystub as FICA, Social

Security, or Medicare - don't go into the big pot of federal funds, but instead go into trust funds. The tax you pay for Social Security is counted in the Social Security trust fund, not in federal funds, and likewise for Medicare. That means payroll taxes are not available for federal spending on the military, education or other programs. Another example of a federal

trust fund is the Highway Trust Fund. The Highway Trust Fund is paid for by federal gas taxes, and is used for road and infrastructure repairs and improvements all around the country.

But most spending categories - from the military to education - don't have trust funds of any significant size, which means they have to rely on federal funds that

come largely from income taxes. On Tax Day, it's all about federal funds that pay for the military, certain health care programs like Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, education and other things.

Our Tax Day materials, like our income tax dollar and tax receipt show you what becomes of your income tax dollar after it joins the big pot

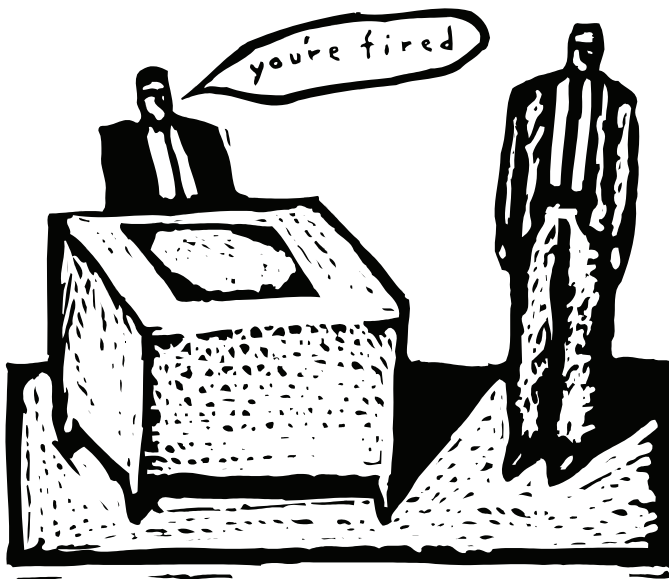
of federal funds. Trust fund expenses like Social Security and Medicare aren't included - they'll have to get their own day.

Source: National Priorities Project 4/13/15 [www.nationalpriorities.org](http://www.nationalpriorities.org). NPP, 243 King Street, Suite 246 Northampton MA, 01060 | (413) 584-9556 [info@nationalpriorities.org](mailto:info@nationalpriorities.org)





# Why the rich don't care about jobs for the rest of us



PAUL BUCHHEIT

Many of us wonder what possible reason could exist for the failure to invest in American infrastructure, to create millions of jobs as a result, and to help everyone in the long run. Analysis reveals personality traits and beliefs and misconceptions that might account for such behavior. Here's a look inside the billion-dollar brain:

## 1. IT'S ALL ABOUT ME

Several studies by Paul Piff and his colleagues have revealed that upper-class individuals tend to be narcissistic, with a clear sense of entitlement. Worse yet, they believe their talents and attributes - genius, even - have earned them a rightful position of status over everyone else. Scarier yet, according to onestudy, the American sense of entitlement has been growing over the past 30 years, despite the fact that most of us have lost ground to the super-rich. And most disturbing is that 'upper-class' individuals tend to behave more unethically than average citizens.

This "all about me" attitude means that the wealthy don't have to depend on others, and that they have less need to understand the feelings of others. This directly impacts our daily lives. The greater the concentration of wealth, the less a society invests in infrastructure. Our investment in infrastructure as a percent of GDP dropped by 60 percent from 1968 to 2011.

As the super-rich take their helicopters to and from work, they're having multi-million-dollar bunkers built under their houses to sustain them when the middle-class revolution comes.

## 2. IT'S ALL ABOUT LAZY PEOPLE WHO REFUSE TO WORK

Congressmen and CEOs don't normally see the people

affected by their actions. This leads to a resentment of the poor, and imagined abuses in the minds of people like Paul Ryan and Scott Walker, both of whom likened the safety net to a "hammock," and Texas Republican Louie Gohmert, who decried the purchase of crab legs by people on a \$5-a-day food stamp budget. John Boehner daydreamed: "This idea that has been born...that, you know, 'I really don't have to work...I think I'd rather just sit around.'"

Almost all healthy adult Americans, of course, want to work. But in 2011 Senate Republicans killed a proposed \$447 billion jobs bill that would have added about two million jobs to the economy. Members of Congress filibustered Nancy Pelosi's "Prevention of Outsourcing Act," even as a million jobs were being outsourced, and they temporarily blocked the "Small Business Jobs Act." In April, 2013 only one member of Congress bothered to show up for a hearing on unemployment. When asked what he would do to bring jobs to Kentucky, Mitch McConnell responded, "That is not my job. It is the primary responsibility of the state Commerce Cabinet."

The lazy people who refuse to work are, in reality, the tax avoiders who are getting \$2.2 trillion without having to work for it. The Safety Net costs us \$370 billion. But tax avoidance costs us \$2,200 billion (tax expenditures, tax underpayments, tax havens, and corporate nonpayment). That's \$2.2 trillion, six times more than the Safety Net, most of it benefiting the wealthiest Americans.

## 3. IT'S ALL ABOUT WAITING FOR THE FREE MARKET TO WORK ITS MAGIC

Conservative analyst Michael Barone said, "Markets work. But sometimes they take time." Thirty-five years, so far. Beneficiaries of low taxes and deregulation desperately want to believe that "trickle-down" works, or at least to convince

middle America that it works. They want to believe, against all logic, that lower taxes mean more tax revenue.

All this in the face of mountains of data disproving their supply-side ideas. As far back as 1984 the Treasury Department concluded that most tax cuts lose revenue. More recent studies by Saez et al. and by the Economic Policy Institute found no connection between tax rates and economic growth, and Piketty, Saez, and Stantcheva determined that the optimal tax rate on his earnings could be over 80 percent.

There is also hard evidence that cutting taxes on the rich fails to stimulate job creation, and that raising taxes on the rich has the opposite, beneficial effect. The facts come from Kansas and Minnesota. Despite early optimism by trickle-down adherents, tax cuts in Kansas have been disastrous, leading to revenue losses, cutbacks in education and health care, and sluggish job growth. In Minnesota, on the other hand, tax increases on the rich have led to higher wages, low unemployment, and rapid business growth.

The rich don't care about creating jobs. They don't care about Robert Reich's insight about more and more jobs being lost to smart technologies, leading to a society in which "those who create or invest in blockbuster ideas will earn unprecedented sums and returns," leaving much less for the rest of us. The solution, says Chris Hedges, is to take on corporate power by instituting "a nationwide public works program, especially for those under the age of 25, to create conditions for full employment." Every American, of course, deserves the opportunity to earn a living wage. It will take a revolution against narcissism to make it happen.

PAUL BUCHHEIT IS A COLLEGE TEACHER, AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF US UNCUT CHICAGO, FOUNDER AND DEVELOPER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATIONAL WEBSITES (USAGAINSTGREED.ORG, PAYUPNOW.ORG, RAPPINGHISTORY.ORG), AND THE EDITOR AND MAIN AUTHOR OF "AMERICAN WARS: ILLUSIONS AND REALITIES" (CLARITY PRESS). HE CAN BE REACHED AT PAUL@USAGAINSTGREED.ORG.

Source: Common Dreams 5/11/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>

## Become a PEACE PAL!

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

### Monthly Giving Enrollment Form

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

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

Here is my monthly pledge contribution of:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$(Other) \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to donate by one of the following methods:

☐ U.S. mail; please send me envelopes

☐ Online donation through PJN website: [www.pjnsjc.org](http://www.pjnsjc.org) (click on donation button)

☐ Automatic Bank Transfer

☐ I've enclosed a check for my first contribution. Arrangements will be made by me with my bank for future pledges.

Mail checks to:

**Peace and Justice Network,  
P.O. Box 4123, Stockton CA 95204**

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

# House lawmakers repeal estate tax

JASMINE TUCKER

Last week lawmakers in the House of Representatives voted 240-179 to repeal the federal estate tax despite President Obama's threats to veto the bill. The vote was largely on party lines.

The estate tax is a tax that applies to property (cash, real estate, stocks, or other assets) that is transferred from a deceased person to his or her heirs. The estate tax applies to estates worth more than about \$5.4 million for individuals and \$10.9 million

for married couples. That means that the vast majority of deaths do not trigger federal estate taxes - only about 2 in every 1,000 estates owe any estate tax.

The top estate tax rate is 40 percent, though experts find that the average tax paid is less than 17 percent. That's because only the value above \$5.4 million is taxable - and heirs are able to shield large portions of the estate's value even above that amount by using other deductions.

The bill would cost an estimated \$269 billion in

lost revenue over the next 10 years and does not provide any offset to make up for the lost money. For \$269 billion, we could implement both the president's Preschool for All initiative and free community college program over the next ten years and double investment in other federal discretionary education programs for two years - with money left over.

Currently, the top 1 percent of Americans owns 42 percent of the nation's total wealth, while the bottom 90 percent of Americans

own just 23 percent of the nation's wealth. Even well-off folks like Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, the founders of Ben & Jerry's ice cream, argue that rich people don't need yet another tax break. And 68 percent of Americans would agree: wealthy households don't pay enough in taxes. It's time for lawmakers to listen to what you're saying.

Source: National Priorities Project 4/20/15 [www.nationalpriorities.org](http://www.nationalpriorities.org). NPP, 243 King Street, Suite 246 Northampton MA, 01060 | (413) 584-9556 [info@nationalpriorities.org](mailto:info@nationalpriorities.org)



We are a grassroots environmental organization promoting Outings, Education and Action.

We meet the 4th Monday of most months at 3700 Pacific Avenue across from UOP.

We offer interesting topics, speakers and discussions. The public is welcome! See us online at **Delta-Sierra Group**.

## BEST REMODELING SERVICES

BY MASTER CRAFTSMAN DAVID BEST  
Lic # 541562

Kitchen & Bathroom Remodels. Patio's built.  
Doors hung right...and every possible repair  
around your home. Free Estimates.  
Numerous satisfied costumers.

**WE SAVE, REUSE, RESTORE (209) 368-2378**

## Publications

Technical Writing & Editing / Graphic Design / Web Sites

## InfoWright

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



## FEATURE YOUR BUSINESS HERE

Advertise in **Connections** and get seen by your local community and support alternative media.

**\$46** ..... **2x2"**  
(Business Card Size)

**\$58** ..... **2x4"**

**\$70** ..... **2x6"**

Contact us for more rate options. Discounts for longer terms and nonprofits available. Contact: bgjudici@caltel.com or PJN, P.O. Box 4123, Stockton 95204

# With drought comes opportunity



KEITH HARRINGTON

Last month, for the first time in history, California enacted mandatory limits on how much water its residents can use. And yet, as a recent op-ed in The New York Times points out, the state is exporting 100 billion gallons of water a year in the form of cattle feed. That's right: cattle feed. California's thirstiest crop isn't almonds or broccoli or anything else you'll find in the produce section, but alfalfa. If you eat a steak, there's a good chance that cow's diet included some alfalfa hay. But chances are slim that any of that feed came from California unless you get your beef from China, where most of California's alfalfa ends up. It's outrageous to say the least. But it's exactly what we should expect from a food system that is built not to be practical, but profitable.

The very dominance of California agriculture is an expression of the same logic. California supplies more than half of America's fresh fruits and vegetables. Not only are nine of the top 10 counties by agricultural sales located there, but the top county, Fresno, produces more than 23 other / states/.

The United States is so dependent on California farms that we could literally face hunger if they failed. But even that frightening scenario would not necessarily force the system to change, as the history of famines from Ireland to Ethiopia shows. That's because capitalist goods do not flow to where they're most needed. Instead, they always flow to where they're most profitable. The market doesn't care if you're starving; it only cares how much money you've got.

At the bottom of this senseless system is the matter of who gets to make the decisions. Most of the time, the power to choose what to produce, how to produce it, and where to sell it no longer lies with the farmers who work the land and often truly care about feeding people in their communities. Instead, according to sociologist Thomas Lyson's book / Civic Agriculture/, more than half of California's farmland had already come under the control of absentee owners by the year 2000.

These farms are in turn integrated into supply chains of corporate distributors, processors, and retailers controlled from the top down by elite boards of directors. To grasp exactly how undemocratic the system is, consider that in 2013, the 10 largest food companies in the U.S. made about 13 percent of the country's total food sales in dollars, and that power over those companies rested in the hands of a mere 113 people who made up their boards of directors. (YES Editor's note: These figures come from an original analysis of data from the website //foodprocessing.com//, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the companies' own websites./)

The system is so entrenched that even policy solutions are limited. Big Ag's pull in Sacramento recently derailed an effort to regulate groundwater pumping. And even if you could somehow loosen the industry's grip on Congress enough to pass an export tariff or ban a water guzzler like alfalfa, you might have to contend with a challenge from China under WTO rules.

The enormity of our agricultural challenge is staggering to say the least. But fortunately, it is under just such circumstances that "checkerboard revolutionaries" are at their best. What defines these change-makers is their pioneering experimentation with local solutions to systemic problems.

In the case of the California food crisis, the work of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers is a true exemplar. Founded in 1978, the group has spent decades experimenting with and promoting locally rooted, ecologically and socially responsible approaches to growing and selling food. As its name suggests, CAFF centers its mission on the family-owned-and-operated farm. To borrow the Occupy slogan, these farmers are, so to speak, "the 99%" of the agricultural world. That is, that they run the vast majority of farms (actually around 90 percent in California), but control a disproportionately small fraction of farmland. Most of it is owned instead by one-percenter industry titans like Beverly Hills billionaire Stewart Resnick, whose agricultural holdings are "larger than four San Franciscos," according to Mother Jones.

To aid family farmers, CAFF has spearheaded policy, educational, and research efforts to advance a sustainable agricultural technology known as agroecology. Basically, agroecologists see farms as part of the local ecosystem, and look for ways to use existing environmental assets to grow food efficiently. If caterpillars are eating all the chard, an agroecologist might encourage natural predators, for example, rather than dousing the fields in chemicals or turning to seeds with pesticides built in.

The technology thus benefits the environment and the farmer's bottom line by minimizing what researchers refer to as "artificial growth factors" such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and genetically modified seeds. This so-called "self-provisioning" of resources promotes economic as well as ecological resilience by protecting farmers from outside supply shocks and reducing their dependence on big creditors and agribusiness. To top it off, other studies have shown that agroecological self-provisioning increases farmer income by cutting costs and boosting productivity.

Besides advancing chemical-free pest management and water management techniques like "dry-farming"—in which California growers produce wine grapes using little or no additional water—CAFF has also helped farmers tap into local markets with marketing campaigns like "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" and the establishment of farmers markets and other direct sales methods. Thanks to CAFF's leadership, there are no shortage of squares on California's checkerboard of alternative food models.

### FROM LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

How might we bring the great solutions CAFF has pioneered into the mainstream? The first step is to appreciate that the problem is not fundamentally a crisis of the way we grow and distribute food; it's a crisis of the economic system we call capitalism. Like the fossil fuel industry and Wall Street style finance, the industrial food system is inextricably tied to the corporate capitalist economic model. It puts profit first, treats labor and nature as mere inputs to fuel endless growth, and centers control in the hands of the elite few at the expense of democracy. As with fuel and finance, we can't make our food system sustainable without fundamentally transforming our whole economy and the politics around it.

Accordingly, advocates for local, sustainable food systems ultimately need to approach their work through a big-picture framework. As I hinted at earlier, the concept that perhaps best ties together the various strands of the local food struggle is /food sovereignty/. This notion simultaneously emphasizes the root of the problem—that capitalist corporations have taken control of our food system—and points the way to the solution—placing it back into the hands of ordinary farmers, farmworkers, and local communities.





# Obama administration approves Shell's plan to drill in the Arctic

COLE MELLINO

The Obama administration gave conditional approval today to Shell to start drilling for oil and gas in the Arctic Ocean this summer. Shell has been fighting for the right to drill in the Arctic for years, despite a number of botched forays in recent years, and it looks like they are still going to get their way.

Last month, the Department of the Interior opened the door to selling offshore drilling leases in the Arctic, even though a court-ordered re-analysis showed that the environmental impacts could be far worse than previously thought.

"We have taken a thoughtful approach to carefully considering potential exploration in the Chukchi Sea, recognizing the significant environmental, social and ecological resources in the region and establishing high standards for the protection of this critical ecosystem, our Arctic communities, and the subsistence needs and cultural traditions of Alaska Natives," Abigail Ross Hopper, director of the Interior Department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management said. "As we move forward, any offshore exploratory activities will continue to be subject to rigorous safety standards."

The decision is a devastating blow

to environmentalists, who have pressed the Obama administration to reject proposals for offshore Arctic drilling. "Instead of holding Shell accountable and moving the country towards a sustainable future, our federal regulators are catering to an ill-prepared company in a region that does not tolerate cutting corners," said Greenpeace senior research specialist Tim Donaghy. "Shell has a history of dangerous malfunctioning in the Arctic while global scientists agree that Arctic oil must stay in the ground if we're to avoid catastrophic climate change."

Michael Brune at the Sierra Club agrees. "We are deeply disappointed that just days after the United States took over chairmanship of the Arctic Council, an international body dedicated to protecting the Arctic environment, the Obama Administration decided to allow Shell to move forward with its dirty and dangerous plan to drill in our Arctic waters," Brune said. "This is exactly the wrong message to send to the world."

"Both science and common sense is crystal clear in telling us that undeveloped dirty fuels, especially those in the Arctic, must remain in the ground if we are to avoid the worst consequences of climate disruption. Downplaying the threats drilling poses to our climate, communities, and environment—

as Shell continues to do—does not in reality make the threats any less serious. The Obama administration must say no to drilling in America's Arctic Ocean, cancel these leases and remove future leasing from the five-year offshore drilling plan."

Greenpeace and Sierra Club are not the only environmental groups that have stressed that the ecological costs of drilling in the pristine and remote Arctic seas are just too high. Marissa Knodel of Friends of the Earth said, "With a 75 percent chance of a large oil spill and more drilling equipment, air, water and noise pollution, this is the largest, loudest and dirtiest exploration plan ever proposed in the American Arctic Ocean," said

The Obama administration had initially given Shell a permit to begin offshore Arctic drilling in the summer of 2012. But, the company ran into all kinds of safety and operational problems. Two of its oil rigs ran aground and had to be towed to safety, according to *The New York Times*. In 2013, the Department of the Interior said the company could not resume drilling until all safety issues were addressed.

Now, Shell has been given the green light once more and many groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, are saying Interior rushed the decision. "The Interior Department bent over backward to rush

Shell's permit through the regulatory process so it could move its drillships into the Arctic this summer," said the Center for Biological Diversity's Alaska director Rebecca Noblin. "Considering Shell ran its drillship aground in Alaska in 2012, it's hard to fathom how the federal government can rationalize rubber-stamping Shell's second try at Arctic drilling."

In a review of the company's performance in the Arctic, Interior concluded that Shell had failed in a wide range of basic operational tasks, reports *The New York Times*. But now, Interior has decided to give shell new permits for 2015.

"This decision places big oil before people, putting the Arctic's iconic wildlife and the health of our planet on the line," said Erik Grafe, Earthjustice staff attorney. "The agency should not be approving such threatening plans based on a rushed and incomplete environmental and safety review. Ultimately, Arctic Ocean drilling is far too risky and undermines the administration's efforts to address climate change and transition to a clean energy future. These fossil fuels need to remain in the ground."

Source: EcoWatch 5/12/15 <http://ecowatch.com/>

## With drought comes opportunity

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

We can clearly see the power of food sovereignty as a movement-building concept in the international sustainable farming coalition called La Via Campesina. This burgeoning movement was the first to popularize the concept of food sovereignty, and has wielded it to mobilize a culturally and economically diverse membership against the agenda of big agribusiness. While the interests of farm laborers, family farmers, and indigenous peasants can differ enormously, all have found common cause in the idea that ecologically and socially sustainable farming requires local democratic control.

The strategic value of such global unity is obvious. Just as capitalism and its commodity chains span borders, so too must the efforts to resist and build alternatives. Membership in La Via Campesina provides food revolutionaries with links to other squares on the international checkerboard of local solutions, and thus establishes channels for the flow of essential resources and ideas.

Food sovereignty also provides a great way to conceptualize the socio-economic benefits of agroecology. Not only does agroecology promote the independence of family farms by cutting down on the need to

buy things like pesticides and seeds, it also democratizes knowledge by transforming farmers into active participants in the development of agricultural science. According to Keith Warner's excellent study of a CAFF agroecology research program, successful agroecological research is impossible without participatory social-

learning networks among farmers.

Yet empowering farmers is not enough. True food sovereignty means giving democratic control to all participants in our food system, including the farmworkers who have historically been the most marginalized. A food system that benefits local consumers and family farms but ignores the well-being of workers is not a sustainable one. This is why worker-empowerment efforts, like those the Coalition of Immokalee Workers have pioneered in Florida, must become a central part of the sustainable food movement.

Encouragingly, a number of advocacy groups based in the East of the United States, such as the National Family Farm Coalition and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, have already joined forces with La Via Campesina. But no such alignment has taken root on the West Coast so far.

Now is the crucial moment to remedy that and bring California farmers into a network that will magnify their efforts to strengthen democratic control and develop sustainable ways to farm in the state's increasingly dry climate.

As the largest state economy in the U.S., California's leadership can shift the nation. We've seen it on issues from limits on tailpipe emissions to energy efficiency standards. Now it's time to see it on agriculture. And with organizations like CAFF putting food sovereignty front and center, that leadership could have the systemic thrust it needs to effect real change.

Source: YES! Magazine 5/12/15 <http://www.yesmagazine.org>

## Water pollution secrecy challenged

Nitrate pollution is the main threat to drinking water for farmworker communities throughout the Central Coast Region. Contaminated water seeps into these communities' aquifers from irrigated agricultural operations. Drinking water polluted with nitrate harms people in many ways, and children are particularly vulnerable: birth defects, cancer, potentially deadly "blue baby syndrome," thyroid, spleen, and kidney disease.

A lawsuit filed by California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) and co-plaintiff the Environmental Law Foundation ("ELF") in early May claims that an agricultural group, known as the Central Coast Groundwater Coalition, keeps data related to nitrate pollution secret. State law and regulations require growers to test well water, report the results to affected users, and report to the Board on efforts to protect the users, such as providing alternative sources of drinking water. All the information is public.

Instead, the Board's policy allows only the growers' Coalition to perform all testing, receive the results, decide whether the data are "valid," decide whether the testing data show elevated nitrate levels, notify the polluter, and receive confirmation letters back from the grower. The Coalition keeps to itself all records of compliance and other materials; it cuts out the Regional Board and the public entirely.

The suit claims it refused a request to release any records at all under the Public Records Act. The suit also claims that the Board's policy allowing secrecy violates California's Water Code.

"Small communities need to have access to information about where contaminated water exists and to be able to verify that residents have been notified about their water being contaminated," said Pearl Kan, CRLA attorney. "The Regional Board's policy violates fundamental principles of democratic governance," said Nathaniel Kane, attorney for ELF. "The Board has delegated its regulatory authority over growers to a group which is entirely controlled by the growers themselves."

"Low-income rural residents have a right to know where contaminated drinking water is located in their community," stated Mike Meuter, CRLA Director of Litigation, Advocacy and Training.

About California Rural Legal Assistance: Founded in 1966, CRLA's mission is to fight for justice and individual rights alongside the most exploited communities of our society. For more info, visit: [www.crla.org](http://www.crla.org)

About Environmental Law Foundation: ELF, founded on Earth Day, 1991, is a nonprofit environmental organization committed to improving environmental quality in California. For more info, visit: [www.envirolaw.org](http://www.envirolaw.org)

Source: California Rural Legal Assistance release 5/11/15 [www.crla.org](http://www.crla.org) California Rural Legal Assistance, 1430 Franklin Street, Suite 103, Oakland, CA 94612



# Coalition files lawsuit over 'bomb trains'

JON QUEALLY

A coalition of prominent environmental groups on Thursday filed a lawsuit against the Department of Transportation over objections to what they say are inadequate federal regulations of trains carrying volatile and dangerous crude oil which have proven a grave threat to the communities and wilderness areas they pass through as they criss-cross the country with increasing frequency.

Submitted by Earthjustice on behalf of numerous organizations—including ForestEthics, Sierra Club, Waterkeeper Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity, and several regional groups—the lawsuit, submitted to the 9th Circuit argues that recently issued crude-by-rail regulations by the DOT are not up to the challenge posed by the rapid increase of trains transporting crude oil across the nation. The dangers have been made evident, say the groups involved, by a seemingly endless series of fiery—and in some cases deadly—oil train derailments in recent years.

The recent surge in U.S. and Canadian oil production—much of it from Bakken shale mining operation in North Dakota and tar sands from Alberta, Canada—has led to a more than 4,000 percent increase in crude oil shipped by rail from 2008 to 2013, the groups stated, with much of that traffic coming from trains with 100 to 120 oil cars that can be more than 1.5 miles long. That increased traffic, the coalition argues, has resulted in an unprecedented rate of derailments and spills, with more train accidents in 2013 than in the 38 years from 1975 to 2012 combined.

Less than a week after the DOT released its final tank car safety rule on May 1, as the coalition noted in a press statement, a train carrying crude oil exploded outside of

Heimdal, North Dakota. Under the current standards, the groups argue, the kind of tank cars involved in that accident would not be retired from crude oil shipping or retrofitted for another five to eight years.

"The Department of Transportation's weak oil train standard just blew up in its face on the plains of North Dakota last week," said Patti Goldman, an Earthjustice attorney. "Pleas from the public, reinforced by the National Transportation Safety Board, to stop hauling explosive crude in these tank cars have fallen on deaf ears, leaving people across the country vulnerable to catastrophic accidents."

As Kate Sheppard reports for the /Huffington Post/: "The Department of Transportation rules [...] call for phasing out older models of tankers that carry crude oil and other flammable liquids. But it could take up to 10 years to phase out some tankers -- an "unduly long phase-out period for tank cars that are prone to puncture, spill oil, ignite, and harm communities in train accidents," the suit argues. The rules apply only to trains carrying a continuous row of 20 or more tank cars loaded with flammable liquids, or those carrying a total of 35 or more tank cars, which the groups say will allow unsafe tankers to stay in use. The lawsuit contends the new rules fail to require enough notification for communities and first responders who would be called upon in the event of an accident -- a criticism echoed by the largest firefighters union."

According to the coalition behind the lawsuit, the DOT rules fail to protect people and communities in several major ways:

- The rule leaves hazardous cars carrying volatile crude oil on the tracks for up to 10 years.

- The rule has gutted public notification requirements, leaving communities and emergency responders in the dark about the oil trains and explosive crude oil rumbling through their towns and cities.

- New cars will require thicker shells to reduce punctures and leaks, but retrofit cars are subject to a less protective standard.

- The standard doesn't impose adequate speed limits to ensure that oil trains run at safe speeds. Speed limits have been set for "high threat urban areas," but very few cities have received that designation.

"Explosive oil trains present real and imminent danger, and protecting the public and waterways requires an aggressive regulatory response," said Marc Yaggi, executive director of Waterkeeper Alliance. "Instead, the Department of Transportation has finalized an inadequate rule that clearly was influenced by industry and will not prevent more explosions and fires in our communities. We hope our challenge will result in a rule that puts the safety of people and their waterways first."

"We're suing the administration because these rules won't protect the 25 million Americans living in the oil train blast zone," said Todd Paglia, ForestEthics executive director. "Let's start with common sense -- speed limits that are good for some cities are good for all communities, 10 years is too long to wait for improved tank cars, and emergency responders need to know where and when these dangerous trains are running by our homes and schools."

*Source: Common Dreams 5/15/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>*

## Seeds planted for Bernie Sanders-led grassroots revolution

SCOTT GALINDEZ

Within 24 hours of making his presidential bid official, Senator Bernie Sanders raised \$1.5 million dollars from 35,000 donors. To put this in perspective, he raised more money than Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and maybe Hillary Clinton. Clinton did not release her first day totals. "Bernie," as his supporters call him, out-raised every campaign that reported their first day totals. The average contribution to his campaign was \$43.54.

On CBS's Face the Nation, Sanders noted that, since he announced his candidacy at the end of April, 200 thousand people have pledged to volunteer and he has received nearly 90,000 donations. "I don't think we're going to outspend Hillary Clinton or Jeb Bush or anybody else, but I think we are going to raise the kinds of money we need to run a strong and winning campaign," said Sanders.

Whenever he talks about his agenda, he says no president could achieve it without millions of people backing him in a grassroots revolution. It's early in the campaign, but so far signs are the revolution he called for is starting to take shape.

Last Wednesday over 250 activists from around the country came together on a conference call to kick off a new grassroots organization called "People for Bernie Sanders." People on the call were not your typical Democratic Party activists. They were veteran organizers who don't generally get involved in electoral politics. Many came from the Occupy movement and would probably be organizing protests in candidates' offices if a candidate hadn't emerged that they could believe in. I'm not saying these folks

have ruled out a protest or two, but for now they are jumping into the electoral arena. One thing that separates them from other candidates' supporters is they are organizing outside of the official campaign. There won't be a top down agenda that they all have to adhere to. Local groups are encouraged to "be the campaign."

Charles Lenchner, one of the conveners of "People for Bernie Sanders" explained it this way: "We want supporters of Bernie Sanders to build a broad movement to elect him and 'just do it'; this is not the same as waiting for some entity (or email list) to give you specific instructions. Right now, at this moment, there simply is no Bernie campaign where most voters reside; the best antidote is for everyone to collectively bootstrap what they can. This is our advantage to counter the money power of the corporate candidates." Lenchner said they are in communication with the campaign and want to coordinate their activities.

Shana East, the regional director for People for Bernie summed it up this way: "A grassroots movement is a homegrown movement. It's from the bottom up, not top down. So, we don't wait for someone in Washington D.C. to allow us to do something. We decide on a local level what needs to be done and then we do it. We call this a Do-ocracy!"

East, who said the core group involved in People for Bernie has been so busy that many have not slept in a week, helped organize 2 meetups already in Chicago. The first one drew 75 people with only one day's notice. She described the events as very passionate, with people getting involved in the discussion and preparing to work. Activists around the

country are organizing meetups in their communities.

One common theme at the meetups has been expressed in statements like Jake Kaufman's in Chicago, who said, "This is my first campaign. because Bernie's the first candidate I've ever been inspired by."

People for Bernie is not the only grassroots effort working outside the official campaign. Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) launched "Run Bernie Run" as far back as August, even before MoveOn launched "Run Warren Run." Vermont Today reported in August: "If Bernie does run, we can definitely get resources to help him move forward in states like Iowa and New Hampshire," said Conor Boylan, co-director of the Progressive Democrats of America. "We are going to continue to keep an eye on him because our base loves him; he is creating a lot of buzz."

On Facebook there are multiple pages in many states with thousands of followers. One group, Bernie Sanders for President 2016, is doing their best to maintain a list of all the Facebook pages and even has formed a private group of administrators from the various pages to coordinate efforts.

With the Sanders campaign just getting started, the early response has to be encouraging. While the pundits continue to describe the race for the Democratic Party nomination as a "coronation" for Hillary Clinton,

Sanders supporters are not going to concede. They know they have an uphill fight, but are a committed bunch. They come from movements that understand struggle. Bernie himself acknowledges that change does not come without a fight. He does however see a path to victory: "There

is, in my view, massive dissatisfaction in this country today with corporate establishment and the greed of corporate America and the incredibly unequal distribution of wealth and income which currently exists." Sanders also said his record on this issue over the past 25 years shows that he has led the way in standing up for working families and taking on "the billionaire class," Wall Street, private insurance companies, and drug companies.

Sanders always concludes his stump speech by reminding people that progressives have been winning on many fronts. He gives examples ranging from an African American being elected president to the acceptance of gay marriage. He says that 30 years ago nobody would have believed these things possible.

Convincing people he can win is the biggest obstacle Bernie and his supporters have. Eight years ago, Hillary Clinton was the presumptive nominee. She wasn't polling as strongly as this time, but with seasoned candidates like John Edwards and Joe Biden in the race, voters had options they were familiar with. Before Barack Obama won Iowa, the polls showed Hillary Clinton as the top choice of African Americans. They didn't believe America was ready for a black man to win. After Iowa, they became believers. So it is possible to overcome the "I love Bernie but he just can't win" mindset.

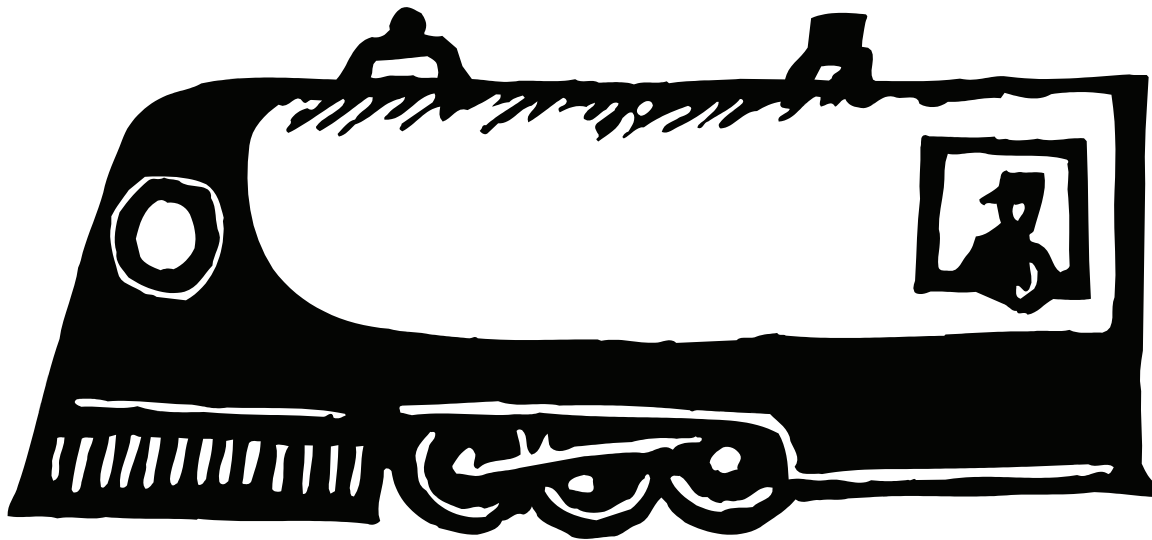
If the American people vote for the candidate who best represents their interests, they will vote for Bernie Sanders.

*Source: Reader Supported News 5/12/15 <http://readersupportednews.org>*





## Is safety safe and who decides?



THOMAS BLOCK

Can the oil and rail industries convince the Obama administration that 25 million Americans who live within railway blast zones are able to sustain and keep on sustaining tragedies like Lac-Megantic before Main Street America retaliates? Let's look at the following.

Back on August 20, 1969, two Penn Central trains collided killing four and injuring forty-three. At that time, the NTSB recommended implementation of PTC systems (Positive Train Control which monitors the location and movement of trains in real time). A PTC system had not been installed by September of 2008 when twenty-five train passengers were killed and 102 were injured in the Chatsworth neighborhood of Los Angeles. Congress passed the Rail Safety Improvement Act before the end of the year that required implementation of PTC systems by 2015.

On June 25, 2012 outside of Goodwell, Oklahoma, two Union Pacific freight trains collided killing three crew members. Slow to react, there were no PTC systems on board either of those two trains. On August 1, 2013, Republican Senator John Thune, the Commerce Committee Chairman, cosponsored senate bill 1462 which delayed the installation of the railroad safety risk reduction program (use of PTC systems) from 2015 to the very end of 2020 with a possible two-year extension to 2022. By 2014, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) had exempted 10,000 miles of regional track or short lines from the original mandate. On August 17, 2014 and, again, slow to react, two Union Pacific freight trains collided head-on in Hoxie, Arkansas killing two more crew members. Guess what those two trains lacked. From

the original accident in 1969 until 2022, it may be 53 years before PTC installation is completed for a percentage of the rail industry's trains. And, the railroads keep stressing their hollow "Culture of Safety." We can easily see how the rail industry has twisted and manipulated the definition of safety and also influenced, in a negative way, the disposition of segments of the population. Last year, Charles Banks, President of RL Banks & Associates complained about the way "in which PTC is being implemented – partially the result of an unrealistically short, federally mandated timeline." And now there is the Philadelphia derailment that killed 8.

Prior to the passage of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, railroads had made their objection to PTC systems known since the early 1990s. They had complained that the "PTC systems were too costly to deploy" and had received support from the FRA which "judged that safety benefits did not justify the large investments. It [the FRA] took steps

We can't wait a decade for safer rail cars. The industry needs to make this issue a priority and expedite the safety enhancements,

to help develop and encourage the use of PTC systems but did not require them (Journal of Commerce)." The original estimated \$5.5 billion cost, offset by government aid under the Obama administration's economic stimulus plan and benefiting from improved service quality that would provide "material dollar-value benefits to the railroads," was flatly rejected by the railroads. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) stated: "financing this unprecedented PTC expense may have the effect of forcing BNSF to divert scarce capital resources from the baseline maintenance of the railroad as well as potentially jeopardize other investments that could have significantly more benefit to society including capital expansion projects that could attract more freight to move by rail."

There have been many times when the Federal Railroad Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board have appeared to be at odds with each other. Heather Caygle, a Politico correspondent, has recognized that the NTSB has long recommended remedies for the rail and oil industries that "the FRA has failed to adopt." Congressional complaints have vilified the FRA calling it a "rogue agency" that is "much too captive to the [railroad] industry" or maintains an "excessive coziness to the industry." The current NTSB chairperson, reacting to the rail industry's insistence for a ten year schedule to replace or retrofit tank cars, has said, "We can't wait a decade for safer rail cars. The industry needs to make this issue a priority and expedite the safety enhancements, otherwise, we continue to put our communities at risk." But, while the NTSB can make all the recommendations it deems necessary to transport high-risk cargoes, it is the regulatory FRA that balks when those regulations need to be made into law. Anthony Foxx, the current Secretary of Transportation has given the new FRA administrator an A+ for her very short tenure heading the FRA. The American Association of Railroads fondly remembers Sarah Feinberg for her ability "to fostering a 2014 agreement between DOT and the industry on voluntary measures to prevent derailments."

But, Ms. Feinberg's recent actions are foreboding. On April 27, the FRA sent out a safety advisory recommending that railroads "use highly qualified individuals to conduct the brake and mechanical inspections and recommends a reduction to the impact threshold levels the industry currently uses for wayside detectors that measure wheel impacts to ensure the wheel integrity of tank cars in those trains." This advisory was in response to mechanical contributions to recent derailments. Perhaps Ms. Feinberg needs to be reminded that it is the NTSB that makes recommendations. It is the FRA that regulates the railroad industry. We do not need another agency to make more recommendations.

## Global carbon levels surpassed 400 ppm for entire month

Marking yet another grim milestone for an ever-warming planet, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration revealed on Wednesday that, for the first time in recorded history, global levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere averaged over 400 parts per million (ppm) for an entire month—in March 2015. "This marks the fact that humans burning fossil fuels have caused global carbon dioxide concentrations to rise more than 120 parts per million since pre-industrial times," said Pieter Tans, lead scientist of NOAA's Global Greenhouse Gas Reference Network, in a press statement. "Half of that rise has occurred since 1980."

This is not the first time the

benchmark of 400 ppm has been reached. "We first reported 400 ppm when all of our Arctic sites reached that value in the spring of 2012," explained Tans. "In 2013 the record at NOAA's Mauna Loa Observatory first crossed the 400 ppm threshold." However, Tans said that reaching 400 ppm across the planet for an entire month is a "significant milestone."

A tweet released by NOAA on Wednesday shows that this development is consistent with rising levels over recent years. However, zooming to a wider historical lens shows an even more dramatic increase. During pre-industrial times, CO2 levels were at 280 ppm. Scientists have warned that,

in order to achieve safe levels, CO2 must be brought down to a maximum of 350ppm—the number from which the environmental organization 350.org derives its name.

Bill Snape, senior counsel to the Center for Biological Diversity, told / Common Dreams/, "The fact that we are now firmly over 400 ppm for first time in human history indicates to me that we ought to be moving with much more urgency to fix the underlying problem."

Source: Common Dreams 5/6/15 <http://www.commondreams.org> Common Dreams, P.O. Box 443, Portland, ME 04112-0443



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

**Attorneys at Law**  
42 N. Sutter Street, Suite 40, Stockton  
104 N. School St. #205, Lodi  
948-9384 or 369-1333

- Social Security
- Wills
- Probate
- Trusts

*Se Habla Espanol • Thai • Vietnamese*



**LELA NELSON REALTY**  
2222 Pacific Avenue • Stockton, CA 95204

**(209) 467-1200**  
(209) 942-5673 Fax  
(209) 466-6243 Res.  
E-Mail: [LelaNelson@aol.com](mailto:LelaNelson@aol.com)  
Website: [www.lelanelson.com](http://www.lelanelson.com)

**E. Lela Nelson**  
BROKER





# US responsibility for global refugee crises

MARGARET KIMBERLEY

All over the world people risk and sometimes lose their lives escaping poverty or war fare in their native lands. Throughout human history migrants have sought out places that are safer or more prosperous but they are seldom greeted with open arms. Xenophobia, racism, and fears of scarcity prevent desperate people from being integrated into societies that might accept them. However, the urge to escape violence or hunger never abates.

The most visible of the world's refugee crises today is taking place in the Mediterranean sea. Thus far in 2015, it is estimated that 1,724 people have died on unseaworthy vessels as they try to reach southern Europe from Libya. These refugees come from many African nations, from Syria and from countries as far away as Bangladesh. On April 18, 2015 a vessel holding an estimated 850 people capsized with only 28 survivors.

This humanitarian crisis is the direct result of the United States and NATO decision to effect regime change in Libya in 2011. Presumptive democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton infamously said of Libyan president Gaddafi, "We came, we saw, he died." Not only was Gaddafi killed by the conspiracy between NATO and jihadists in his country, but Libya never recovered from the intervention.

The most well known individual victim was the American ambassador, killed in Benghazi by the same forces which the United States supported. Very few people in this country are aware of their government's complicity and those who do know don't want to discuss it. The republicans who were as eager to intervene as the Obama administration want to make embarrassing political hay but don't want to talk about the ongoing humanitarian crisis which the United States created.

Citizens of many African nations routinely went to work

in Libya, an oil rich nation which had jobs for migrants. Libya was an example of the prosperity all Africa nations might be able to experience before it was turned to rubble by NATO's machinations. Internecine warfare has turned it into a failed state. There is no legitimate government and it is so dangerous that there are no international flights going into that country. Libya can't even effectively extract or sell the oil resources that it has.

This chaos makes it a perfect place for human traffickers to do business. Africans make a dangerous journey across the Sahara desert from Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria, Niger and Mali. Further east from the horn of Africa come the Ethiopians, Somalians and Eritreans, all of whom suffer from American instigated destruction in their lands. So many Syrians have fled the NATO attack on their nation that neighboring countries Lebanon and Jordan prevent them from entering. Now Syrians fly first to the Sudan and wait to be smuggled into Europe through Libya, whose long coast is a magnet for smugglers and would-be migrants hoping to enter European nations as refugees.

The hand wringing among the Americans and the European Union countries is entirely hypocritical and ought to be pointed out as such. Thousands of Libyans were killed or displaced by the NATO intervention and a brutal race war was directed at black Libyans and African migrants. Libya would not be the point embarkation point for so much misery had it been left alone.

The world's corporate media have a seemingly infinite capacity to produce hours of footage and thousands of words without ever getting to the inconvenient truth. In this case

the truth is that the United States and its allies lied to the world when they claimed a dubious responsibility to protect Libyans. They were interested in nothing of the sort. The only goal was to attack yet another country too weak to thwart their plans for imperial expansion. They succeeded in getting rid of Gaddafi and in creating another crisis for humanity.

Then again Libya isn't much different from Central American countries like Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. US backed coups, interventions, and drug policing have created violence and chaos in

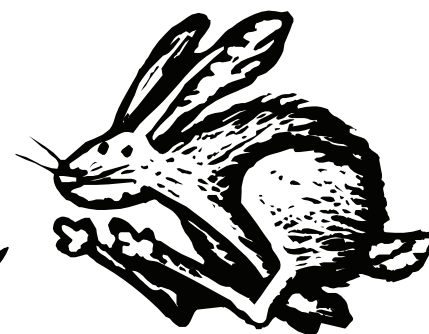
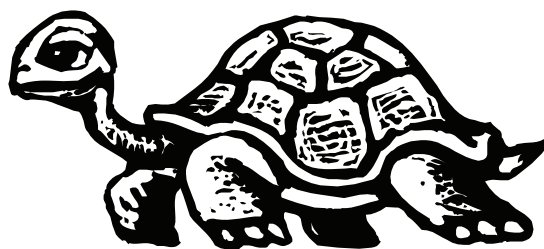
those countries. When unaccompanied children began arriving in the United States there was little discussion of our government's culpability. Political discourse, such as it was, was focused on political battles in congress about immigration policy and not about how this particular crisis was American made.

We now see another sorry spectacle of suffering people and powerful nations who could help but refuse to do so. It is all the more disgraceful because those countries created the problem in the first place. Let the NATO nations take in every refugee fleeing on a leaky boat. It is the least they could do to make restitution for the suffering they created.

MARGARET KIMBERLEY'S FREEDOM RIDER COLUMN APPEARS WEEKLY IN BLACK AGENDA REPORT, AND IS WIDELY REPRINTED ELSEWHERE. SHE MAINTAINS A FREQUENTLY UPDATED BLOG AS WELL AS AT [HTTP://FREEDOMRIDER.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://FREEDOMRIDER.BLOGSPOT.COM).

Source: Black Agenda Report 5/12/15 <http://blackagendareport.com>

## Military dodges budget austerity with House slush fund



SARAH LAZARE

The U.S. House of Representatives on Friday narrowly passed a \$612 billion war spending bill, relying on a back-door slush fund to dodge the austerity cuts that are gutting domestic programs from education to health care. The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed 269 to 151, largely along party lines. The budget circumvents cuts passed in 2011, known as "sequestration," by shifting \$89 billion into the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Fund, which was first created in 2001 as an "emergency" fund for the U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The OCO was supposed to temporary but has since become a

permanent fixture that allows the military to sidestep cuts—and maintain seemingly limitless war spending.

Many Democrats voted against the bill—and President Barack Obama threatened to veto it—because of its reliance on the OCO to circumvent budget sequestration. "We will not let defense out from under the budget caps and keep everything else under it," said Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.) on Thursday. However, historically Democrats have also consistently pressed for historically high levels of military funding, and the total amount of \$612 billion is, in fact, in line with what the Obama administration requested for the 2016 budget. Furthermore, Obama's initial proposal had called for nearly

\$51 billion to be placed in the OCO.

Some Republicans signaled they believe military spending should be limitless. "Whatever our troops need to get the job done, they should get it, and the House has acted to provide just that," said John Boehner (R-Ohio). Analysts say this year's budget fight brings a critical question to the fore when it comes to Pentagon funding: Is the OCO slush fund here to stay?

Lindsay Koshgarian, research director for National Priorities Project, told / Common Dreams/, "This seems to be a turning point, where either we will get in a pattern of accepting a defense slush fund as we go forward with caps or we won't. Will we see defense

spending with no real limits in sight while we have limits on domestic spending for education and health care and infrastructure?" In addition to high levels of military funding, the bill also includes a provision that would make it more difficult for the Obama administration to transfer prisoners from Guantánamo Bay and would present another roadblock to closing the infamous facility.

The Senate version, which passed the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, also relies on the OCO war chest to maintain high levels of funding. The legislation is next headed to the appropriations process, and it will be months until the fate of the NDAA is known.

Source: Common Dreams 5/15/15 <http://www.commondreams.org>



### Contact Your Reps

Pres. Barack H. Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC 20500. 202-456-1414; [www.whitehouse.gov](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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

Rep. Jeff Denham (R-District 10), 4701 Sisk Road, Suite 202, Modesto, CA 95356, 209-579-5458, Fax 209-579-5028. 1730 Longworth HOB, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-4540. Twitter @RepJeffDunham

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





# Movement builders should listen to Bernie Sanders — focus on mass action, not candidates

KATE ARONOFF

Is Bernie Sanders a more progressive presidential candidate than Hillary Clinton? Undoubtedly. Will he single-handedly catalyze a united left front in the United States? Probably not.

Unchallenged, Hillary Clinton is likely to run a campaign chock-full of populist optics, but thin on any real engagement with the issues that make progressives most nervous about her bid: foreign policy, welfare, corporate influence and more. Sanders, a registered independent, who caucuses with Democrats yet identifies as a democratic socialist, has been unafraid to talk about class inequality, even — heaven forbid — capitalism. He's even started bringing a long-taboo word back into mainstream American political conversation: socialism.

As Ned Resnikoff points out for Al Jazeera, Americans' stance toward socialism has been thawing since the Cold War. Between Occupy Wall Street, Kshama Sewant's election to Seattle City Council, and — now — Sanders' candidacy, it may finally be possible to de-link the "S Word" from the gulags and authoritarianism of the Soviet Union, and re-associate with such basic amenities as healthcare, education and housing. According to a 2011 Gallup poll, 49 percent of 18-29 year olds even have a positive view of socialism. With any hope, this year's Democratic primary debates will challenge Clinton to choose firm sides on these issues, and maybe even build them into her platform in response to the vocal minority more endeared to Sanders' populism than Clinton's smug establishmentarianism.

Likewise, Sanders, with some notable silences, generally espouses views closer to those of activists within today's emergent movements for social justice. Beyond words, though, what could his candidacy as a Democrat mean for

organizers on the ground? While a left-of Clinton Democratic contender may help positively shape the debate going into primary season, electing a progressive into the White House doesn't mean anything unless there's a movement infrastructure in place to hold them truly accountable.

Smartly, Elizabeth Warren — maybe in a move to preserve her chances for 2020 or 2024 — has repeatedly declined the left flank of the Democratic Party's calls for her to run for president. Still, as a recent *New Yorker* profile of Warren pointed out, Warren's role is as the Democrats' squeaky, anti-establishment wheel and a bulldog on Wall Street bankers, Republicans and centrist Democrats alike; there's also no indication she won't make a run in the future. By that time, America's progressives, working together, may be well organized enough to actually put someone into office they can trust — and have enough street heat to make sure they don't go back on their word.

As Joel Bleifuss argues over at *In These Times*, candidates are nothing without grassroots supporters ready and willing to take their candidates to bat should they screw up. Sanders himself told MSNBC that "No president, not Bernie Sanders, not anybody, will succeed [in taking on the oligarchs] unless there is a mass mobilization of millions of people who stand up and say enough is enough."

Looking towards the 2016 elections, those attempting to build or catalyze transformative movements should take Sanders' own advice — part of which might mean putting a little less faith in the man himself.

Focusing on candidates themselves, however aligned with a movement's views, is a flawed way to approach achieving major progressive wins. As Arun Gupta writes for Telesur TV, "go ahead and vote for Sanders and Clinton, but

that's all. Spend the rest of your time, energy and money on building militant grassroots activism." Rather than stumping for Sanders or some Warrenite specter of Hillary that will never exist, organizers might devote their time to building out movements that won't just ask for center stage come election time, but make it impossible to imagine candidates who aren't vying for those movements' support, even tapping its leaders for their cabinets.

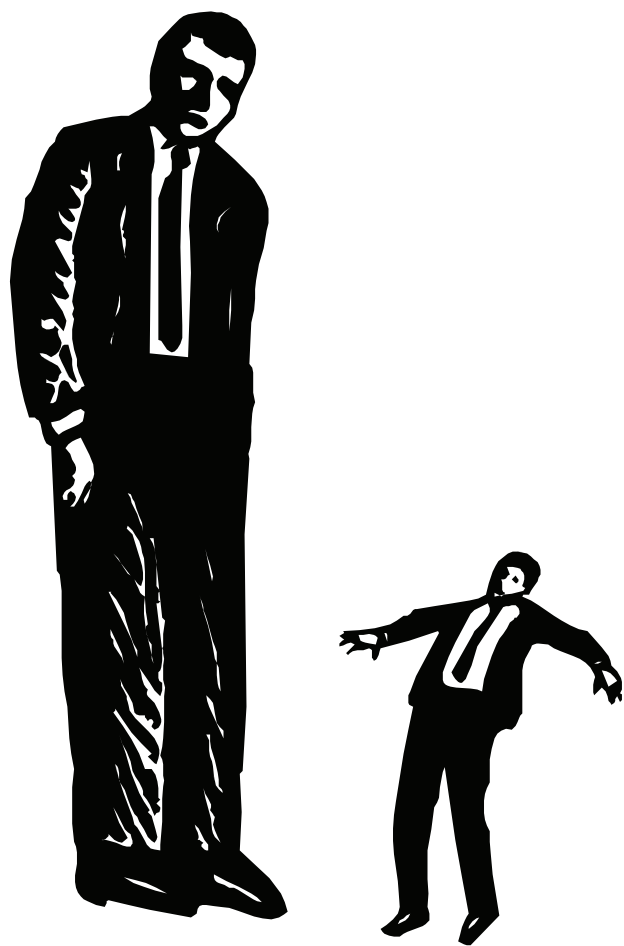
If Barack Obama's hawkish, hardly "change" filled presidency has been any indication, elected officials are only as valuable as the masses holding their feet to the fire. As a legitimate candidate, Sanders has the potential to claw open conversations that organizers have been pushing for years, creating rare opportunities in the national dialogue that grassroots forces can use to their advantage. It may even make the next administration, Republican or Democratic, less devastating to working families, communities of color and the planet. But on issues as pressing as violent, systemic racism, climate change, and severe economic inequality, good candidates won't save us. Strong movements will — and they could make the next election cycle one to get truly excited about.

KATE ARONOFF IS AN ORGANIZER AND FREELANCE JOURNALIST BASED IN PHILADELPHIA, PA. WHILE IN SCHOOL, SHE WORKED EXTENSIVELY WITH THE FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT MOVEMENT ON THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL, CO-FOUNDING SWARTHMORE MOUNTAIN JUSTICE AND THE FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT STUDENT NETWORK (DSN). SHE IS CURRENTLY WORKING TO BUILD A STUDENT POWER NETWORK ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA. FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER @KATEARONOFF

Source: *Waging Nonviolence* 5/11/15 <http://wagingnonviolence.org>

## CEO-to-worker pay rises to a ratio of 373-1

MARK KARLIN



The AFL-CIO just released its executive compensation study covering 2014, and the chasm between workers' and CEOs' pay is rising at an alarming rate. According to the McClatchy Washington Bureau, the gap continues to "soar": "The ratio jumped to 374-to-one in 2014, up from 331-to-one in 2013, the union report said, noting that back in 1980 it stood at 42-to-one....[The figures take on new] importance... as economists and policymakers debate the cause of anemic wage growth. Income has been largely stagnant for workers, even as millions of new jobs have been created and the unemployment rate now stands at 5.4 percent. [The CEO pay] increase of 15.6 percent over the prior year [is] well above the sub-par annual wage growth for workers that's below 3 percent."

In short, with all the talk of closing the income inequality gap, it is only getting vastly worse, according to the AFL-CIO study. On the AFL-CIO Executive Paywatch website, Walmart is used as a case study demonstrating income disparity between CEOs and workers: "Walmart CEO Doug McMillon received \$19,392,608 in total compensation. In comparison, the average production and nonsupervisory worker in the U.S. made \$36,134 in 2014. Doug McMillon made 536 times the U.S. average rank-and-file worker's pay."

As a counterpoint to McMillon's salary, Executive Paywatch offers the testimonial of Tiffany, a Walmart worker: "I worked at Walmart for almost three years as a customer service manager in Laurel, Md., after working at a Walmart store in Louisiana. I am a proud wife and a mother of two girls. In 2013, I earned about \$12,000 as a full-time employee. These poverty wages force my family to receive public assistance. Currently, we are enrolled in the public health care program for low-income families and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program for my infant daughter."

The pay disparity between the top corporate earners and

the workers is shameless. And the US taxpayer is actually subsidizing the profits of large corporations such as Walmart; we're paying for the survival programs that underpaid employees must turn to for support. Without these crucial programs, many employees would not have enough money to put food on the table.

In fact, Walmart depends on government programs in multiple ways. In February of 2014, a BuzzFlash commentary noted, "Walmart is claiming that its sales dropped in the fourth quarter because the government has cut back on food stamps, also called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)."

As BuzzFlash documented in an April 2015 commentary, six Walmart heirs have assets that exceed the combined economic worth of the bottom 40 percent of the US population. This is a stunning fact with profound implications: "There are much larger issues of financially restructuring the US economic system to be debated than just returning to the status quo before the great income shift facilitated by neoliberal economics."

However, as a practical reality, for the 2016 election, the discussion is going to be limited to those who claim that they are advocating increased "economic opportunity" and a much smaller group of politicians who call for an economic redistribution of wealth back to the workers and poor of the United States.

Expanded "economic opportunity" is a misleading siren song, because if the idea had any merit, we would have seen a vast expansion of "economic opportunity" in the last 35 years. Instead, we have seen a growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few — and stagnant and decreased wages for the vast majority of the rest of the nation. The pay-gap statistics released by the AFL-CIO this week are further confirmation that only true systemic economic change can lead us to just income distribution in the US.

Source: *Buzzflash at Truthout* 5/14/15 <http://truth-out.org/buzzflash>



Saturday, June 20 | 12pm to 7pm

# 2015 Juneteenth Annual Citywide Festival

**San Joaquin County Human Services  
Agency / Taft Community Center  
389 W Downing Ave.  
Stockton, California**

San Joaquin County Human Services Agency will feature the 40th Annual Juneteenth Festival! This year the theme is: Strengthening Our Family / Strengthening Our Community.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. This year celebration will commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. A special tribute/salute i.e. “2015 Juneteenth Humanitarian” Award will be bestowed to the Rev. Dr. Willie A. Douglas, At-large Civil-Human Rights & Social Justice Advocate; the 2015 Juneteenth Spirit Award to Ulysses Hall, lifelong Stockton resident and founder of “We Are Family”; Rev. Jeremiah King (Posthumously) – Founder of Second Baptist Church, first Black Church in Stockton, CA in 1854; Mrs. Larcene Dixon – Librarian/Historian for the Second Baptist Church; and Ms. Harriet Bush – at 102 years old, Ms. Bush is a Matriarch in the community.

As we reflect / ponder, looking back on the struggles African Americans endured in their quest for freedom, we’re reminded, and move forward, with love and understanding that Juneteenth is a day of reflection, a day of renewal, a pride filled day. It is a moment in time taken to appreciate the African (Black) American experience. It is inclusive of all races, ethnicities and nationalities as nothing is more comforting than the hand of a friend, with progress for a more united diverse colorful community flower of people.

With ongoing collaborative efforts through past years by faith-based representatives, the Taft Community Center, various community activists, the County of San Joaquin and the City of Stockton, the Juneteenth Celebration Event has maintained a tradition of recognizing the importance of Emancipation Proclamation, with emphasis on education and economic development, in looking back on how Black African Americans within the City of Stockton / County of San Joaquin have made progress through the years, bringing awareness of a continued need for a strategic plan as the community continues to move forward.

The 2015 Annual Stockton City-Wide Juneteenth Celebration is free and open to the public. For entertainment and education, there will be numerous cultural and historical displays, a fashion show, including a car showcase exhibition. For the third consecutive year, there will be a scheduled morning Juneteenth History Instructional Class session lead

by Geraldine Hollis / Rev. Dr. Willie A. Douglas / Terence West / Min. Tommie Muhammad, open to the public, specifically targeted toward school age students.

The Festival will feature performers and guest speakers that will enlighten on Juneteenth Celebration true meaning and purpose, and how the community of whole can move forward collaboratively in a united effort for the betterment of all people.

### Tentative Schedule:

- Educational History - 10am-11:30am
- Welcome - 12pm-12:15pm
- Opening Prayer - 12:15pm-12:20pm
- Introduce Juneteenth Committee - 12:20pm-12:30pm
- National Anthems - 12:30pm-12:45pm
- Introduce DJ - Wes Payton - 12:45pm-1pm
- Essay Contest Winner - 1pm-1:10pm
- Elizabeth Ayala (Gospel) - 1:10pm-1:25pm
- DJ Music - Wes Payton - 1:25pm-1:50pm
- Essay Contest Winner - 1:50pm-2pm
- Guest Speakers - 2pm-2:30pm
- Award Presentation - 2:30pm-2:45pm
- Essay Contest Winner - 2:45pm-2:55pm
- Saar Productions (Line Dance) - 2:55pm-3:15pm
- Rob C (R&B) - 3:15pm-3:30pm
- Essay Contest Winner - 3:30pm-3:40pm
- Fashion Show - 3:40pm-4:10pm
- West Coast Soul Line Dancers - 4:10pm-4:30pm
- Bump City (Old School) - 4:30pm-5:15pm
- Raffle - 5:15pm-5:30pm
- Ruk22 & Elegance (Hip Hop) - 5:30pm-5:45pm
- Mudville (Rap) - 5:45pm-6pm
- Bump City (Old School) - 6pm-7pm

Saturday & Sunday June 27 & 28 Saturday, June 20 | 12pm to 8pm

# Lodi Obon Bazaar

**Buddhist Church of Lodi  
23 N Stockton St  
Lodi, California**

For many Japanese-American Buddhists, Obon is a time to gather and express gratitude to loved ones who have passed on before. A family-friendly event, Lodi’s Obon Bazaar is a “can’t miss” summertime tradition for many. Featuring popular Japanese dishes including teriyaki chicken, maki sushi, and tempura, along with gourmet sno-cones, desserts and Ben’s “No Monku” hamburgers, these favorites are the highlight of the weekend for many.

New additions to the 2015 menu will include award-winning wines from Mikami Vineyards as well as an array of Japanese craft beers and sake. In addition to foods, bingo and children’s games, Saturday’s afternoon schedule is filled with Japanese and Buddhist cultural events and entertainment including ukulele strummers, Japanese musicians, vocalists, folk dances, works by local artists and an exhibit of the history of Japanese-American baseball in Lodi.

Sunday’s events will include food sales beginning at noon, bingo at 1pm and conclude with the traditional Taiko drummers and Obon Odori dancing at 7 pm. Over many

years in the US, Obon bazaars have evolved into celebrations of joy that culminate in the traditional Bon odori, or dancing. These folk dances tell stories of traditional occupations and everybody is encouraged to join in as dancers circle around a central platform and dance to the accompaniment of live music often wearing colorful kimonos or happi coats. Reverend Katsu Kusunoki will be leading informative and educational tours of the Temple on both days beginning at 12:30 pm. Serving the Lodi are for 86 years, the Buddhist Church of Lodi is a member temple of the Buddhist Churches of America and welcomes all members of the community to attend the annual Bazaar and related events.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

#### Saturday, June 27:

- Food Sale: 12 - 8pm
- Church Tour (Hondo, Sanctuary by Rev. Katsu): 12:30 – 1:30
- Entertainment (Inside Air Conditioned JACL Hall)
  - 2:15 – 3:00 Ukulele Strummers
  - 3:00 – 3:30 Gagaku (Japanese Traditional Orchestra)

**Saturay, June 27 | 5pm-8pm  
Victory Park, Stockton, CA**

# Delta Fusion: Stockton Steaming Ahead

**Mission:** DeltaFusion ignites community creativity by bringing the stories of the San Joaquin Delta region – past, present, and future – to life with giant puppets and dramatic pageantry. DeltaFusion is a celebration of the diverse natural and cultural heritage of Stockton, California and the San Joaquin County Delta region. Using giant puppets, masks, music, and pageantry, DeltaFusion continues to tell the story of how these cultures were drawn to settle in our area and thrive there today. Join us for the fun in making this happen in 2015 or just plan to bring your family and friends to the big day in Victory Park on the last Saturday in June. Giant puppets, masked performers, musicians and costumed participants will wind their way around the park before gathering under the trees next to the Haggin Museum for the 5th annual DeltaFusion Pageant.

### WORKSHOP SCHEDULE 2015:

#### Big Build Sessions:

Saturdays, May 16, 23, 30, and  
June 6, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm  
Held at the University of the Pacific’s Theater Arts Building. Only adults are invited to attend Big Builds.

#### Community Workshops

Session I: Ages 6 – 12  
Monday – Friday, June 8 – 25  
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm  
Pacific’s Theater Arts Building

Session II: Ages 13 – Adult  
Monday – Friday, June 8 – 25  
3:30 pm – 5:30 pm  
Pacific’s Theater Arts Building

Dress Rehearsal: All participants  
Friday, June 26, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
on the grounds of Victory Park

#### Performance: All participants

Saturday, June 27, 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
on the grounds of Victory Park

For more information contact (209) 940-6315 or [education@hagginmuseum.org](mailto:education@hagginmuseum.org).

- 4:00 – 4:30 Shigin (Japanese Vocalized Poem)
- 5:00 – 5:30 Bujikan Buyu Dojo
- 5:30 – 8:00 Children’s Game Booths (Outside – Saturday Only)
- 1:00 – 8:00 Bingo (Inside air conditioned church basement)

#### Sunday, June 28

- Food Sale: 12 – 7
- 12:30 – 1:30 Church Tour (Hondo, Sanctuary by Rev. Katsu)
- 1:00 – 6:00 Bingo (Inside air conditioned church basement)
- 6:00 – 6:30 Taiko Drums (Street – Stockton Bukkyo Taiko)
- 7:00 – 9:00 Obon Odori (Street)
- Raffle Drawing to take place during Obon Odori intermission

More info: [office@lodibuddhist.net](mailto:office@lodibuddhist.net) or 209-368-5589





# JUNE/JULY CALENDAR

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

## MAY 15 - AUG 9

"Delta Grandeur" Photo Exhibition at The San Joaquin County Historical Museum, 11793 N. Micke Grove Road, Lodi. 11 am - 4 pm. The photography exhibition, reflecting the vision of local photographer Rich Turner, celebrates the beauty and diversity of the threatened Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Through vibrant imagery, the exhibition explores the complex relationship that humans and wildlife have forged in the Delta. Museum hours: Wed-Sun: 10am to 4pm. Adult \$5, senior & teen \$4, child \$2. Parking \$6. 953-3460 [info@sanjoaquinhistory.org](mailto:info@sanjoaquinhistory.org)

## THURS, MAY 21

Live Music at the Haggin with the Washboard Monkeys. American Roots Music at its finest! Upbeat and danceable rockabilly, swing, blues and jigs, all played with an acoustic bluegrass flair. Enjoy original music and songs you know, though you've never heard them played quite like this. 7 pm. Haggin Museum, Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, CA. \$8 adult, \$7 senior over 64, \$5 youth 10-17. Under 10 free with adult. (209) 940-6300

## THURS-SUN | MAY 21 - 31

Lodi Musical Theater presents "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers." Thurs-Fri 7:30, Sat 2 pm & 7:30 pm, Sun 4 pm. No show 5/29. Hilarious and nostalgic, set in the mountains of Oregon in the 1850's, "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" is a spectacular musical about seven rambunctious brothers who are desperate for wives. Charlene Powers Lange Theatre @ Hutchins Street Square, 125 S. Hutchins St, Lodi. Genl \$20, senior \$17, Sunday \$10. 333-6782

## FRI, MAY 22

Sky Tours at Delta College, 8 - 10 pm. Object: The Moon, Venus, Jupiter, 9:30 pm Deep Sky Object: M3 (Globular Cluster in Boötes) Volunteers from the Stockton Astronomical Society will set up their telescopes for the public at S.J. Delta College in the Athletics 1 parking lot on one Friday every month, May through December! Weather permitting. Every month we will attempt to feature a different deep sky object. Deep sky objects are very far away and look dim and fuzzy. We will point one of our larger aperture telescopes at a deep sky object during the last hour of viewing. In order to view these objects, it is often necessary to stand on a step stool or ladder that

will be next to the telescope. Free. Athletics 1 Parking Lot @ San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 823-0328 or [dave.jacobi@comcast.net](mailto:dave.jacobi@comcast.net)

Friday Night Jazz at the Grand Theatre, 8 - 10 pm. Once a month, the lobbies of the Grand Theatre are transformed into a swanky jazz night club. Main Street Music presents various Jazz musicians from around the region. Appetizers, desserts, craft beers and featured wines available for purchase in the Don Cose Arts Café. All ages welcome. Must be 21+ to consume alcohol. \$8. Grand Theatre Center for the Arts, 715 Central Ave, Tracy. 831-6858

## SAT, MAY 23

Astronomy in the Park at Oak Grove Regional Park, 4520 W Eight Mile Rd, Stockton. Similar activities to Sky Tours (see May 22). 8:15 pm. Park entry fee \$6. 462-0798

Peter Hackett & Friends at Whirlow's, 1924 Pacific Avenue, Stockton Enjoy free, live blues music! 7 - 9 pm. 466-2823 [whirlowl@aol.com](mailto:whirlowl@aol.com)

## TUES, MAY 26

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

## FRI, SUN | MAY 29, 31

Stockton Opera presents the Beloved Die Fledermaus, Now in its 46th year, Stockton Opera proudly presents Die Fledermaus for two performances. Set in 19th century Vienna, Die Fledermaus is filled with lively melodies and unforgettable waltzes; it is one of the most celebrated and popular operettas by Johann Strauss II, the famous "Waltz King." Performed in English, this fully staged operetta is produced and directed by James Haffner, with music conducted by Peter Jaffe and choreography by Jennifer Hargreaves. The opera features Stockton favorites Jessica Siena as Rosalinde and Daniel Ebbers as Eisenstein. Die Fledermaus will be performed on Friday, May 29, 7:30 pm and on Sunday, May 31, 2 pm. Both performances will be staged at the Faye Spanos Concert Hall, University of the Pacific. There will be two intermissions. Tickets are \$20-\$45 and are available through the Stockton Symphony ticket office, 951-0196 during business hours, and online through [www.StocktonOpera.org](http://www.StocktonOpera.org).

## MON, JUNE 1

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

## WED, JUNE 3

Concerts in the Park: Steve Trucco 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, JUNE 4

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

## SAT, JUNE 6

Free Admission Day at The Haggin Museum, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, Come enjoy free admission to the Haggin every 1st Saturday of the month. 12 - 5 pm. 940-6300 [info@hagginmuseum.org](mailto:info@hagginmuseum.org)

## SUN, JUNE 7

The 42nd Annual Jewish Food Fair 9:30 am - 2:30 pm. This wonderful family event draws thousands of visitors from around the Central Valley each year to enjoy a taste of some great "Jewish soul food." There will be live music, Israeli dancing, Jewish music with our youth choir, and synagogue tours. Guests will dine on exceptional Jewish food, cooked the old-fashioned way by members of the Temple Israel congregation, using authentic Jewish recipes, all-natural ingredients and lots of tender, loving care. Brunch tickets are for sale in advance, or on the day of the event for \$10, and include bagels and lox or corned beef on rye, coleslaw, pickle, and orange juice & coffee. Temple Israel, 5105 N. El Dorado St., Stockton, 477-9306

## TUES, JUNE 9

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

## WED, JUNE 10

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.

## FRI, JUNE 12

Summer ArtSplash, a free self guided tour of downtown Stockton venues filled with art. 5pm - 8 pm. Begin at the

Mexican Heritage Center, 111 S. Sutter, for map then spot the pink ribbons at each venue; you'll enjoy live music, food, wine and more. 954-6726.

## SAT, JUNE 13

2nd Saturday Family Bike Ride, DeRosa University Center @ University of the Pacific, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 10 - 11:30 am Hosted by the San Joaquin Bike Coalition, get to know fellow bicyclists and bike routes throughout Stockton. [sjbikecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:sjbikecoalition@gmail.com)

## WED, JUNE 17

Concerts in the Park: Dixie Inc, 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.

## THUR - SUN | JUN 18 - JUL 12

Legally Blonde: The Musical. Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. (not on 7/4) Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton. Harvard's beloved blonde takes the stage in pink storm in this fun, upbeat musical about self-discovery. \$15 - \$25. 473-2424. [www.sctlivetheatre.com](http://www.sctlivetheatre.com)

## SAT, JUNE 20

2015 Juneteenth Annual Citywide Festival, San Joaquin County Human Services Agency / Taft Community Center, 389 W Downing Ave. Stockton. 12 - 7 pm. (see p 18) 468-4168 [twest@sjgov.org](mailto:twest@sjgov.org)

Zoo After Dark, 7:30-9:30 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.

## TUES, JUNE 23

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

## WED, JUNE 24

Concerts in the Park: Miss Lizzy & Her Cadillac Kings, 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.

## WED, JULY 1

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 2

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

## MON, JULY 6

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

## WED, JULY 8

Concerts in the Park: Tropical Nights, 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, JULY 10

Summer ArtSplash, a free self guided tour of downtown Stockton venues filled with art. 5pm - 8 pm. Begin at the Mexican Heritage Center for map then spot the pink ribbons at each venue; you'll enjoy live music, food, wine and more. 954-6726.

## SAT, JULY 11

2nd Saturday Family Bike Ride, DeRosa University Center @ University of the Pacific, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 10 - 11:30 am Hosted by the San Joaquin Bike Coalition, get to know fellow bicyclists and bike routes throughout Stockton. [sjbikecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:sjbikecoalition@gmail.com)

## TUES, JULY 14

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

## WED, JULY 15

Concerts in the Park: Snap Jackson and the Knock On Wood Players, 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.

## SAT, JULY 18

Zoo After Dark, 7:30-9:30 pm, Micke Grove Zoo, 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd. Lodi. (see June 20)

## FRI, JUNE 26

Sky Tours at Delta College, 8:30 - 10:30 pm. Object: The Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, M13 (Star Cluster in Hercules), 10:00 pm Deep Sky Object: M51 (Whirlpool Galaxy) (see May 22) Free. Athletics 1 Parking Lot @ San Joaquin Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 823-0328 or [dave.jacobi@comcast.net](mailto:dave.jacobi@comcast.net)

## SAT, JUNE 27

DeltaFusion Festival, Victory Park, 1001 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton. 5 - 8 pm. Free. DeltaFusion is a celebration of the diverse natural and cultural heritage of Stockton and the San Joaquin County. DeltaFusion ignites community creativity by bringing the stories of the San Joaquin Delta region – past, present, and future – to life with giant puppets and dramatic pageantry. DeltaFusion is a celebration of the diverse natural and cultural heritage of Stockton, California and the San Joaquin County Delta region. 940-6315 [education@hagginmuseum.org](mailto:education@hagginmuseum.org)

Astronomy in the Park at Oak Grove Regional Park, 4520 W Eight Mile Rd, Stockton. Similar activities to Sky Tours (see June 26). 8:30 pm. Park entry fee \$6. 462-0798

## SUN, JUNE 28

Festa Famiglia, Waterloo Gun and Bocce, 4343 N Ashley Lane, Stockton Enjoy this festival celebrating the Italian Culture. Live entertainment, traditional dancers, food, fun and much more. 931-0323

Lodi Obon Bazaar, Buddhist Church of Lodi, 23 N Stockton St, Lodi. Family-friendly weekend filled with popular Japanese foods and Buddhist cultural events!

## FIRST MONDAY

Campaign for Common Ground meeting, 7 pm, Towers Building, 509 W Weber Ave, Stockton. [cogmemb@gmail.com](mailto:cogmemb@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. [bailley\\_hcasj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bailley_hcasj@sbcglobal.net)

## Eight ways to reduce global inequality

Extreme economic inequality is corrosive to our societies. It makes poverty reduction harder, hurts our economies, and drives conflict and violence. Reversing this trend presents a significant challenge, but one where we've seen some progress. Below we offer eight ways to move the world forward in reducing global inequality.

### 1. STOP ILLICIT OUTFLOWS

In developing countries, inadequate resourcing for health, education, sanitation, and investment in the poorest citizens drives extreme inequality. One reason is tax avoidance and other illicit outflows of cash. According to Global Financial Integrity, developing countries lost \$6.6 trillion in illicit financial flows from 2003 through 2012, with illicit outflows increasing at an average rate of 9.4 percent per year. That's \$6.6 trillion that could reduce poverty and inequality through investments in human capital, infrastructure, and economic growth.

### 2. PROGRESSIVE INCOME TAX

After falling for much of the 20th century, inequality is worsening in rich countries today. The top one percent is not only capturing larger shares of national income, but tax rates on the highest incomes have also dropped. How much should the highest income earners be taxed? This is obviously a question to be decided domestically by citizens, and opinions differ. For instance, economist Tony Addison suggests a top rate of 65 percent rate on the top 1 percent of incomes.

### 3. A GLOBAL WEALTH TAX?

In */Capital in the Twenty-first Century/*, Thomas Piketty recommends an international agreement establishing a wealth tax. Under his plan, countries would agree to tax personal assets of all kinds at graduated rates. The skeptics do have a point about whether this particular plan is practical,

but we shouldn't give up on the idea. Because wealth tends to accumulate over generations, fair and well-designed wealth taxes would go a long way towards combating extreme inequality.

### 4. ENFORCE A LIVING WAGE

Governments should establish and enforce a national living wage, and corporations should also prioritize a living wage for their workers and with the suppliers, buyers, and others with whom they do business. Low and unlivable wages are a result of worker disempowerment and concentration of wealth at the top—hallmarks of unequal societies. As human beings with basic needs, all workers should earn enough to support themselves and their families. Governments and corporations should be responsible for protecting the right to a living wage, corporations should commit to responsible behavior that respects the dignity of all workers.

### 5. WORKERS' RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

The right of workers to organize has always been a cornerstone of more equal societies, and should be prioritized and protected wherever this basic right is violated. Extreme inequality requires the disempowerment of workers. Therefore, the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively for better pay and conditions is a global human rights priority. Despite Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – which declares the right to organize as a fundamental human right—workers worldwide, including in the United States, still face intimidation, fear, and retribution for attempting to organize collectively. Where unions are strong, wages are higher and inequality is lower.

### 6. STOP OTHER LABOR ABUSES

Companies worldwide are also replacing what was once permanent and stable employment with temporary and

contingent labor. Often called “contingent” or “precarious” workers, these workers fill a labor need that is permanent while being denied the status of employment. In the United States, this trend is called “misclassification,” in which employers misclassify workers as “independent contractors” when they are actually employees. Contingent labor also occurs through outsourcing, subcontracting, and use of employment agencies.

### 7. OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC TRADE POLICY

Negotiating international trade agreements behind closed doors with only bureaucrats and corporate lobbyists present has to end. These old-style trade agreements are fundamentally undemocratic and put corporate profits above workers, the environment, health, and the public interest. We need a new, transparent trade policy that is open, transparent, and accountable to the people.

### 8. A NEW ECONOMICS?

Economists are often imagined as stuffy academics who value arcane economic theory above humanitarian values. The field's clinging to parsimonious theories

## JUNE/JULY CALENDAR

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

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

### SECOND SATURDAYS

Family Bike Ride, DeRosa University Center @ University of the Pacific, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 10 - 11:30 am Hosted by the San Joaquin Bike Coalition, get to know fellow bicyclists and bike routes throughout Stockton. sjbikecoalition@gmail.com

### 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

### WEDNESDAYS

Concerts in the Park: Victory Park, 1001 North Pershing Ave, Stockton 6 - 8 pm. Free. 6/3 Steve Trucco Band; 6/10 Valley Concert Band; 6/17 Dixie Inc;

6/24 Miss Lizzy & Her Cadillac Kings; 7/1 Valley Concert Band; 7/8 Tropical Nights; 7/15 Snap Jackson and the Knock On Wood Players; 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 whirlow@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

**A big thanks to our long-serving distributors!!**



### Friday & Sunday, May 29 & 31

### Ride Stockton Opera presents the Beloved Die Fledermaus

Now in its 46th year, Stockton Opera proudly presents Die Fledermaus for two performances. Set in 19th century Vienna, Die Fledermaus is filled with lively melodies and unforgettable waltzes; it is one of the most celebrated and popular operettas by Johann Strauss II, the famous “Waltz King.” Performed in English, this fully staged operetta is produced and directed by James Haffner, with music conducted by Peter Jaffe and choreography by Jennifer Hargreaves. The opera features Stockton favorites Jessica Siena as Rosalinde and Daniel Ebbers as Eisenstein.

Die Fledermaus will be performed on Friday, May 29, 7:30 pm and on Sunday, May 31, 2 pm. Both performances will be staged at the Faye Spanos Concert Hall, University of the Pacific. There will be two intermissions. Tickets are \$20-\$45 and are available through the Stockton Symphony ticket office, 951-0196 during business hours, and online through www.

StocktonOpera.org.

The story of Die Fledermaus (“The Bat”) is deceptively simple. Leading man Gabriel von Eisenstein is about to become the victim of an elaborate practical joke by Dr. Falke, one of his best friends. Falke is out for revenge because a year ago, after a great costume party, Eisenstein left him passed out drunk in a park. Falke had to walk home the next morning, still wearing his ridiculous bat costume. Since then, everyone has called him Doctor Fledermaus. Strauss perfectly captures the spirit of late-19th century Vienna; in true operatic fashion, Dr. Falke's revenge involves a disguises, mistaken identities, scandalous seductions, outrageous fake accents, and a lot of champagne, as feuding spouses Gabriel and Rosalinde von Eisenstein are caught separately enjoying a dazzling masked ball.

The cast for the Stockton Opera performances includes Jessica Siena, Daniel Ebbers, Rachel Schutz, Matthew Hanscom, David Gustafson, Hannah Ludwig, Paul

Kimball, Martin Lehman, Edward Hargreaves, Sarah Phelan and Jennifer Hargreaves.

The Los Angeles Times hailed Jessica Siena as “extravagantly gifted” and her portrayal of Marie in New York City Opera's National tour of Donizetti's La fille du régiment earned her critical acclaim throughout the country. The late jazz legend Dave Brubeck chose Ms. Siena for the role of Dora in his operatic suite, Cannery Row, at an annual Brubeck Festival.

After an extensive and distinguished international career, tenor Daniel Ebbers has settled into the San Joaquin Valley region as an associate professor of voice at the University of the Pacific. He has performed with numerous regional organizations including the Stockton Symphony, Tahoe Music Festival, Bear Valley Music Festival, Music in the Mountains, the Modesto Symphony and made several appearances at the Mondavi Center in Davis.