

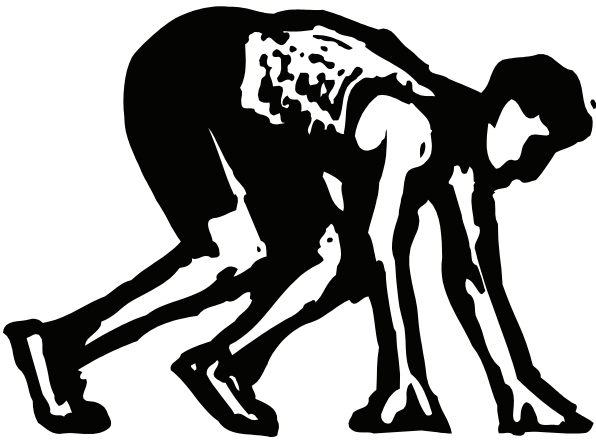


THE POWER OF SHOWING UP

Starting  
February  
12th

BRUCE GIUDICI

We start from a desire to effect peace and justice. Every local situation is different, but there is a common thread to any consequential process. If we want to affect our future, at some point we will have to start doing the work - both important and fulfilling. The discomfort of the statements coming from our national political leadership is already mobilizing new activists. Assuming these statements



continue, there will be increasing numbers of the disenchanted looking to take action. Fortunately, we have many organizations that can help to counter the anticipated effects of a unpeaceful and unjust national administration.

To start, the Connection's publishing Peace and Justice Network will hold it's Annual Meeting and Potluck on Sunday, February 12 from 4 - 7 pm at the Morearty Peace Center, 231 Bedford Road in Stockton. This is a good introduction to local leaders who are working on a variety of issues - you are cordially invited to attend.

Then, in 2 short months - on April 23 - the Network will sponsor it's 29th annual Earth Day Festival in Victory Park, from 11 - 4 pm. Organizing meetings are happening on Mondays at 6 pm on the UOP campus. Earth Day will also be celebrated in Angels Camp's Utica Park on the same day. At both events, visitors can contact individuals and organizations that are working to help our environment locally and globally.

Along environmental lines, local groups Restore the Delta ([www.restorethedelta.org](http://www.restorethedelta.org)) and the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance ([www.calsport.org](http://www.calsport.org)) will have their hands full dealing with the Delta Tunnels, which are reaching days of decision in the year 2017. Barbara Barrigan-Parilla and Bill

Jennings are strong leaders from whom new volunteers will learn how to organize, present information to decision makers and do important work that will last decades.

In the face of the Affordable Care Act repeal, Single Payer San Joaquin continues to work on the only feasible and sustainable health care option. This year will witness a search for ACA replacements; volunteers on this issue can help make durable change that will save lives. The group meets on second Thursdays at the Peace Center.

And as media outlets are under attack, this paper and KXVS will continue to present information that you count on to make decisions in areas of peace and justice. Both endeavors rely on volunteer help, in areas of production, distribution and fundraising. Our costs are low, because there are no staff costs - but what expenses we have, need to be paid (paper, ink and mailing for Connections; equipment and rent for KXVS).

The list can be endless - the limits are those of our collective imaginations. Community organizations such as STAND (affordable housing) and Fathers and Families (youth intervention) are doing exceptional work - together we can change lives. We have a storehouse of experience within our community - and the beginning of our efforts can happen at the PJN Annual Meeting. Many hands will make the vital work we do lighter. We hope to see you there - the power we have, starts with showing up.

Brown's State of the State address

This is California, the sixth most powerful economy in the world. One out of every eight Americans lives right here and 27 percent - almost eleven million - were born in a foreign land. When California does well, America does well. And when California hurts, America hurts.

... this morning it is hard for me to keep my thoughts just on California. The recent election and inauguration of a new President have shown deep divisions across America.

While no one knows what the new leaders will actually do, there are signs that are disturbing. We have seen the bald assertion of "alternative facts." We have heard the blatant attacks on science. Familiar signposts of our democracy-truth, civility, working together - have been obscured or swept aside.

But on Saturday, in cities across the country, we also witnessed a vast and inspiring fervor that is stirring in the land. Democracy doesn't come from the top; it starts and spreads in the hearts of the people. And in the hearts of Americans, our core principles are as strong as ever.

So as we reflect on the state of our state, we should do so in the broader context of our country and its challenges. We must prepare for uncertain times and reaffirm the basic principles that have made California the Great Exception that it is.

First, in California, immigrants are an integral part of who we are and what we've become. They have helped create the wealth and dynamism of this state from the very beginning. I recognize that under the Constitution, federal law is supreme and that Washington determines immigration policy. But as a state we can and have had a role to play. California has enacted several protective measures for the undocumented: the Trust Act, lawful driver's licenses, basic employment rights and non-discriminatory access to higher education. We may be called upon to defend those laws and defend them we will. And let me be clear: we will defend everybody - every man, woman and child - who has come here for a better life and has contributed to the well-being of our state.

My second point relates to health care. More than any other state, California embraced the Affordable Care Act and over five million people now enjoy its benefits. But that coverage has come with tens of billions of federal dollars. Were any of that to be taken away, our state budget would be directly affected, possibly devastated. That is why I intend to join with other governors - and with you - to do everything we can to protect the health care of our people.

Third, our state is known the world over for the actions we have taken to encourage renewable energy and combat climate change. Whatever they do in Washington, they can't change the facts. And these are the facts: the climate is changing, the temperatures are rising and so are the oceans. Natural habitats everywhere are under increasing stress. The world knows this. One hundred and ninety-four countries signed the Paris Agreement to

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SAVE THE DATES

Feb 4 Andrew Young Modesto P19  
Feb 12 PJN Annual Meeting P1  
Apr 23 Earth Day Festival Stockton  
Apr 23 Earth Day Celebration Angels Camp

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## Editors Letter

BRUCE GIUDICI

Entering our 31st year of publication in the year 2017, we at Connections are made ever more aware of the importance of a free and open media. Amid the ongoing and increasing attack on all media by the newly-installed administration, we are reminded of an important

maxim in reporting: consider the source.

This will become increasingly important in the coming years for one simple reason: to the already well-informed, bogus reporting is obvious - but to the uninformed, any professionally presented information repeated by powerful people becomes the truth.

## Hubris (or making America unpopular)

EDITOR,

Our new President-elect has called for "making America great again." It is a catchy slogan and may well have caused his small margins of victory in the critical states of Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. It is, of course, wasted effort to parse the meaning of slogans. They are meant to make us feel good—and this one obviously did.

It is to be hoped, however, that the new President will consider the possible negative effects before emphasizing this as the theme of his administration. If the thought of our greatness makes us feel good, is it not likely that it will make some others feel bad? That can lead to events that will be more than unpleasant. We have come to call them terrorist attacks.

It is a fact that there are approximately 23 others in the world for each one of us. Some are friendly; some are not. For the latter, there are probably many motivations but surely, for some, it is a perception of American arrogance. We saw this clearly on September 11, 2001. Two symbols were attacked: the Pentagon, a symbol of our overwhelming military dominance, and the twin towers of World Trade Center (aptly named).

I can not prove that there is a proportionality between our arrogance and the terrorism that is inflicted upon us—but I believe it. I also believe that "making America great", or more

accurately, shouting that America is great, creates a fear and loathing in other parts of the world. We can build a wall; we can restrict immigration and civil liberties, but we can't make ourselves impenetrable. In the Platonic world, there may be a perfect defence; in the physical world, there is not.

MILLARD FROHOCK

## Reduce Delta water exports, increase Delta flows

EDITOR,

The 21-year-old Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan is outdated. The State Water Resources Control Board has begun the process to update this plan starting first with the most endangered river in America, the San Joaquin River. This process is called Phase I of SED for the San Joaquin River. Sign our petition to ask the Board to do the right thing (visit [restorethedelta.nationbuilder.com](http://restorethedelta.nationbuilder.com)). Scientific reports published over the past several years have sent a clear message: The San Francisco Bay-Delta, the largest estuary on the West Coast, is on the brink of collapse. Millions depend on this estuary for their livelihoods.

The Bay Institute recently published a study, "San Francisco Bay: The Freshwater - Starved

## Media under attack

This is especially dangerous when today's readers consume information that only reinforces their pre-held beliefs, allowing for no contrary opinion. In a market economy, this has given rise to the active, ongoing and very profitable process of uninformed our citizenry, led by top-rated Fox "News" and it's logical end result, the dangerous presidency of the demagogic Trump whose sales pitch thrives in

a swamp of ignorance.

For our part, you may have noticed that every article in Connections is accurately sourced, so that you may go the the original article as needed, to follow up on related issues or to become readers of the sourced publication. In fact, the sources of the articles in this issue are particularly diverse and worthy of subscription: in other words, the sourcing is not just there to provide proper attribution, but to broaden your sources for accurate information going forward.

In these times of disrespect for our open media, we must have information that may not be flattering to those in power -the provision of which is an independent media's most important function. The sources you will find in Connections are generally outlets that have been around for many years, with field experts providing commentary on what will be important for you to know, in order to take action in the coming couple of months. Our educational mission is to broaden the discussion of local, national and global

water quality and quantity objectives for the Delta will never be met.

2) We do not want to see a weakening of salinity standards in the South Delta. Water quality standards must be protected for drinking water, agriculture, municipal discharge, fisheries, recreation, and ground water recharge, and to reduce the future risk of increased harmful algal blooms that are toxic to humans, dogs, fish, and wildlife in south Delta channels.

3) The State Water Board must consider environmental justice communities in terms of drinking water and

issues so that our readers are made aware and are encouraged to work toward a world of peace and justice. We hope you use this and all our issues as a starting point to become an active participant in our democracy in whatever capacity.

At this moment, there is so much information available to us - so many are now motivated to make positive change in the face of leadership going in the exact opposite direction. I encourage you to, at the least, subscribe to the following sites: Common Dreams, Reader Supported News, and Truth-out. There you will get information of encouragement mixed with what is happening - news that should motivate you to action. Connections is the tip of a huge iceberg; explore the iceberg - this can be the beginning of a movement of major change. Look around - the new administration has made issues crystal clear in a way Reagan and W did not. The turnout at the women's marches was impressive - and inspiring. Let's keep the fire burning.

domestic use. Phase 1 Recirculated Draft SED fails to consider environmental justice communities in chapters 5 and 9 (hydrologywater quality and groundwater).

4) We believe that water flows on the San Joaquin River must be adequate to restore and protect fisheries—and to protect the public trust value of the Bay-Delta estuary. A 40% restoration of flows will not accomplish this end. Science tells us that we need 60% of flows restored on the San Joaquin River for the health of the Bay-Delta.

RESTORE THE DELTA



## CONNECTIONS

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**Deadline:**

**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>



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





# A beginning, not an end

YIFAT SUSSKIND

Today is the beginning. It may be the start of the Trump Administration, but let it also be the inauguration of something much more powerful: a renewed feminist social justice movement that takes root in each of our lives, throughout the country and around the world. As a venal sexual-predator-in-chief ushers white supremacists into the highest offices of government, the unthinkable is becoming commonplace. And the commonplace has a way of bleeding into the acceptable. That's why I'm writing you this letter—to recommit to what I believe in. I'm writing this letter to the future, too, because our children and new generations will ask us: What did you do to protect people and to fight for our rights, our health, and our planet when it was all under threat?

I will tell them that we never accepted the unacceptable. We pressed steadily ahead to achieve our vision of social justice. We faced setbacks, and kept going. We had the wisdom to celebrate every

victory, no matter how small. We were radical in our thinking and mainstream in our appeal. We created unlikely alliances. We mobilized masses of new and committed activists. We seized any opportunity to block harmful policies and build safer, healthier communities at home and abroad. We made resistance a way of life, and we made our connection to people worldwide our guiding principle. We took care of each other and we were brave.

If we can look back and say that, it will be thanks to the work that is before us now. It will be thanks to our abilities to bring movements together and work across issues to:

- Defend those most threatened by harmful policies and hateful agendas, and stand with activists worldwide to confront the backlash of right-wing populism and authoritarian government.
- Mobilize to protect communities from US wars, provide humanitarian aid and oppose destructive military policies.

- Fight for reproductive justice as a cornerstone of women's self-determination and in defense of every mother's right to raise her child in a safe and healthy environment.

- Realign economic and environmental policies to allay the worst impacts of climate change and protect people and planet.

- Fight for the full scope of women's rights and LGBTIQ rights and defend people from attacks based on their gender or sexuality.

Right now, we stand on the shoulders of generations of activists past who risked everything to give us a chance at a life of dignity and rights. I gain inspiration from women worldwide who've refused to give into despair, who've imagined a new way of life even in the midst of war and disaster, and who are bringing that new world into being. Alice Walker said that "resistance is the secret of joy." The reverse is also true: "joy is the secret of resistance." Remember that laughter dilutes fear and opens the

way forward to action. I'm committing with this letter to daily, joyful resistance, and I hope you will, too, whatever that looks like for you. Hope lives in action.

**YIFAT SUSSKIND IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF \*MADRE <HTTP://WWW.MADRE.ORG/>\*, AN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION. SHE HAS WORKED WITH WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS FROM LATIN AMERICA, THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND AFRICA TO CREATE PROGRAMS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S HEALTH, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PEACE BUILDING. SHE HAS ALSO WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY ON US FOREIGN POLICY AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND HER CRITICAL ANALYSIS HAS APPEARED IN /THE NEW YORK TIMES/, /THE WASHINGTON POST/, /FOREIGN POLICY IN FOCUS/ AND ELSEWHERE.**

Source: Common Dreams 1/20/17 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

# Moving beyond resistance

IRA CHERNUS

In the very early morning hours of November 9, when we learned that Donald Trump—however improbably and perhaps illegitimately—would be the next president of the United States, a battle broke out inside my head. It is still raging on. It's a battle for control of my life. On one side is a passionate voice that began saying a single word in those early morning hours: Resist! Since then I've heard and read the same word from so many, many people whom I respect: Resist! Resist! Resist! It keeps on echoing inside my head....

Of course, sometimes it's crucial to say "No" to the powers that be. But most of the time you have to be saying "Yes" to the world you want to create. You have to be the change you want to see. Just keep doing the slow, grinding work of making positive change. As long as you keep your eyes on that prize, you stay in control of your own life. You refuse to give that control over to anyone else. You stay grounded and balanced.

Think about the civil rights movement, sparked by those young African-Americans who sat down at lunch counters and refused to leave till they were served. Talk about balance and poise. They were not against anything. They had a positive program: a just and peaceful world. And they were putting that program into action with their bodies, regardless of what anyone else did.

The Tea Party is another useful example. Yes, it first came into being as an anti-Obama reaction. But it became so influential because it offered an alternative vision of political life. It was a cruel vision, to be sure, but the Tea Party was not merely resisting. It was telling the world what it was for. In the process, the Tea Party created a powerful counterbalance to the country's general trend, however slightly, to the left. It moved the center to the right.

That's what happens when people build a powerful political force with a positive vision: They move the political center toward them. However slight the shift, it can make a very big difference. Of course there is no guarantee. Regardless of the outcome, though, pursuing a positive vision rather than merely Resisting is the only way to prevent Donald Trump from taking control of our lives. It's the only way to keep control of our own lives. That, I think, should be our primary goal. For me, it seems like the best way, perhaps the only way, to survive the



next four years.

That's not to say the passionate voice inside my head crying "Resist" is quiet. Resistance has its appeal. It energizes us. It gives us a shared focus and goal that can bring together disparate groups in a common effort. Resistance to Trump can even rally people to oppose policies that are similar to what Obama has already been doing (war on ISIS, deportation, etc). So Resistance can sometimes be politically effective. And let's be honest: It often feels good. With all that, and with so many voices I respect all around me sounding the cry of Resist!, it is hard to give up resistance as the goal and focus of political life. But it makes good sense to move beyond resistance. So I'm working on it.

**IRA CHERNUS IS PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER AND AUTHOR OF /MYTHIC AMERICA: ESSAYS AND AMERICAN NONVIOLENCE: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA/. HE BLOGS AT MYTHICAMERICA.US.**

Source: Common Dreams 1/18/17 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

# Brown's State of the State address

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

control greenhouse gases. Our own voluntary agreement to accomplish the same goal – the "Under Two M.O.U." – has 165 signatories, representing a billion people. We cannot fall back and give in to the climate deniers. The science is clear. The danger is real. We can do much on our own and we can join with others – other states and provinces and even countries, to stop the dangerous rise in climate pollution. And we will....

As we face the hard journey ahead, we will have to summon, as Abraham Lincoln said, "the better angels of our nature." Above all else, we have to live in the truth. We all have our opinions but for democracy to work, we have to trust each other.... When the science is clear or when our own eyes tell us that the seats in this chamber are filled or that the sun is shining, we must say so, not construct some alternate universe of non-facts that we find more pleasing.

Along with truth, we must practice civility. Although we have disagreed – often along party lines – we have generally been civil to one another and avoided the rancor of Washington. I urge you to go even further and look for new ways to work beyond party and act as Californians first....

While we now face different challenges, make no mistake: the future is uncertain and dangers abound. Whether it's the threat to our budget, or to undocumented Californians, or to our efforts to combat climate change – or even more global threats such as a financial meltdown or a nuclear incident or terrorist attack – this is a time which calls out for courage and for perseverance. I promise you both....California is not turning back. Not now, not ever.

(Editors note: for the full transcript, visit [www.capradio.org/](http://www.capradio.org/))



# Is MLK's legacy being reversed?

JUAN COLE

Reaction has two main meanings in English. One is to respond to some new situation (not specifying the nature of the reaction). The other is to resist some innovation. In this second sense, a reactionary is one who wants to go back to a previously existing condition of society. A reactionary is worse than a conservative. A conservative resists progressive change that benefits large numbers of people but does not help the rich. A reactionary wants to undo a progressive change already long since effected, taking achievements away from the people for the sake of the 1%.

We live in a reactionary age. Trump crony Newt Gingrich wants to undo the New Deal of Franklin Delano Roosevelt entirely, getting rid of social security and condemning large numbers of elderly Americans to penury. (In the 1930s the elderly were the poorest segment of society; that is no longer true today, and people can hope to retire and live with dignity, because of social security). We live in a moment where 8 billionaires are as rich as the poorer half of humankind and when the top 1% takes home 20% of the US national income (up from 10% only a few decades ago). Ironically, it is in this moment, when workers and the middle classes are prostrate and the lion's share of resources is going to 1.2 million households out of 124 million American households—it is at this very moment that reactionaries are demanding that ordinary people surrender their pensions and social security and health care for the sake of a further fat tax cut for the super-rich. The average wage of the average worker has been flat since 1970 in the US, as any increases in productivity or real economic growth appears to have been taken right to the top and the 1% by the Republican tax-cut conveyor belt. A loss of entitlements would actually reduce their incomes substantially, sending them back to the 1950s.

I saw the Wall Street Journal reporter Brett Stephens on Farid Zakaria's GPS recently, opining that he goes around the country talking to small business owners, and they are complaining about excessive regulation and the injustices of the 2002 Sarbanes Oxley Act. Let me just say that I believe Mr. Stephens was using "small business" as a more sympathetic stand-in for his actual client, mega corporations. Sarbanes-Oxley made it illegal to destroy

records to forestall a Federal investigation, in the wake of Enron and other scandals that robbed large number of employees of their pensions. Very inconvenient. Dodd-Frank is also no doubt very inconvenient for "small business." Any let or hindrance on the super-rich whom Stephens and his like serve is of course a brake on economic progress. Except that Enron and the 2008 crash, which occurred in the absence of regulation, were not in fact good for the economy or for workers and the middle class. Stephens may well get his way, and these regulatory reforms may well be deep-sixed in the Age of Trump. Many among the rich dream of getting back to the halcyon unregulated 1920s, managing to forget the plunge their predecessors took off the Empire State building in 1929. The very definition of reaction is a nostalgia for an age whose time has passed.

Reaction menaces us in the realm of civil rights as well as in that of the economy, where we have become a hereditary plutocracy. The Voting Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to discriminate against people on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It made it illegal for state officials to give literacy (or even Latin) tests only to African Americans as a prerequisite to register to vote. It ended racial discrimination in establishments that offered what was defined as a public accommodation. That is, white southerners like George Wallace insisted that a restaurant is a private business and so the owner should be welcome to discriminate in which customers he or she would serve. The Voting Rights Act begged to differ. If you're serving the public, it said, you are in some ways a public institution and you may not operate in a racist manner. Some members of the Libertarian wing of the Republican Party still hold the George Wallace position on restaurants, including Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY).

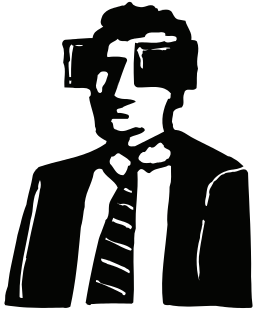
In this age of reaction, the achievements of the Voting Rights Act have been deeply eroded when they haven't been entirely reversed. After three decades in which desegregated schools operated perfectly well throughout the country and came to be supported by many progressive southern Whites, from about 1990 the Federal courts began ceasing to require desegregation. The result? Apartheid schooling in the United States is again a reality. Given the high rates of racial segregation in neighborhoods, this reality, partly economic, has come to be reflected in the schools. We've seen large-scale

resegregation. Call it Jim Crow by other means. Ironically, all students benefit from being in racially mixed schools, including the white students. There are cognitive benefits; i.e. you learn to think more clearly in a more hybrid social situation.

Not only have the schools been resegregated but once the Roberts court removed oversight from the Deep South states, they immediately ran and put back in the Latin tests for African-Americans. This time though they cleverly did it more subtly by requiring identification papers in order to vote. If challenged, the white racists who passed these laws will say it is to prevent voter fraud. But there isn't any voter fraud to speak of, at least from these quarters.

So we are back to de facto restrictions on the voting rights of African-Americans, which may have affected the election outcome in 2016. And we're back to all-Black schools. The Republican Party is still dedicated to equality in one area, though. They'd love to make us all wage slaves with no unions, no rights (even to have a break), no minimum income, no health care and no social security. Indeed, there is a sense in which the 99% are all Black in the Age of Trump, whether they know it yet or not. That is why we need the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., today more than ever.

Source: Tikkun/NSP 1/16/17 <http://www.tikkun.org/>



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# Budget office report: GOP healthcare repeal strips insurance from 32 million people

NADIA PRUPIS

Repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) without replacing it could cost 32 million people their health insurance, according to a new estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released Tuesday. The CBO estimated that if Congress votes to repeal the ACA—also known as Obamacare—keeping insurance market reforms in place without implementing a new healthcare law, roughly 18 million people would lose their insurance within the first year, and premiums would rise by 20 to 25 percent for individual plans.

By 2026, the report found, 32 million people would be out of

insurance. Fewer than 2 million would be enrolled in the non-group market. The CBO released its estimate in conjunction with staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT), in response to a request from Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Senate Finance Committee ranking member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee ranking member Patty Murray (D-Wash.). It comes just before confirmation hearings begin for Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), who is nominated for secretary of Health and Human Services.

Estimates were based on the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act of 2015, an ACA repeal bill introduced

by Republicans; the GOP has yet to announce any updated plan on replacing President Barack Obama's landmark healthcare law. Despite having no replacement in line, both chambers of Congress—which are now under GOP control—passed resolutions earlier this month that brought the ACA one step closer to repeal.

Source: Common Dreams 1/17/17  
<http://www.commondreams.org/>





# This is a coup d'etat, plain and simple



MORT ROSENBLUM

Now it is clear: we are seeing a coup d'etat. And its perpetrators, aided by citizens' apathy and wishful thinking, don't even need to gas up tanks or muzzle the media. This is exactly how democracies die. We can stop this and emerge stronger -- but only if enough of us grasp what is at stake and take action. Put aside political leanings and polemics to spend a moment assessing for yourself what you see unfolding.

Here, for what it's worth, is the view of a reporter who has covered coups in sizeable republics, evil empires and banana backwaters for a very long time. Donald Trump is our chief executive, a term-limit civil servant bound by laws and common values to serve us all. Congressmen represent entire constituencies, not just partisans within them. Justices swear to be fair-minded and impartial.

One day after a departing president showed us our best side, outlining historic growth after crippling decline and pleading for unity in magnanimous terms that moved many to tears, his successor showed us our worst. Though trounced by popular vote, Trump acts as if we handed him a crown. That storybook emperor skulked off when a kid pointed out he was naked. Trump simply flips us the finger and commits one indecent act after another.

Even if, against all economic odds, he could cut deals that made Americans richer at the expense of others, is that all matters? Consider the consequences in a volatile world bristling with arms and facing climatic endgame. Trump's siding with Vladimir Putin rather than our incumbent leader falls between treachery and treason. It defines a man who puts his own ego above all else. With dazzling hypocrisy, his party criticizes him yet takes little action.

Republicans' disregard for propriety - trying to abolish ethics oversight as they steamroll approval of top officials tainted by vested interests, nepotism and crackpot extremism - reveals contempt for a citizenry they presume is stupid. Already, a mad scramble is on to strip protection from natural splendor that took eons to evolve, sacred Indian sites, endangered aquifers and virgin wilderness for immediate plunder by a rapacious few with no regard for generations to come.

Our failsafe, beyond the three branches, is a permanent Fourth Estate: the press, now the "news media."

## A free society and its press are inseparable. Point one in our Bill of Rights.

For all the failings of its worst components, it is vital to us. Its best components set a global standard. Trump's "press conference" swept away any lingering doubt of demagogic intention. He was an imperious insulting bully who dismissed substance with inane generality, focusing not on domestic or world crises but on his own self-image. When a reporter asked about his tax returns, he said the American people weren't interested. "I don't think they care at all," he sneered, thrusting a finger at his questioner. "I think you care."

Here is Trump in, well, a nutshell. A free society and its press are inseparable. Point one in our Bill of Rights. A dictator's first move is to discredit news media and replace them big-lie propaganda, which is why Breitbart "News" had a front seat. Presidential news conferences began as simple briefings: an executive answering to the people who hired him via the press. Now live TV allows leaders to play to the public, bypassing reporters who might pin them down with hard facts.

News executives let George W. Bush choreograph with pre-chosen questioners. Barack Obama imposed draconian means to plug leaks but answered questions when asked. Trump dismisses non-cheerleaders as unruly children. CNN revealed an open secret, an unsubstantiated but solidly based report that Russians had taped Trump in a honey trap. Big whoop: a businessman who boasts of sexual prowess hired a prostitute. A simple denial would suffice. But Trump went nuclear. "Fake news!" he thundered at a CNN reporter seeking clarity, cutting him off. Then a question came from Ian Pannell of BBC, a seasoned pro with the most credible, comprehensive global news purveyor I know. "BBC," Trump said. "That's another beauty."

As for substance, Trump asserted: "(There are) 96 million really wanting a job and they can't get. You know that story - the real number. That's the real number. So that's the way it is." No, NPR noted in a running fact-check, the real number is 7.5 million. We are at full employment: 4.7 percent. More jobs would spike inflation. Trump included people not in the work force, including students, retirees and stay-at-home parents.

The man is a total fool - or he thinks that the rest of us are. Meryl Streep brought this down to basic humanity at the Golden Globe Awards. More than a chief executive, she said, a president defines who we are. To illustrate, she chose an image many of us still can't get out of our heads.

Displeased by New York Times' reporter Serge Kovalski, he mocked a condition that makes the man's bent right arm and hands move uncontrollably. Trump denies it, telling us to believe him rather than our own eyes. Among so many outrages, some scare me to my core. Trump approached truth, unintended, in one of his absurd tweets: "Is this Nazi Germany?" He was complaining that the CIA hovered over him.

But his Big-Lie demagoguery evokes far too much of a Führer elected by a fearful, hurting nation. He is an equal-opportunity bigot, not specifically anti-Semitic. His

free-form ill-informed extremism, mercurial with no clear worldview, risks eventual conflict with China and Russia. For now, there is the unholy land.

The man named as our ambassador to Israel has said that people like me are no better than Nazi guards who herded Jews to their death. That is, we Jews who believe that a separate Palestine is essential to Israel's survival and global stability. My name and nose mark me as Jewish, but my religion is honest journalism, a belief that whoever or whatever created this world needs the help of reporters to keep it spinning as planned.

Since 1967, I've seen Holy Land hatreds grow in response to perceived injustice. We can't bomb those away. The terrorism Trump blames on Obama is rooted in our conduct of needless unwinnable war in Iraq. But reporting loses all meaning if a society disregards fact and documented history. Without a grip on reality, we are lost. We need schools that prepare kids to see the world as it is. Yet Trump gives us Beverly DeVos.

An elitist billionaire, DeVos pushes private charter schools that earn profits while educating a chosen few and condemning others to blackboard jungles that turn out barely literate masses to work cheap and believe what they're told. Finland, in contrast, has the world's best schools because all of them are public. If rich people want their kids properly educated, they have to raise the level for everyone.

There is so much more; a cabinet of wolves to watch over us sheep; the sham of keeping Trump family business separate from ours; the ignominious rush to disrupt Obamacare for no reason but scorn for the man whose name it bears. That last is the kicker. Affordable Health Care is flawed because Congress rejected a single-payer approach so big business could profit. Republicans are repealing it before they know what might eventually take its place. Politicians who insist that the life of unformed fetuses is sacred are prepared to let people die before their time before they can't afford our absurdly high medical costs. So what to do?

First, think of cockroaches infesting a dark room. When you flip on the light, they scurry for the baseboards. If not, a can of Raid does the trick. That's Congress. Each voter only has to focus on two senators and a representative. Even in gerrymandered states, voter turnout is low; committed opposition can defeat anyone. Call, write, sign petitions, attend town halls, organize protests and get to know aides who listen to reason. Be polite, persuasive - and persistent.

For a useful plan, go to [www.indivisibleguide.com](http://www.indivisibleguide.com), a report from former congressional staff workers about how Tea Party amateurs inveigled their way onto Capitol Hill. For a sense of how the cockroach kings put their narrow interests over ours, take a close look at Mitch McConnell, whose latest outrage was to stonewall a moderate Supreme Court nominee for nearly a year. If Trump proposes a partisan justice, compel Congress to stonewall another four years.

Our would-be emperor needs constant watching. More than anything else, he craves adulation. Boycott his brand. Remind his enthusiasts of every broken promise. If he senses the nation's mood harden against him, he will likely respond.

Coup leaders habitually entrench themselves with firepower and mass arrests. They tear up existing laws to write their own. Ours depend only on our apathy and ignorance. If we can't stop them cold, we deserve whatever befalls us.

-Source: Reader Supported News 1/14/17 <http://readersupportednews.org>



# Trump's trade focus on workers?

DEAN BAKER

Shortly after Donald Trump enters the White House, we should get an answer to a key question from his campaign: What does he actually intend to do about trade? Trade was one of his main issues when he campaigned in the key industrial states that he won in November.

Trump argued that past presidents of both parties had failed the country's workers by signing bad trade deals. He said that the negotiators were "stupid" and that he would instead appoint "smart" negotiators who wouldn't let Mexico, China and other trading partners beat us at the negotiating table.

Trump is correct in identifying trade as a force that has caused enormous economic damage to millions of people in these states, but he is wrong that the problem was "stupid" negotiators. The vast majority of people who have been given the responsibility for negotiating trade deals are smart, ambitious and hard-working.

The large trade deficits we have been running in the last two decades are not due to negotiators. We run large trade deficits because securing manufacturing jobs in the United States has not been a priority for our negotiators.

When our trade negotiators sit down with Mexico, China and other trading partners, they have a long list of items on their agenda. For example, they want longer and stronger patent protection for our drugs and copyright protection for Microsoft's software. They also want better market access for our financial, telecommunications and retail industries. Our trade negotiators have been quite successful in these areas.

Furthermore, the trade deficit is not a bad thing for everyone in the United States. Many of the items that we import from Mexico, China and other developing countries were actually produced by US companies. They wanted to take advantage of low cost labor to get an edge on their domestic competition. Similarly, Walmart and other major retailers are happy to have low-cost suppliers in the developing world.

The US manufacturers that took their operations overseas and the retailers that benefit from low-cost supply chains did not lose from recent trade deals, they got rich. The problem for US workers has not been that our trade negotiators are not smart; the problem is that

they have a different agenda.

This raises the question of the agenda that Donald Trump wants to pursue in trade deals. If his goal is first and foremost to regain manufacturing jobs by reducing the size of the trade deficit, then the top priority should be lowering the value of the dollar against the currencies of China and other trading partners.

A lower valued dollar will make US exports cheaper for people living in other countries leading them to buy more of our exports. It will also make imports more expensive for people in the United States. That will cause US consumers to substitute domestically produced items for imports. The net effect would be a smaller trade deficit and more jobs in manufacturing.

While it is not possible to get back the 5 million manufacturing jobs we have lost in the last two decades, plausible reductions in the trade deficit could bring back 1-2 million manufacturing jobs. This would have a noticeable impact on the labor market for workers without college degrees.

However, it is not clear that Trump plans to pursue a trade policy focused on getting back manufacturing jobs. While he railed about currency "manipulation" in the election campaign, he also complained that other countries didn't grant our companies adequate market access or respect the patents and copyrights of US companies.

These are conflicting agendas, and it remains to be seen whether Trump pursues a trade agenda that will increase manufacturing jobs, or one that will further enrich corporate America. With the top two economic posts in the Trump administration going to Goldman Sachs alumni, the money is betting on the corporate agenda.

But that doesn't mean that US workers will be left entirely out in the cold. After all, Trump did engineer a deal that saved the jobs of 800 Carrier workers in Indiana. This amounts to 0.008 percent of the 12,260,000 manufacturing jobs in the United States. Trump has indicated that he plans to push other deals with individual companies, which could amount to several thousand more jobs.

In other words, when it comes to the policies that actually determine the jobs and wages of tens of millions of working class people, Trump will be doing the bidding of the same corporate interests as his predecessors. But he will give us more Carrier-type shows, which should net us a number of jobs that you can count on your fingers.

**DEAN BAKER IS THE CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH (CEPR). HIS MOST RECENT BOOK IS PLUNDER AND BLUNDER: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BUBBLE ECONOMY. HE ALSO HAS A BLOG, BEAT THE PRESS.**

Source: Alternet 1/4/17 <http://www.alternet.org> via CEPR <http://cepr.net/>



## Ag secretary pick denies climate change

KATIE HERZOG


Former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue is Trump's final cabinet nominee, another white man joining an already overwhelmingly white, male administration. Before entering politics, Perdue was a veterinarian and ran a grain and fertilizer business. As Georgia governor — the first Republican to run the

state since Reconstruction — he prayed for rain on the steps of the state capitol in hopes of ending one of the worst droughts in decades. Perhaps it worked: Two years later, in 2009, Perdue governed during the most severe floods in Georgia's recorded history. Despite witnessing these weather extremes, Perdue is a climate change denier who called global warming a

"running joke among the public" in a 2014 editorial in the National Review. "Liberals have lost all credibility when it comes to climate science," he wrote, "because their arguments have become so ridiculous and so obviously disconnected from reality." The Department of Agriculture executes federal law and policy connected to

farming, food, and forestry. Among other things, it runs programs designed to curb the agriculture sector's environmental impact and carbon footprint: In 2014, agriculture contributed 9 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Under Perdue and Trump, don't bet on that declining.

Source: Grist 1/20/17 <https://grist.org>



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# Resisting the Trumpublican shock doctrine blitzkrieg

MILES MOGULESCU

The Trumpublicans are intent on manipulating the shock of Donald Trump's victory to roll back much of the New Deal and Great Society; ram through unvetted Cabinet appointments intent on undermining the legal mandate of the very Departments they are charged with leading; legitimize unprecedented conflicts of interest; and intimidate opponents, professional civil servants, and the press, in a rapid Blitzkrieg, before the opposition even knows what hit them.

This is a classic case of what Naomi Klein termed "The Shock Doctrine" in her 2007 book of the same title. A quick tutorial on The Shock Doctrine: In times of political, economic, or social crisis (including wars, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, economic panics, coups and other dramatic political upheavals) oligarchic forces push through otherwise unpopular "free market" and neoliberal reforms—including deregulation, privatization, tax cuts for the elites, and massive cuts to the social safety net, in the hope that the resistance won't have time to organize.

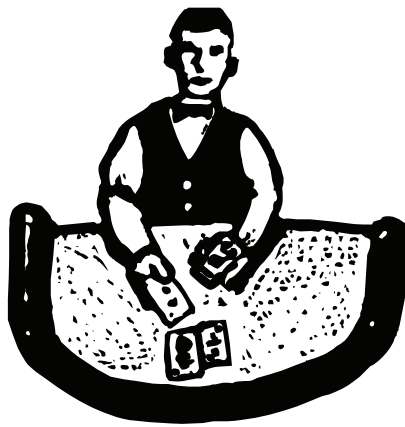
In more "normal" times, such fundamentalist neoliberal "reforms" would be so unpopular that they would largely be politically unachievable. But, according to Klein, economist Milton Friedman, the guru of fundamentalist free market capitalism, "articulated contemporary capitalism's core tactical nostrum...He observed that 'only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change.'...And once a crisis has struck, the University of Chicago professor was convinced that it was crucial to act swiftly, to impose rapid and irreversible [neoliberal] change before the crisis-racked society slipped back into the 'tyranny of the status quo.' He estimated that 'a new administration has some six to nine months in which to achieve major changes; if it does not seize the opportunity to act decisively during that period, it will not have another opportunity.'"

I would posit that the Trump's victory—unexpected by just about everyone—is exactly the kind of crisis that potentially allows the oligarchy to use the Shock Doctrine to do its dirty work. While the oligarchy may find Trump a bit unseemly personally, they see him as a "useful idiot" who can be used to ram through otherwise unpopular reactionary economic and social policies before anyone can stop them.

If they succeed, a century of reforms going back a century to the Progressive era, the New Deal, and the Great Society could be rolled back in a matter of months and we could be facing a new Gilded Age.

Let's look at a little of what's happened since November 7th, even before Trump has been inaugurated:

- Trump has brought racist white nationalists and Islamophobes like Steve Bannon and Michael Flynn into the top echelons of the White House.
- He's relentlessly attacked the intelligence services for bringing to light Russia's campaign to influence the election in his favor.
- In the dark of night, Senate Republicans took the first vote to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, even though they have no idea what to replace it with.
- The Trump transition team demanded that the Department of Energy turn over the names of scientists working on climate change.
- This is particularly scary since the House Republicans reinstated an obscure 1876 rule that allows any single member of Congress to add an amendment to any appropriations bill to cut the salary of any government employee or group of employees to \$1.00, gutting 130 years of protections for a professional civil service.
- Trump has declared war on the intelligence services, accusing them of acting like Nazis, while repeatedly praising Vladimir Putin.



- Trump has done nothing meaningful to eliminate his myriad of conflicts of interest that make it unclear if any Presidential decision is for the benefit of the country or his businesses.
- Congressional Republicans are plotting an agenda to roll back financial and environmental regulations, slash taxes on corporations and the wealthy, defund Planned Parenthood, and allow individuals from states with open carry laws to bring their guns into states in which they're illegal, all within the first hundred days or so of the Trump administration.
- Trump has appointed a menagerie of swamp creatures to his Cabinet, mostly billionaires with a record of opposing the very legal mandates of the Departments they will be pledged to lead. Here's just a sampling of this basket of deplorables:

## RICK PERRY, SECRETARY OF ENERGY:

The Department of Energy is one of the three Cabinet Departments Perry wanted to abolish, except in his infamous "oops" moment when he couldn't even remember its name. One of the Department's key responsibilities is ensuring the safety of America's nuclear weapons, a vital task in which he has no experience. Get ready to "duck and cover".

## ANDREW PUZDER, SECRETARY OF LABOR:

The anti-labor, anti-union CEO of Carl's Jr. and Hardees. He opposes increasing the minimum wage and wants to roll back Obama's rule restoring overtime pay to middle class workers. The Labor Department's legal mission is "To foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights," a mission Puzder has spent his career fighting against. He's the last person you'd appoint if you actually wanted to increase the living standard of American workers of any race.

## SCOTT PRUITT, HEAD OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY:

A climate change denier, he's repeatedly sued the EPA to roll back environmental protections. Four or eight years under the leadership of men like Pruitt could make climate change irreversible, leading to global catastrophe.

## BETSY DEVOS, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:

A billionaire by birth, DeVos has spent years undermining public schools and trying to channel taxpayer money instead to private, for-profit, and religious schools.

## TOM PRICE, SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES:

Repealing the Affordable Care Act and replacing it with the "free market" may not be Price's biggest negative. He also wants to privatize Medicare and cut funds for Medicaid.

## JEFFERSON BEAUREGARD SESSIONS, ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Sessions began his career trying to jail civil rights workers who were close to Martin Luther King for trying

to register African Americans to vote. He's called the Voting Rights Act a "piece of intrusive legislation" and opposed the Violence Against Women Act. Although Sessions pledged to uphold even laws he disagrees with, the Attorney General has wide discretion to decide which cases to bring. Expect him to turn a blind eye to voter suppression.

## THE "DEPARTMENT OF GOLDMAN SACHS":

After relentlessly attacking Ted Cruz's wife for working at Goldman Sachs and Hillary Clinton for giving them paid speeches, Trump has appointed at least 6 Goldman Sachs alumni to top Economic posts: They include "foreclosure king" Steve Mnuchin as Treasury Secretary, current Goldman COO and President Gary Cohn as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Goldman's legal advisor Jay Clayton as head of the Security and Exchange Commission, and Breitbart News owner Steve Bannon as Chief White House Strategist. Expect radical deregulation of Wall Street and pray that we don't experience a 2008-style crash or worse.

Meanwhile, Mitch McConnell is railroading Trump's appointments through the Senate hearing process at lighting speed, before most of them, have even filed their disclosure forms or ethics agreements, in the hopes they will be confirmed before more negative information about them becomes public or the opposition has time to rally. In classic Shock Doctrine strategy, Trump and Congressional Republicans are doing so many things so fast to fill the swamp, entrench the kleptocracy, and harm ordinary Americans, that it's almost impossible to keep up.

Having lost the popular vote by nearly three million and won the electoral vote by a collective 85,000 votes in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, the Trumpublicans are acting as though they have a popular mandate to shred the social safety, cut taxes on the wealthy, eviscerate environmental protections, deregulate the banks who crashed the economy in 2008, and ignore blatant conflicts of interest by Trump and his appointees that cast doubt on whether they're acting on behalf of the nation or their personal financial gain.

Faced with the Trumpublican Shock Doctrine Blitzkrieg, the response must be massive resistance—in the streets (including non-violent civil disobedience), in mainstream and alternative media, in neighborhoods, towns, cities, and states, in Congress, in elections at every level of government, in the courts, and inside regulatory agencies. The idea, put forward by some Democrats, that we should wait to see whether Trump and the Republicans actually follow through on their plans, and seek areas of bi-partisan agreement, must be definitively buried. It must be made clear that any Congressional Democrat who follows such a path will face a aggressive primary challenge.

It's incumbent upon everyone who cares about democracy and the common good to fight back. As for House and Senate Democrats, their job is to use every available rule and tool to delay and obstruct the Trumpublican agenda. Among other things, while Senate Democrats can't filibuster Trump's appointments, they have the power to require that every appointment subject to confirmation require 30 hours of debate.

That alone can tie up the Senate for several months, delaying the rest of the Trumpublican agenda while giving time for citizens to organize resistance and Trumpian scandals to marinate and escalate. While Republicans can eventually pass some of their agenda by using budget reconciliation which doesn't allow for a filibuster, most Republican legislation will be subject to the filibuster, which Democratic Senators should use as often as necessary and not be intimidated by charges of obstruction.

Keep in mind Shock Doctrine strategist Milton



# Anti-abortion global gag rule: "women will die because of this":

DAWN LAGUENS AND AMY GOODMAN

Just two days after millions of people poured into the streets of Washington, D.C., and cities around the world for the historic Women's March on Washington, President Trump has reinstated the controversial "global gag rule," which women's rights advocates fear will increase unsafe abortions around the world. The policy originated in the Reagan era and bans U.S. funding for any international healthcare organizations that perform abortions or advocate for the legalization of abortion or even mention it, even if those activities are funded by non-U.S. money. Trump signed the order surrounded by seven other men. We speak to Planned Parenthood's Dawn Laguens.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Just two days after millions of people poured into the streets of Washington, D.C., and cities around the world for the historic Women's March on Washington, President Trump has reinstated the controversial global gag rule, which women's rights advocates fear will increase unsafe abortions around the world. The policy originated during the Reagan era, and it bans U.S. funding for any international healthcare organization that performs abortion or advocates for the legalization of abortion or even mentions abortion, even if those activities are funded by non-U.S. money. Trump signed the order surrounded by seven other men. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer was questioned about the move on Monday.

**REPORTER:** Of all the policy or actions that the president could have taken today, he chose to reinstate the Mexico City Policy. What message is he sending here? Does he see the elimination, reduction of abortions as an American value? And also, here at home, can pro-life Americans expect him to put his signature on legislation that will defund Planned Parenthood?

**PRESS SECRETARY SEAN SPICER:** Well, I think the president, it's no secret, has made himself—made it very clear that he's a pro-life president. He wants to stand up for all Americans, including the unborn. And I think the reinstatement of this policy is not just something that echoes that value, but respects taxpayer funding, as well, and ensures that we're standing up not just for life, for life of the unborn, but for also taxpayer funds that are being spent overseas to perform an action that is contrary to the values of this president, and, I think, continue to further illustrate, not just to the folks here in this country, but around the world, of what a value we place on life.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The global gag rule is seen by many as a major global barrier to access to crucial women's health services. In this interview, the president of Planned Parenthood, Cecile Richards, explains how the policy works.

**CECILE RICHARDS:** This rule, also known as the Mexico City Policy, was first put in place three decades ago by President Reagan. Current U.S. policy already restricts organizations from using U.S. funds to pay for abortions. But the gag rule goes even further, by dictating what they can do with their own money. This means that if a clinic receives even \$1 of U.S. foreign assistance for family planning, its doctors and nurses are limited in what they can do to help their patients. They can't counsel a woman on the full range of health options legally available to her, refer her to another provider for specialized care or even give her a pamphlet with medically accurate information. That's why we call it the global gag rule, because it prevents doctors from talking to their patients and providing services that are legal in their own countries—and in the U.S.—and it keeps people

from participating in the democratic process of their own countries. This means clinics closing their doors, more unintended pregnancies and more unsafe abortion

**AMY GOODMAN:** The pro-choice group NARAL tweeted, "Trump's reinstatement of the global gag rule officially turns his anti-woman, anti-choice rhetoric into policy." Meanwhile, Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Democratic Congresswoman Nita Lowey of New York announced they would introduce the HER Act to repeal the global gag rule.

Well, for more, we're joined by **DAWN LAGUENS**, executive vice president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, explain exactly how this works.

**DAWN LAGUENS:** So, what happens is—and this is a more expansive version, by the way, of the global gag rule, worse than anything that happened under Ronald Reagan, because they have extended it to apply not just to family planning funds, but \$8 billion in global health aid. And what it means is, any organization that takes one of those dollars to do Zika prevention, to do HIV/AIDS counseling, to do family planning work, if they speak honestly to their clients, to their patients, about the full range of reproductive health options that are available, if they refer or advocate, or even, as you said, mention abortion, they will lose that funding and not be able to provide those other services, because, unfortunately, already abortion dollars—dollars cannot pay for abortion internationally, U.S. aid dollars.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You know, in the United States—I was listening to CNN and one of the critics of Planned Parenthood, when someone said, at least in the United States, what—abortion services that are provided in the country are something like 3 percent of the services that Planned Parenthood provides at the clinics?

**DAWN LAGUENS:** Planned Parenthood provides a full range of reproductive health services. About 97 percent of those services are preventive health services.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, he asked, "So, why do they bother providing abortion?"

**DAWN LAGUENS:** Well, abortion is part of the full range of women's healthcare. And it's a legal right. I think one of the things that Sean Spicer forgets when he says that they're going to export American values, an American value is access to our constitutional rights, and abortion is one of them.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The Guttmacher Institute recently put out information—this, again, is in the United States, and the gag order applies internationally—put out information that abortions are at an all-time low, largely attributed to contraception. How will the global gag order affect access to contraception for women around the world?

**DAWN LAGUENS:** Right. Principled organizations around the world will be forced to make a choice as to whether they accept those family planning dollars that they use to provide all kinds of family planning services, if they also are going to stay true to their mission of serving women with the full range of reproductive health services, or at least informing them. I mean, in many cases, this is just about if a woman is going to ask about an abortion, that they can't refer them to someone who could provide a safe, legal abortion, but have to let them be out in the world trying to figure this out on their own. And it really is

insulting to women, their intelligence and their freedom.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Does this go into effect immediately?

**DAWN LAGUENS:** Organizations are going to have to immediately decide whether they are going to sign and abide by this gag rule. Organizations like Save the Children and CARE oppose these kinds of regulations, oppose global gag rules, because they know that it hurts women. I wanted to remind people that when Barack Obama took office eight years ago and reversed the global gag rule, there were some 70,000 women a year dying from these policies being in place. That has dropped down to 20,000 now at the end of eight years. And we're just very fearful that this is going to cause that number, that loss of life, maternal mortality, to skyrocket.

**AMY GOODMAN:** How will this affect Planned Parenthood in particular? You have your national series of clinics around the country, network of clinics. What about internationally?

**DAWN LAGUENS:** We do support a lot of work internationally, and we don't take U.S. aid dollars internationally. But, of course, we're concerned about the rights and health of women across this country. And some of the same people who advocate for these policies in the global gag rule also are the people who are advocating for taking away the rights of women in America. And so, we're very concerned. And as you know, these are the same people who are trying to defund Planned Parenthood and take away access to preventive health services like family planning for millions of women in this country.

Source: Democracy Now! 1/24/17 <http://readersupportednews.org/>

## Russia decriminalizes domestic violence.

RACHEL WITHERS

As women's rights activists around the world inch slowly closer to properly addressing and combating domestic violence, Russia just took a step in the opposite direction. On Wednesday, Russia's lower house of parliament, the Duma, voted to decriminalize "battery within the family," downgrading it from a criminal offense to an administrative offense. The new law, supported by 368 out of 370 senators, means that family violence that does not result in medical treatment or sick leave for the victim is not criminal (completely disregarding the severe mental health effects of domestic violence). If violence occurs more than once per year, it can potentially still be considered criminal, although it's not clear under what circumstances. Russian journalist Olga Bobrova wrote in November that domestic violence is dangerously normalized in Russia, and that the new law "only legalizes the order of things, which was strengthened in the minds of Russians."

Changemakers argued that the law should reflect the traditional power dynamics within the family, and should not "contradict the system of social values that society holds on to," ultraconservative senator Yelena Mizulina told the Moscow Times. Because apparently laws are meant to protect unfair power dynamics rather than those who suffer from them. You may or may not remember Senator Mizulina as the author of the so-called

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# ACLU calls on Americans to take "The People's Oath"

Building on the sense of urgency and desire to take action that many Americans feel as we approach Donald J. Trump taking the Presidential Oath, the American Civil Liberties Union invites people to create their own oath to protect and defend the U.S. Constitution through its new campaign –The People's Oath (peoplesoath.org) – launching this week to coincide with the 2017 Presidential Inauguration.

Starting Jan. 16, individuals are encouraged to go to peoplesoath.org to add their own ending to: /I do solemnly swear to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States to ensure.../ for example, that/I'm the only one who gets to decide what to do with my body /or ...that/my Muslim-American brothers and sisters get the same rights I do. People's Oath-takers can add their own photo or video to their oath, and then share it with friends and family on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms, tagging each pledge with #PeoplesOath and @ACLU.

"As the 45th president takes the oath to affirm that he will, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, /We the People/ will take the People's Oath to declare our commitment to core American values of justice and freedom," said ACLU Project Director and Senior Attorney Dale Ho. Since October 2016, the ACLU has experienced a record spike of more than 60 percent in membership – now at more than a million members and supporters.

The People's Oath is a platform for Americans who want to not only express themselves, but pledge to take action.

"The ACLU, throughout the course of almost a century, has been our nation's chief defender of freedom and justice for all – no matter who's in the White House," said ACLU Executive Director Anthony D. Romero. "The ACLU's staff of litigators and activists in every state, thousands of volunteers, and thousands of card-carrying supporters are ready to fight against any encroachment on our cherished freedoms and rights." At peoplesoath.org, oath-takers use a digital oath generator to write their own oath or choose a pre-drafted one from a drop-down menu. They are then asked to add a photo, sign their oath, share it on social media, and add their name to a growing list of action takers. The oath generator works on mobile phones and desktop computers.

For more information, visit [peoplesoath.org](http://peoplesoath.org)

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) conserves America's original civic values working in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to every person in the United States by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Source: ACLU release 1/16/17 <http://www.aclu.org>

# Resisting the Trumpublican shock doctrine blitzkrieg

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Friedman's observation that a new administration only has six to nine months to achieve major changes. So delay can mean victory. Keep in mind, too, that the conflicts of interest by Trump and many of his appointees are likely to lead to multiple scandals. Remember that in 1972 Richard Nixon won the largest electoral victory in American history and only a little more than a year later resigned under threat of impeachment.

Trump is entering office with only 37% approval ratings, the lowest in recorded history, Hillary Clinton won a popular vote majority. The most hardened Trump supporters may forgive even his most heinous sins, but many ordinary working class and middle class Trump voters may quickly discover that he's not acting in their interests.

Bill Clinton, George W. Bush (second term), and Barack Obama lost their

Congressional majorities only two years after being elected President, and the same could happen to Trump. If the Democrats can even gain three Senate seats in 2018, they can block most of the Trumpublican agenda, much at the Republicans did with much of Obama's agenda after 2010.

It's easy to feel hopeless in the face of the Trumpublican Shock Doctrine. But falling into despair and inaction is simply unacceptable. If the millions of citizens who care about the future resist and fight back, the Trumpublican Blitzkrieg can be defeated. The future of the nation and the planet is in our hands.

**MILES MOGULESCU IS AN ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY/BUSINESS AFFAIRS EXECUTIVE, PRODUCER, POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND WRITER.**

Source: People's Action Blog 1/13/17 <https://ourfuture.org/>

# Worried this billionaire will destroy public education, teachers have some questions



LAUREN MCCAULEY

Defenders of public education have a few questions they want to ask Betsy DeVos, President-elect Donald Trump's controversial pick to lead the Department of Education, when she appears at her senate confirmation hearing. With a new campaign targeting members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), as well as its members and supporters, are sharing questions they'd like to see answered by the billionaire Amway heiress and notorious critic of public schools. "DeVos has no relevant experience in public education, but as a billionaire with an agenda she's promoted disastrous ideology and pushed destructive policies across her home state of Michigan—working to undermine, defund and privatize public schools, expand for-profit charters without accountability, and push unconstitutional private school vouchers," Randi Weingarten, president of AFT, wrote in an email to supporters on Monday.

"We need a secretary of education who would strengthen and improve public schools, not one who is out to destroy them," Weingarten added. "We need our questions answered before she gets anywhere near our children's futures." The million member-strong trade union offered up some of its own #Questions4Betsy, inspiring others to do the same. "Ninety percent of kids attend public school, an area you have no experience in," AFT observed. "What qualifications do you have for the job?"

Other questions followed:

• What steps are you taking to make sure your investments won't pose a conflict of interest for you at the Department of Ed?

\* The policies that you helped enact have led to atrocious conditions in Detroit. What do you tell those parents and kids?

\* What do you believe your role and the role of the department of ed is to ensure the free exchange of ideas on campus?

\* Will you push expansion of unregulated, for-profit charters on the nat'l level as you did in MI, despite dismal results?

\* Do you plan to pursue a voucher program at the national level despite the fact that voters have rejected such initiatives?

\* Can you share examples from your work where you held charter schools to "high standards and strong accountability"?

\* How would you support schools' efforts to attract educators and retain them to become a committed part of a school?

\* How will you enforce Title IX to ensure women have equal access and to support survivors of campus sexual assault?

And pointing to the DeVos's record as "a hardened anti-LGBTQ crusader," as *Huffington Post's* Queer Voices editor Michelangelo Signorile put it, AFT also wants to know: "As secretary of education, what is the Department's role in protecting #LGBT students?" Taking up AFT's call, public school advocates promptly took to Twitter to share some of the union's questions and pose some of their own:

Last week the HELP committee was forced to delay DeVos' hearing, initially scheduled for Jan. 11, due to concerns over her "extensive financial entanglements and potential conflicts of interest," as /Politico/ reported at the time. What's more, a separate/Politico/ investigation published Monday highlighted how the DeVos family used its massive wealth to advance a staunch Christian conservative agenda in Michigan and beyond.

Responding to the /Politico/ reporting, Diane Ravitch wrote on her blog Monday, "if Betsy DeVos is confirmed, which is likely, we will have a major battle on our hands to protect public education and to maintain a separation of church and state."

"She is not a normal candidate for secretary of education," warned the public education advocate and former assistant Secretary of Education under George H.W. Bush. "She is a religious zealot and a radical extremist. She will speak of her admiration for all successful schools, including public schools, but don't believe it. She is a determined foe of public education."

Source: Common Dreams 1/16/17 <<http://www.commondreams.org/>



## Just eight men own same wealth as half of humanity



NIKA KNIGHT

The private jets of the world's wealthiest men and women are swarming the Swiss Alps for the annual World Economic Forum (WEF), which begins Monday in Davos, Switzerland, in the midst of an ongoing global inequality crisis. And that crisis is accelerating, according to a new Oxfam report released Monday: today, only eight men own the same amount of wealth as the 3.6 billion people who comprise the poorest half of humanity. Those eight men are Bill Gates, Amancio Ortega, Warren Buffett, Carlos Slim Helu, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Ellison, and Michael Bloomberg.

The report, *An Economy for the 99%*, observes that "[f]ar from trickling down, income and wealth are being sucked upwards at an alarming rate." It goes on to describe how super-rich individuals and the massive corporations they run are fueling the inequality crisis by offshoring taxes, driving down wages, and influencing government to their advantage, and argues that the "very design of our economies and the principles of our economics have taken us to this extreme, unsustainable, and unjust point."

"It is obscene for so much wealth to be held in the hands of so few when one in 10 people survive on less than \$2 a day," said Oxfam International director Winnie Byanyima in a statement. "Inequality is trapping hundreds of millions in poverty; it is fracturing our societies and undermining democracy." Indeed, the report links rapidly rising inequality with the vote for Brexit and the election of President-elect Donald Trump, a frightening rise in xenophobia, and widespread frustration with mainstream politics.

"There are increasing signs that more and more people in rich countries are no longer willing to tolerate the status quo," the report notes. "Why would they, when experience suggests that what it delivers is wage stagnation, insecure jobs, and a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots?"

The report's research also highlights how rising inequality in poorer nations fuels profits to the world's wealthiest. "Oxfam interviewed women working in

a garment factory in Vietnam who work 12 hours a day, six days a week and still struggle to get by on the \$1 an hour they earn producing clothes for some of the world's biggest fashion brands," the organization wrote. "The CEOs of these companies are some of the highest paid people in the world. Corporate tax dodging costs poor countries at least \$100 billion every year. This is enough money to provide an education for the 124 million children who aren't in school and fund healthcare interventions that could prevent the deaths of at least six million children every year."

"Across the world, people are being left behind," Byanyima said. "Their wages are stagnating yet corporate bosses take home million dollar bonuses; their health and education services are cut while corporations and the super-rich dodge their taxes; their voices are ignored as governments sing to the tune of big business and a wealthy elite."

The report also outlines a plan for a "human economy" that would work to combat the exponential rise of global inequality. "Together we need to create a new common sense, and turn things on their head to design an economy whose primary purpose is to benefit the 99 percent, not the one percent," the report reads. "The group that should benefit disproportionately from our economies are people in poverty, regardless of whether they are in Uganda or the United States. Humanity has incredible talent, huge wealth and infinite imagination. We need to put this to work to create a more human economy that benefits everyone, not just the privileged few."

It is hard to imagine Davos as the place to create this economy: while the WEF is purportedly focusing anew on inequality this year, the super-rich and leaders of multinational corporations who attend the forum continue to offshore trillions of dollars worth of taxes. "We have a situation where billionaires are paying less tax often than their cleaner or their secretary," Max Lawson, Oxfam's policy advisor, told the Associated Press. "That's crazy."

Source: *Common Dreams* 11617  
<http://www.commondreams.org>

## Trump shows that money in politics still counts

CIARA TORRES-SPELLISCY

One common refrain during the 2016 campaign was that Trump's success both in the primary season and the general election proved that money in politics doesn't matter. And while Trump did beat better-funded candidates such as Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton, Trump always had his personal wealth to tap into at a moment's notice. In the end, he supplied 22 percent of the \$247 million his campaign spent.

"I want people that made a fortune," Trump has said of his cabinet picks. The idea that these individuals will work for the public good instead of their own narrow self-interest is as seductive as Donner's 1846 advertisement purporting to give something of value for nothing.

What the Trump cabinet choices show is that money in politics is still a large determinate of who gets positions of power. After the Supreme Court's twin decisions in *McCutcheon* and *Citizens United*, donors don't have to be choosy about where they spend their largesse in politics. *Citizens United* allows donors to put money in an unlimited set of Super PACs to fund independent ads and *McCutcheon* allows donors to give hard money donations to all federal candidates simultaneously. And add onto that the growing dark money problem which allows big donors to hide their role if they wish.

And that's just spending in federal elections. Big donors have been bankrolling the Republican Governors Association (RGA) for years. A couple years back I did a study of the donors to the RGA between 2002 and 2010. Those in the million-dollar donor RGA club were: Paul Singer (a legendary hedge fund manager), Richard DeVos (co-founder of Amway), Sheldon Adelson (owner of the Sands Casino), and David Koch (part owner of Koch Industries).

Big donors like these often give as members of a family (fathers and sons, husbands and wives, or brothers). In the 2016 cycle the RGAs donors include multiple members of the DeVos family, Paul Singer (\$500,000), Sheldon Adelson (\$500,000) and Koch Industries -- the privately held corporation owned by the Koch Brothers -- which gave the RGA \$2 million.

Of this group, Trump picked Betsy DeVos as his nominee for Secretary of Education. (She's the daughter-in-law of Richard DeVos.) Besides their long-term funding of the RGA, the DeVos family gave to the RNC and Trump's campaign. I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop on other historical big donors being named to positions of power.

But newer big donors are already getting the nod. Linda McMahon and her husband Vincent (of World Wrestling Entertainment) gave millions to support Trump and the Republican Super PAC supporting Senate Republican candidates, among other conservative causes. Ms.

McMahon is now Trump's nominee to run the Small Business Administration.

Todd Ricketts is the son of billionaire Joe Ricketts. Before this election, the two were best known as owners of no-longer-cursed-by-a-goat team known as the Chicago Cubs. Todd is now Trump's pick to be Deputy Commerce Secretary. Todd Ricketts followed an unusual trajectory to land his job. He began the 2016 cycle as fundraising co-chair for Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker. After Walker left the race, the Ricketts family, whose political contributions Todd manages, gave \$5.5 million to a super PAC opposing Trump. But then, late in the general election campaign, Todd helped raise \$66 million for two pro-Trump super PACs. Although Trump is notorious for never forgetting a slight, money has a remarkable way of inducing amnesia.

Meanwhile, Steven Mnuchin who is Trump's pick for Treasury secretary, gave over \$300,000 to conservatives in 2016, according to Open Secrets. By the standards of the Trump administration, Mnuchin's political donations are trivial. Perhaps that's because, relatively speaking, Mnuchin is a pauper. His net worth is roughly estimated at a paltry \$40 million.

And Trump's pick for Secretary of State, ExxonMobil CEO and Putin Pal, Rex Tillerson, gave more than \$70,000 to Republicans in 2016 and over \$400,000 over the past 24 years. Yet, these contributions obscure Tillerson's real political financial power. At least from what's publicly available, ExxonMobil has contributed \$7.1 million to Republican candidates since 2010, representing 87 percent of its total candidate contributions. Meanwhile, the company gave another \$5.8 million to PACs during this period, and it's a safe bet most of them supported Republicans.

Given ExxonMobil's size, it's perhaps not surprising that nearly 8 percent of members of the House and Senate reported owning stock in the energy behemoth. Yet Exxon's stockholders include Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.), who sits on the House Subcommittee on Environment, which oversees environmental standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. And in the Senate, Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) is a member of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, which oversees the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

So lecture me again about how money in politics has nothing to do with power. Please. It appears that what they don't own, they now control.

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Source: *Brennan Center for Justice* 1/16/17  
<https://www.brennancenter.org/>





# How American life continued to deteriorate in 2016

PAUL BUCHHEIT

The reality of the disposable American has been building up in recent years, and new evidence keeps pouring in. Now the potential exists for greater suffering under the rule of a billionaire Cabinet that is far, far removed from average workers and renters and homeowners.

## FIRST THE "UPSIDE" -- 5% OF US ARE MILLIONAIRES

Depending on the source, America has anywhere from 7 million to 13.5 million millionaires -- about 5% of U.S. adults, and about a 40% increase in just six years. At the other end, 90% of us have gained nothing since 1997, and at least half of us nothing since 1980.

## NEW EVIDENCE OF AN OVERALL COLLAPSE

Recent studies show America at or near the bottom among developed countries in disposable income poverty, income and wealth inequality, safety net provisions, employment, economic mobility, life expectancy, infant mortality, and the well-being of children. We've run the table. The better part of America is equivalent to a third-world country.

## NEGLECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE AMONG US

We have fallen far as a nation when a half-million of our children under the age of four are taking anxiety drugs, and when the great majority of American families have to spend over 10% of their income just to send their four-year-olds to pre-school. And the "American Dream" for our kids? According to one careful study, they only have about half the chance that they had fifty years ago.

## RACIST GAP-WIDENING

Today just 100 individuals own as much wealth as the entire Black population of America. Even a middle-aged African-American with a graduate degree has only about

the same odds of becoming a millionaire as a white person with a high school diploma. The common misperception is that Black youths turn to drugs at a disproportionate rate. Not true. According to the American Journal of Public Health, "drug-use disorders were most prevalent among non-Hispanic Whites, followed by Hispanics, then African Americans." Yet "racialethnic minorities are disproportionately incarcerated, especially for drug crimes."

## FINDING A STABLE JOB IS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE FOR MUCH OF AMERICA

We keep hearing about the drop in the unemployment rate. But with nearly two out of every five American adults not even in the labor force, the unemployment rate is more like 30 percent. Partly explaining our employment frustration is a Princeton study which concluded that only 6% of the ten million new jobs created in the past decade were traditional full-time positions, while 94% of them were temporary or contract-based.

## EVEN FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR MANY OF US

After a precipitous drop in the number of starter homes around the country, the homeownership rate hit a 50-year low, and the increasing number of "cost-burdened" renters (spending half their incomes on rent) has increased by 50 percent. Two out of every five middle-class households (incomes between 80 and 125 percent of the median) have dropped to lower-class. According to Pew Research, median household expenses increased by about 25 percent between 1996 and 2014. Income hasn't budged. Young adults are living with parents to the greatest degree in the modern era, and now the parents themselves (people over 40) are moving back in with THEIR aging parents. For those Americans with visions of retirement in their heads, the median working-age

couple has saved only \$5,000 toward that goal, while the "free-market" capitalist solution of the 401(k) pays about \$100 a month.

## AMERICANS: SICK AND DYING, AND KILLING THEMSELVES

Harvard researcher Dr. Samuel Dickman said, "We spend more on medical care than in any other country, and those dollars are increasingly concentrated on the wealthy." Less fortunate Americans are 15 pounds heavier than in the 1990s, dying from alcoholism at a record rate, and struggling with mental health problems for which treatment facilities have been continually cut, leaving many mentally ill people in jails rather than in psychiatric hospitals. Finally, most disturbingly, we're living in an era of suicide in America, in parallel with our era of inequality. Suicide is at its highest level in 30 years. It's especially high for veterans. War is traumatic and depressing, but so is a return to a deteriorating nation.

## ANY GOOD NEWS?

Only if the blurred and battered American Dream turns into a progressive 2020 Vision. Only if Americans get beyond their irrational fear of the word 'social' and begin to work together to dismantle the plutocracy that rules us. It may take the unrelenting stream of bad news to finally make that happen.

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Source: Common Dreams 11617 <http://www.commondreams.org>

# Fight for \$15: CEO of rigged economy has no business as Labor Secretary

In the run up to the Senate confirmation hearing of fast-food CEO Andy Puzder as U.S. Secretary of Labor, cashiers and cooks will lead protests Thursday at his Carl's Jr. and Hardee's restaurants and corporate offices and at U.S. Department of Labor branches in more than two-dozen cities from coast to coast.

Carl's Jr. and Hardee's cooks and cashiers will lead marches and rallies, holding signs that read, "Meet Andy Puzder: CEO of the rigged economy" and "Puzder gets rich while keeping workers poor."

"Andy Puzder represents the worst of the rigged economy Donald Trump pledged to take on as president," said Terrance Dixon, a worker at Hardee's from St. Louis, who is paid just \$9.00/hr. "If Puzder is confirmed as labor secretary, it will mean the Trump years will be about low pay, wage theft, sexual harassment and racial discrimination instead of making lives better for working Americans like me."

According to CKE's latest financial disclosures, Puzder has made between \$4.4 million and \$10 million in recent years, which means he makes more in one day than he pays his minimum wage workers in any given year. Despite this, he has been an outspoken opponent of minimum wage hikes that would allow his workers to meet their basic needs. Researchers at the University of California at Berkeley found in 2013 that fast-food CEOs like Puzder cost taxpayers \$7.3 billion per year in public assistance by holding down pay for their employees.

Puzder has also opposed basic protections and workers' rights, like meal and rest breaks for employees working long hours. He has even said he would like to replace Carl's Jr. workers with machines because they

"never take a vacation, they never show up late, there's never a slip-and-fall, or an age, sex, or race discrimination case." Puzder has also supported repealing the Affordable Care Act and cuts to Medicaid, even while he forces his own workers to rely on these programs by denying them health care.

As labor secretary, Puzder would be charged with upholding many of the labor laws and regulations CKE routinely violated during his time as CEO. In 60 percent of Department of Labor investigations since 2009, CKE restaurants and franchises were found to have violated wage and hour laws. Since Puzder became CEO of CKE in 2000, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which falls under the DOL, has found 98 safety violations at Carl's Jr. and Hardee's locations, with 36 of them capable of causing death or grave physical harm.

"I'm no robot, and make no mistake: I do need a bathroom break and I will sue if I'm sexually harassed on the job," said Jessenia Adame, a Carl's Jr. worker from Austin who is paid \$9.50/hr. "If our elected leaders really want to make America great, they should confirm a labor secretary who looks out for working people like us, not someone like Andy Puzder who has made millions by stealing our wages and who wants to replace American workers with machines."

Puzder's confirmation battle follows an election defined by workers' frustration with a rigged economy that benefits the few at the top, and after a banner year in the fight for \$15/hr and union rights. Nineteen states raised pay for 4.3 million working people at the end of 2016, including in four states where voters approved minimum wage ballot initiatives on Election Day 2016.

In the four states, "yes" votes exceeded the vote totals for either of the major parties' presidential candidates -- striking proof of the broad public support for raising wages across party lines and in different regions of the country. The New Yorker recently hailed its successes as one of the five biggest business stories of 2016.

Since fast-food workers launched the Fight for \$15 over four years ago, the movement has won wage hikes for 22 million underpaid workers, including more than 10 million who are on their way to \$15/hour, by convincing everyone from voters to politicians to corporations to raise pay. The movement, which has resulted in \$62 billion raises for America's workers, was credited as one of the reasons median income jumped last year by the highest percentage since the 1960s.

"I know first-hand that Puzder would be the wrong choice for America's workers," said Rogelio Hernandez, a worker at Carl's Jr. in Santa Monica, CA who makes \$10.50/hr. "But whether he's confirmed, denied, or withdrawn, nomination is confirmed, denied or withdrawn: we won't back down for one minute in our demands for \$15 an hour and union rights for all workers. If Trump is going to be president for the fast-food corporations instead of the fast-food workers, he's going to end up on the losing side of history."

Source: Fight for \$15 release 1/12/17 <http://fightfor15.org>



# World's reefs caught up in the longest global coral bleaching event ever recorded

TIM RADFORD

Some time this century, if humans go on burning fossil fuels at the present rate, severe bleaching will hit 99 percent of coral reefs every year. Coral bleaching happens when the organisms become uncomfortably hot, and reject the algae on which their lives ultimately depend. Since it takes a reef five years to recover from any one bleaching event, the consequences for some of the world's richest ecosystems could be catastrophic. But catastrophe could be delayed. Drastic cuts in emissions reductions could give reefs an average of another 11 years before they start bleaching every year, according to new research.

Right now, the world's reefs are caught up in the longest global coral bleaching event ever recorded. It began in 2014, and could go on well into 2017, according to the journal *Scientific Reports*. Corals are acutely sensitive to ocean temperatures and when the thermometer rises, their symbiotic relationship with a mutual beneficiary, the zooxanthellae, breaks down. Some 90 percent of the Great Barrier Reef off Australia has

been affected by the latest episode, and 20 percent of the coral killed. "Bleaching that takes place every year will invariably cause major changes in the ecological function of coral reef ecosystems," said Ruben van Hooidonk of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Miami. "Further, annual bleaching will greatly reduce the capacity of coral reefs to provide goods and services, such as fisheries and coastal protection, to human communities."

## ACID TREND

The warning supports earlier studies that have already predicted problems for the world's reefs by the century's end. The reefs are being hit by changes in ocean chemistry, as carbon dioxide levels rise and as waters become more acidic. Changing conditions make reefs vulnerable to new predators. And biologists have warned, again and again, that reefs are home to around a quarter of all marine life, and worth an estimated \$375bn a year to humans, as coastal protection, as fishery nurseries, and as a source of tourism. And even if corals recover from bleaching, and pollution, they could still be vulnerable to drowning as sea levels rise. A new study in the journal *Global and Planetary Change* has identified a crisis at the Great Barrier Reef 125,000 years ago, when polar ice melted, sea levels rose by perhaps six metres, and the reef's corals all but perished.

"The findings highlight the importance of increasing the reef's resilience now," said Belinda Dechnik of the University of Sydney, who led the research. "In combination with climate change predictions by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and in the absence of improvements to reef management and human impacts, sea level pressures could tip the reef over the edge, potentially drowning it for good."

But the latest computer model predictions revealed in *Scientific Reports* deliver even more urgency, more global detail and more alarm. There are 87 countries or territories that are home to 500 square kilometers or more of reef. On average, these reefs will start to experience annual bleaching by 2043. This will leave the living corals vulnerable to starvation and disease. About one

reef system in 20 will already be hotter and have started bleaching a decade before that. Among the first will be reefs around Taiwan and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Some 11 percent of reefs will be affected a decade later than average, and these include the corals off Bahrain, Chile and French Polynesia. If nations adhere to an international agreement made in Paris in December 2015 to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the annual bleaching experience could be delayed by another 11 years. The low latitude reefs of the South Pacific, India, Florida and the Great Barrier off Australia could be protected for another 25 years. In effect, the research has identified the conservation priorities. "These predictions are a treasure trove for those who are fighting to protect one of the world's most magnificent and important ecosystems from the ravages of climate change," said Erik Solheim, head of the UN Environment Programme. "It is imperative that we take these predictions seriously and that, at the very minimum, we meet the targets of the Paris agreement. Doing so will buy time for coral reefs and allow us to plan for the future and adapt to the present."

Source: *Climate News Network* 1/16/17 <http://www.ecowatch.com>

# EPA acknowledges neonics' harm to bees, then 'bows to pesticide industry'

ANDREA GERMANOS

The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday published two bee-related announcements, but with both, say environmental groups, the agency has failed the pollinators. One was its "Policy to Mitigate the Acute Risk to Bees from Pesticide Products." It states that the "policy is not a regulation or an order and, therefore, does not legally compel changes to pesticide product registrations." The other release was a set of draft risk assessments for three neonicotinoids, or "neonics." They are the most widely used class of insecticides, and they have been linked to bee harm. The new assessments were for clothianidin, thiamethoxam, and dinotefuran, and an updated assessment on another, imidacloprid, was also included.

Those assessments, according to Paul Towers, policy advocate and spokesperson for Pesticide Action Network, "are full of gaps and continue to ignore many of the most significant threats from neonicotinoids, particularly when they're used as seed coatings on common crops," their most frequent use. Yet "[e]ven in their limited scope, these risk assessments clearly show harm to bees and other pollinators from uses of neonics," said Larissa Walker, program director for the Center for Food Safety's pollinator program. Added Lori Ann Burd, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's environmental health program: "It's outrageous that on the same day the EPA acknowledged these dangerous pesticides are killing bees it also reversed course on mandating restrictions on their use," referring to the agency's backing away from a 2015 proposal. "This is like a doctor diagnosing your illness but then deciding to withhold the medicine you

need to cure it," Burd said. The Center also referred to the policy's failure to mandate restrictions as "a deep bow to the pesticide industry." To truly take steps to protect bees, as well as our environment, said Tiffany Finck-Haynes, food futures campaigner at Friends of the Earth, the EPA "should take bee-toxic pesticides off the market."

The announcements came during the final days of the Obama administration, and as President-elect Donald Trump has already made clear he'll be heading an anti-science administration, with picks like Scott Pruitt, whose record is "completely antithetical" to the mission of the EPA, which Trump wants him to lead. "It's shocking that the EPA's response to the crisis of declining pollinators and the abundant science linking that decline to neonicotinoid insecticides is to meekly offer a policy encouraging industry to consider restricting pesticide use in limited situations where plants are blooming while commercial honeybees have been brought in to work the fields," the Center for Biological Diversity's Burd continued. "This is a rejection of science that should be deeply troubling to all Americans as we move into a Trump administration."

Source: *Common Dreams* 1/13/17 <http://www.commondreams.org/>



# Governor Brown, Donald Trump & Delta Tunnels

On November 10, Governor Jerry Brown offered his commitment to find "common ground wherever possible" with the incoming Trump Administration, but to oppose the new administration regarding climate change policies. Today, Restore the Delta called on Governor Brown to advocate for the full protection of San Francisco Bay-Delta fisheries and river flows for the estuary, as he establishes his working relationship with President-elect Trump's transition team and administration.

Restore the Delta's executive director Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla said: "It is striking to us that Governor Brown did not mention protecting the Clean Water Act for drinking water supplies, or the Endangered Species Act in regard to fishery protections, in his statement about the incoming Trump Administration. While we oppose Governor Brown's Delta Tunnels project, we know that all Californians, expect him, like every governor before him has

done, to fight to enforce the federal Clean Water and the Endangered Species Acts to protect the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary. Governor Brown must protect the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary in his dealings with the Trump Administration. If he does not, in order to push the Delta Tunnels project through the Federal approval process or to increase freshwater pumping from the endangered estuary, his legacy with Californians will be tarnished permanently. We call on him not to tie his Delta, environmental, and statewide water protection legacy to a weakening of these crucial and essential laws. We call on him to demonstrate to the new incoming Federal administration that saving the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary is as important to him as he has claimed it is while promoting the Delta Tunnels."

Source: *Restore the Delta* release 11/14/16 <http://www.restorethedelta.org>





# Donald Trump's plan for our water is just as bad as you'd imagine

During his Presidential campaign, Donald Trump vowed to use his first 100 days in office to implement plans to overhaul our nation's aging roads, bridges, ports and yes—water systems. This sounds great on paper. Infrastructure systems form the backbone of our nation, and when they fall apart society follows. So, while modernizing these systems is laudable, the devil is in the details. In reality, Trump's plan for repairing our nation's water systems would be an absolute disaster for just about everyone—except of course, water corporations and Wall Street investors.

In fact, some of the same players that brought down our nation's housing market are poised to repeat the same mistakes—but this time, with our water. Donald Trump is a business tycoon, not a policy expert. It's therefore disturbing (though not terribly shocking) that his policy proposals favor Wall Street and private interests. Trump's infrastructure plan was crafted by his Commerce Secretary nominee Wilbur Ross, a billionaire who built his fortune helping companies lay off employees, and Peter Navarro, a conservative professor of business at the University of California Irvine.

According to Ross and Navarro, "America's infrastructure is a linchpin of private sector growth." Their white paper on the topic goes on to articulate their plan for our nation's infrastructure. Essentially, it will encourage the privatization of our water systems, while emboldening Wall Street to continue to gamble with our water. In traditional privatization schemes, corporations like Veolia and Suez, whose main focus is water and sewer services, take control of local drinking water and wastewater systems. But over the past decade or so investment firms have identified these systems as a source of windfall profits as well.

## WALL STREET CASHES IN

Motivated by the financial downturn, Wall Street behemoths like JPMorgan Chase and the Carlyle Group saw municipalities turning to privatization to plug budget shortfalls, and have gotten into the water game. But banks don't care if our water is clean and safe to drink, or if we can afford its provision. Where we see a vital resource flowing from a tap, they see dollar bills. As such, private equity players typically focus on projects that bring in short-term profits, flipping assets like water systems after driving down quality and driving up prices.

For example, in 2011 the Carlyle Group purchased a water company serving Missoula, Mont., and Apple Valley, Calif., and then sold it off to a Canadian firm within five years. The city of Missoula is now in the middle of buying its water system back in order to regain local control, ensure long-term stability, protect its water supply and improve service.

Trump's infrastructure plan would encourage similar predatory behavior by giving these kinds of companies a tax credit of \$0.82 for every dollar of equity invested in an infrastructure project. That is a massive handout to Wall Street and could result in degraded service, increased rates and layoffs at community water plants (frequent occurrences in such situations). As we've reported extensively, allowing corporations to take over local drinking and wastewater systems is a bad deal for the public. Private equity is simply too expensive.

In 2008, Alinda Capital Partners financed the design and construction of a new, \$65 million water reclamation plant in Santa Paula, Calif. that the company PERC Water Corp. agreed to build and operate. John Quinn, the city's former finance director, referred to the project as a "terrible deal," adding that while the city intended to refinance down the line with municipal bonds, it would be "stuck paying premium prices to fund [the companies'] profits," according to the trade publication /Public Works Financing/.

## WHY FEDERAL FUNDING IS SO IMPORTANT

So, if private equity investment in community water systems and privatization are so terrible, why do

municipalities pursue these deals at all? Quite simply, out of desperation. The federal government used to be one of the most reliable stewards of our nation's drinking and wastewater systems, but now communities are running out of the funds needed to maintain them.

Since its peak in 1977, federal funding for water infrastructure has dropped by 74 percent in real dollars. In 1977, the federal government spent \$76.27 per person (in 2014 dollars) on our water services but by 2014 that support had fallen to \$13.68 per person. According to the American Water Works Association, our water systems need at least \$1.1 trillion over the next 25 years for necessary upgrades.

Meanwhile, many of our nation's water systems are over a century old, and are falling apart. Aging water systems mean corroding pipes, sometimes made of lead—part of what contributed to the Flint water crisis. As water quality suffers, cities and towns still need to compensate for the federal funding gap, and that often means raising rates.

In a comparison of water rates for 20 of the largest U.S. cities and 10 regional representatives, the organization Circle of Blue found that the average water service rates for residential users increased by 6 percent between 2014 and 2015 alone. Rates have increased by 41 percent since 2010.

But in many communities, particularly Rust Belt cities that have experienced severe economic challenges in recent years, households can't afford to pay more for water service. This is happening in places like Baltimore and Detroit where rates have gone up to compensate for depleted federal funding and aging systems, and as a result, many households have lost access to service.

But Trump's advisors think it's good that privatization would lead to more shutoffs. According to the paper: "One of the authors of this paper studied the New York City Water Authority as Mayor Giuliani's privatization advisor. This public agency was constantly experiencing far worse collection experience than Consolidated Edison, Brooklyn Union Gas or New York Telephone. The reason was simple: Customers knew that the private utilities would cut off their service if they were too delinquent, but a municipal authority would be far less likely to do so because of the political uproar that would result." To be fair, they are correct about one thing—water shutoffs, particularly those resulting from increased rates, do cause controversy—as they well should.

Perhaps most frustrating of all, Trump's brain trust appears to be banking on local water crises to justify its plan. While his advisors callously reference Flint as an example of crumbling infrastructure, it's vital to note that their plan won't actually help Flint or cities experiencing similar challenges.

## A FLAWED PLAN

Water corporations typically don't invest money in places as economically depressed as Flint, because those communities can't afford the inflated costs of privatized water service. In fact, private water companies often cherry pick service areas to avoid low-income neighborhoods altogether. If they were to service areas like this, water shutoffs would likely ensue when households couldn't afford the resulting rate increases.

"Trump's infrastructure plan is a raw deal for communities, workers and everyone who drinks water or uses it for basic sanitation. Much like his infamous Twitter account, it's full of hot air and little substance." Moreover, claims that the plan is revenue neutral and would therefore pay for itself are false. In reality, it would shift investments to infrastructure and not necessarily increase the amount of money invested in the economy overall, so there's no increased revenue from income taxes on investor profits.

As befitting his reputation as a businessman who has amassed a fortune through ethically questionable practices, No matter your political affiliation, your cultural identity, your race, your income or your gender—we all

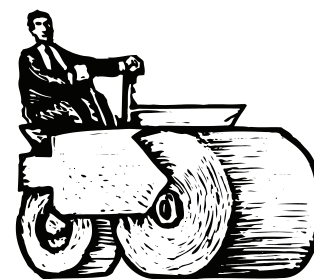
need and deserve water to live. It is critical that everyone be able to afford water service, and that the liquid flowing from our taps is safe to drink.

That's why it's more important than ever that we keep our water under public control, not corporate control. That means discouraging Wall Street from privatizing water systems, encouraging public financing of water projects through government bonds, and ensuring a steady, sustainable source of funding for community water systems through the State Revolving Funds.

Restoring this federal funding to community water systems will enable municipalities to launch infrastructure upgrade projects, thereby creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and boosting the economic prospects of millions of Americans.

**KATE FRIED IS THE SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT FOOD & WATER WATCH. WITH OVER A DECADE OF EXPERIENCE, KATE HAS WORKED ON A WIDE RANGE OF CAUSES SUCH AS INNER-CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESSIVE BALLOT MEASURE CAMPAIGNS AND ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDING, AMONG OTHERS. ORIGINALLY FROM NEW ENGLAND, SHE HOLDS A B.A. IN ENGLISH WITH A CONCENTRATION IN CULTURAL STUDIES FROM OBERLIN COLLEGE.**

Source: Common Dreams 1/13/17 <http://www.commondreams.org/>



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## Bipartisan EPA alumni urge Senate to reject Pruitt's "troubling" nomination

NADIA PRUPIS

On Monday, 13 former heads of state environmental bureaus sent a letter to senate leaders, urging them to reject Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt's nomination as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chief. The letter, organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), implores members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to vote against Pruitt over his track record of opposing EPA rules—a history that calls into question whether he "appropriately respects science-based decision making" or would cooperate with states to protect Americans' health and safety from climate threats. "While we have worked under both Republican and Democratic Governors, reflect a range of political views, and come from diverse states, we share a common concern about Mr. Pruitt's nomination," the letter reads.

In one instance outlined in the letter, Pruitt challenged the EPA's 2009 assertion that greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare. Along with the fossil fuel industry, Pruitt filed a lawsuit that argued the finding—based on analysis of scientific literature, including research by the United Nations' climate panel—was "arbitrary and capricious." Although the legal challenge was unsuccessful, Pruitt's argument—that the EPA should not have relied on reports issued by scientific bodies—sheds a revealing light on his environmental positions. "We find this deeply troubling," the letter states. "The fact that Attorney General Pruitt attacked this finding suggests a lack of understanding as to how environmental

protection agencies make science-based decisions or, even worse, an inclination to set science aside when the outcome is at odds with his predetermined political point of view." Pruitt has also filed a lawsuit to block air pollution regulations, which was ultimately rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court. "Rather than EPA acting as our partner in state-led efforts to ensure clean air and water for our residents, we fear that an EPA under Mr. Pruitt would undermine the rules that help to make sure that our state regulations are successful," the letter concludes. "For all these reasons, we respectfully recommend that this committee reject Mr. Pruitt's nomination."

The letter is the latest salvo in a campaign against Pruitt's nomination, following a day of action spearheaded by the climate group 350.org that saw protesters rallying outside of lawmakers' offices around the country, urging them to reject the Oklahoma official along with other climate deniers in President-elect Donald Trump's cabinet. As /Common Dreams/ and other outlets have reported, Pruitt has deep ties to the fossil fuel industry and the rightwing billionaires Charles and David Koch. The /New York Times/ on Saturday reported that Pruitt impeded efforts to penalize poultry companies that had polluted Oklahoma's waterways with chicken manure—"one of a series of instances in which Mr. Pruitt put cooperation with industry before confrontation as he sought to blunt the impact of federal environmental policies in his state," the /Times/ Eric Lipton and Coral Davenport wrote.

Source: Common Dreams 1/16/17 <http://www.commondreams.org/>

## Gitmo attorneys: Kelly's aggressive role at Guantánamo makes him "unfit" to lead DHS

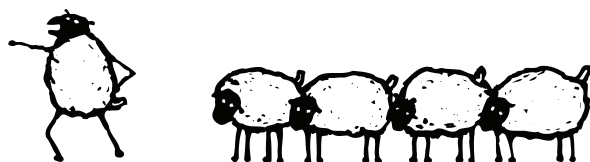
JEN NESSEL

In advance of the Senate confirmation hearing for Retired Major General John Kelly to lead the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) issued the following statement: "General Kelly's aggressive oversight of the illegal military prison at Guantánamo Bay disqualifies him to head the Department of Homeland Security. Presiding over a population of detainees not charged or convicted of crimes, over whom he had maximum custodial control, Kelly treated them with brutality. His response to the detainees' peaceful hunger strike in 2013 was punitive force-feeding, solitary confinement, and rubber bullets. Furthermore, he sabotaged efforts by the Obama administration to resettle detainees,

consistently undermining the will of his commander in chief. His temperament and actions make him unfit to lead an agency that currently holds tens of thousands of immigrants, including many fleeing violence and many in long-term indefinite detention. Kelly's recent vow to end "political correctness" in U.S. national security policy is a thinly veiled endorsement of policies and practices that are illegal and immoral, including torture and racial and religious profiling. His statement is a clear warning sign, and the Senate must reject his nomination to preserve and protect the rule of law."

**THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS IS DEDICATED TO ADVANCING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. FOUNDED IN 1966 BY ATTORNEYS WHO REPRESENTED CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN THE SOUTH, CCR IS A NON-PROFIT LEGAL AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTED TO THE CREATIVE USE OF LAW AS A POSITIVE FORCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.**

Source: Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) 1/10/17 <http://www.ccrjustice.org/>



## Trump 'plan' fails on all levels, does nothing on conflicts of interest

### Statements of Public Citizen Experts

ROBERT WEISSMAN, PRESIDENT, PUBLIC CITIZEN:

President-elect Donald Trump has failed his ethics test. Now, America will suffer the consequences. There is only one way to avoid the conflicts of interest that will engulf his presidency and America: He must sell the family business. Unfortunately, President-elect Trump has today declined to take this simple step. The measures he plans to put in place will do nothing to solve the most serious conflict problems. It does not matter if a trustee prevents conversations between the president and those running his business (including, implausibly, his sons), nor if profits from foreign operations are donated during the presidency. That's because Trump knows what he owns, and he knows how policy choices will affect his business. The corrupting conflicts are inescapable, irrespective of Trump's good or bad intent, and irrespective of his contact with those running the business, as long as he owns the business. These pervasive conflicts will affect matters from consumer protection to bankruptcy law, labor rights to tax policy, as well as foreign policy. Americans deserve a president who works for them, without regard to how policy will affect the president's own bottom line. Instead, we are on the verge of witnessing the first for-profit president.

LISA GILBERT, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC CITIZEN'S CONGRESS WATCH DIVISION:

Trump's announcement today fails on all levels. Hiring a trustee doesn't insulate him from knowing what he owns – this arrangement involves neither the needed divestment of his assets nor the creation of a truly blind trust to manage the proceeds. Further, his sons will remain involved with the trust and there is no such thing as a firewall at family dinners. In addition, the idea of giving up only profits, not all revenue, from foreign business, and only from hotels, is not an acceptable answer to the emoluments clause problem. Due to his foreign entanglements, Trump may be in violation of the Constitution on day one and will enter office with numerous financial conflicts with foreign governments and foreign business interests that could prejudice him as he makes decisions that impact the United States and our security. Finally, the idea of "limited new deals" is not a feasible one. As long as the Trump family business enterprises continue to accept business, any representation about not taking new deals is a smokescreen. Individuals and businesses who seek to curry favor with the new president and his family will direct their business to Trump, which likely will have disastrous and corrupting ramifications for policy choices.

**PUBLIC CITIZEN IS A NATIONAL, NONPROFIT CONSUMER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN 1971 TO REPRESENT CONSUMER INTERESTS IN CONGRESS, THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE COURTS.**

Source: Public Citizen 1/11/17 <http://www.citizen.org/>

## Russia decriminalizes domestic violence.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"gay propaganda law," which made exposing minors to representations of non-traditional relationships a crime in Russia.

Official data on domestic violence in Russia is limited. According to the BBC, "Estimates based on regional studies suggest some 600,000 women in Russia face physical and verbal abuse at home and 14,000 die from injuries inflicted by husbands or partners each year - almost 40 a day." A 2010 report to the /United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women/ stressed the inadequacy of Russian law in dealing with domestic violence, recommending the introduction of protective orders for victims, rehabilitation programs, and recategorization of family violence from private to public prosecution. Definitely didn't mention decriminalization. Nope. A Russian petition on Change.org was already calling for stronger measures, not weaker ones. You can sign it by visiting: <https://www.change.org/>

Source: BUST Magazine 1/16/17 <http://bust.com/feminism>





# EU: Orwellian counter-terrorism laws stripping rights under guise of defending them

Sweeping new laws are driving Europe into a deep and dangerous state of permanent securitization, Amnesty International said on the publication of a comprehensive human rights analysis of counter-terrorism measures across 14 EU member states.

"Dangerously disproportionate: The ever-expanding national security state in Europe" reveals how a deluge of laws and amendments passed with break-neck speed, is undermining fundamental freedoms and dismantling hard-won human rights protections. "In the wake of a series of appalling attacks, from Paris to Berlin, governments have rushed through a raft of disproportionate and discriminatory laws," said John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Director for Europe. "Taken alone these individual counter-terrorism measures are worrying enough, but when seen together, a disturbing picture emerges in which unchecked powers are trampling freedoms that have long been taken for granted."

The report, based on more than two years' research across 14 EU member states, as well as analysis of initiatives at international and European levels, reveals the extent to which new legislation and policies intended to address the threat of terrorism have steamrolled rights protections. In several countries, counter-terrorism measures have been proposed or enacted that have eroded the rule of law, enhanced executive powers, peeled away judicial controls, restricted freedom of expression and exposed everyone to unchecked government surveillance. The impact on foreigners and ethnic and religious minorities has been particularly profound.

## THE NEW NORMAL: EMERGENCY LAWS AND EMERGENCY-LIKE MEASURES

In several countries, constitutional amendments or legislation will make it easier to declare a formal state of emergency or grant special powers to security and intelligence services often with little or no judicial oversight. For example, new legislation in Hungary provides for sweeping executive powers in the event of a declared emergency including the banning of public assemblies, severe restrictions on freedom of movement and the freezing of assets. Vaguely defined provisions grant powers to suspend laws and fast-track new ones and deploy the army with live firearms to quell disturbances. In France a state of emergency has been renewed five times standardizing a range of intrusive measures, including powers to ban demonstrations and conduct searches without judicial warrants. Temporary emergency measures, such as administrative orders controlling movement in the UK and France, have increasingly become embedded in ordinary law. Poland's new counter-terrorism law permanently cements draconian powers – which include discriminatory targeting of foreign nationals. Some states have misused counter-terror laws to target human rights defenders and political activists. The use of emergency laws by French police to put environmental activists under house arrest ahead of the UN Climate Conference in Paris in 2015 is a stark example.

## SURVEILLANCE STATES

Many EU countries have joined the ranks of "surveillance states" as new laws allowing indiscriminate mass surveillance have been passed giving intrusive powers to security and intelligence services. Mass surveillance powers have been granted or otherwise expanded in the UK, France, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands, among others, allowing the mass interception of and possible access to the data of millions of people. Unsupervised targeted surveillance has also been massively expanded. Poland's 2016 Counter-terrorism Law permits covert surveillance measures targeting foreign nationals, including wire-

tapping, monitoring of electronic communications, and surveillance of telecommunications networks and devices without any judicial oversight for three months. David Miranda, a Brazilian national who was assisting with the journalistic investigation into Edward Snowden's surveillance revelations, was stopped under terrorism powers while transiting through the UK in 2013. He was detained, searched and interrogated for nine hours on suspicion of involvement in "espionage" and "terrorism." His mobile phone, laptop, external hard drive and other materials were confiscated.

## THOUGHT CRIMES

In a modern twist of the Orwellian "thought crime", people can now be prosecuted for actions that have extremely tenuous links to actual criminal behaviour. With counter-terror measures focusing ever more on prevention, governments have invested in "pre-crime" initiatives and become increasingly reliant on administrative control orders to restrict people's freedom of movement and other rights. This has led to many people being placed under curfew, given travel bans or electronically tagged without ever being charged with or convicted of any crime. In these cases evidence is often kept secret, meaning that those accused of "pre-crimes" are not able to adequately defend themselves.

## TARGETING OF REFUGEES AND MINORITY GROUPS

Migrants and refugees, human rights defenders, activists and minority groups have been particularly targeted by new powers, with profiling, often based on stereotyping, leading to the outright misuse of laws that define terrorism very loosely. Many EU member states are attempting to draw links between the refugee crisis and the threat of terrorism. In November, a Hungarian court sentenced Ahmed H – a Syrian national residing in Cyprus – to ten years in prison for committing an "act of terror". This "acts of terror" consisted of throwing stones and speaking to a crowd through a megaphone during clashes with border police. In reality he had travelled to help his elderly parents on their journey fleeing Syria to Europe. Whilst he admitted stone throwing, footage shows that he had also been trying to calm the crowd. Ahmed's wife, Nadia, told Amnesty International: "Our lives have been turned upside down. I try to be both mother and father to my daughters but it is very hard. We miss Ahmed and we are scared for him."

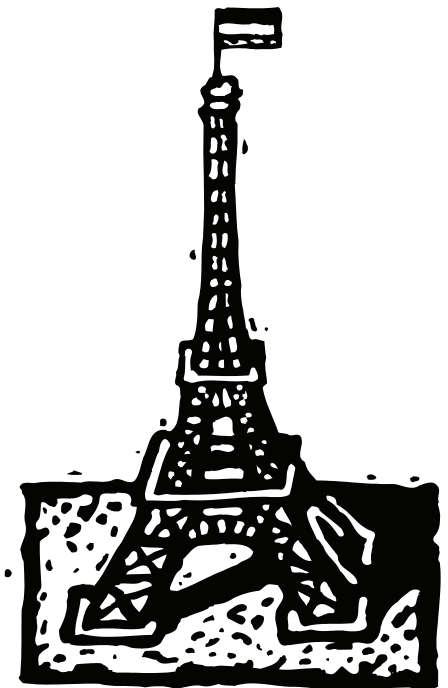
## A CHILLING EFFECT

Fear of being labelled a security threat or an "extremist" has had a chilling effect, shrinking space for free expression. In Spain, two puppeteers were arrested and charged with "glorification of terrorism" after a satirical performance during which a puppet held a banner with a slogan which was deemed to support an armed group. In France a similar offence – "apology of terrorism" – has been used to charge hundreds of people, including children, for "offences" such as posting comments on Facebook that do not incite violence. In 2015 French courts handed down 385 sentences for "apology of terrorism", a third of which were against minors. Definitions of what constitutes "apology" are extremely broad. In Spain a popular musician was arrested and detained for a series of tweets including a joke about offering former King Juan Carlos a cake bomb as a birthday gift. Discriminatory measures have had a disproportionate and profoundly negative impact on Muslims, foreign nationals or people perceived to be Muslim or foreign. Discriminatory action by the state and its agents is increasingly seen as "acceptable" in the national security context. "Whilst the threat posed by terrorism is very real and must always be responded to resolutely, the role of governments should be to provide security for people to enjoy their rights rather

than restricting people's rights in the name of security," said John Dalhuisen. "EU governments are using counter-terrorism measures to consolidate draconian powers, target groups in discriminatory ways and strip away human rights under the guise of defending them. We are in danger of creating societies in which liberty becomes the exception and fear the rule."

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE WHO CAMPAIGN FOR INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL. OUR SUPPORTERS ARE OUTRAGED BY HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BUT INSPIRED BY HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD - SO WE WORK TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH CAMPAIGNING AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY. WE HAVE MORE THAN 2.2 MILLION MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS IN MORE THAN 150 COUNTRIES AND REGIONS AND WE COORDINATE THIS SUPPORT TO ACT FOR JUSTICE ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES.**

Source: Amnesty International 11617 <http://www.amnesty.org>



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# 'Welcome to the era of bullsht': Russian journalist pens letter to 'my doomed colleagues' in US media

DAVID FERGUSON

Russian journalist Alexey Kovalev wrote a letter to his "doomed colleagues in the American media" about how they are now facing what Russian reporters have been facing for years. "Congratulations, US media!" Kovalev wrote at Medium.com. "You've just covered your first press conference of an authoritarian leader with a massive ego and a deep disdain for your trade and everything you hold dear."

"We in Russia have been doing it for 12 years now — with a short hiatus when our leader wasn't technically our leader — so quite a few things during Donald Trump's press conference rang my bells. Not just mine, in fact — read this excellent round-up in /The Moscow Times/," he went on. Putin's press conferences, Kovalev said, are annual media spectacles at which "Putin always comes off as an omniscient and benevolent leader tending to a flock of unruly but adoring children." President-elect Donald Trump's circus-like press conference on Wednesday, he said, showed that the former reality TV star is "apparently taking a page from Putin's playbook." To his American counterparts, Kovalev said, "You're in this for at least another four years, and you'll be dealing

with things Russian journalists have endured for almost two decades now. I'm talking about Putin here, but see if you can apply any of the below to your own leader."

## WELCOME TO THE ERA OF BULLSH\*T:

"Facts don't matter," said Kovalev. "You can't hurt this man with facts or reason. He'll always outmaneuver you. He'll always wriggle out of whatever carefully crafted verbal trap you lay for him." Putin, he said, treats all interviews as a one-way conversation. When he's handed questions he doesn't like, he responds with "a bag of meaningless factoids (Putin likes to drown questions he doesn't like in dull, unverifiable stats, figures and percentages), platitudes, false moral equivalences and straight, undiluted bullsht."

"He'll mock you for your nervous stuttering and if you're raising a serious issue, respond with a vague, non-committal statement," Kovalev warned.

## DON'T EXPECT ANY CAMARADERIE:

If you're hoping for support from your fellow journalists, you're bound to be disappointed, Kovalev said. "These people are not your partners or brothers in arms. They are your rivals in a fiercely

competitive, crashing market and right now the only currency in this market is whatever that man on the stage says," he warned. "It's in this man's best interests to pit you against each other, fighting over artificial scarcities like room space, mic time or, of course, his attention." Russian media agencies now arrive at Putin press conferences with "large, bright placards aimed at attracting the president's attention." The Russian president has made the press events into a game where reporters clamor like children for his attention.

## EXPECT A LOT OF SYCOPHANCY AND SOFT BALLS FROM YOUR "COLLEAGUES":

"A mainstay of Putin's press conferences is, of course, softball questions. Which also happen to be Putin's favorites. Mr President, is there love in your heart? Who you will be celebrating New Year's Eve with? What's your favorite food?" Kovalev said. Other times Putin will take questions of little importance so he can eat up time posturing and making himself look like an attentive, authoritative leader. "There will be people from publications that exist for no other reason than heaping fawning praise on him and attacking his enemies," Kovalev wrote. "But

there will also be one token critic who will be allowed to ask a 'sharp' question, only to be drowned in a copious amount of bullsht, and the man on the stage will always be the winner ('See? I respect the media and free speech')."

## YOU'RE ALWAYS LOSING

"This man owns you," said Kovalev. "He understands perfectly well that he is the news. You can't ignore him. You're always playing by his rules — which he can change at any time without any notice. You can't — in Putin's case — campaign to vote him out of office. Your readership is dwindling because ad budgets are shrinking — while his ratings are soaring, and if you want to keep your publication afloat, you'll have to report on everything that man says as soon as he says it, without any analysis or fact-checking, because 1) his fans will not care if he lies to their faces; 2) while you're busy picking his lies apart, he'll spit out another mountain of bullsht and you'll be buried under it." He concluded, "I could go on and on, but I think at this point you see where this is heading. See if any of this rings any bells if you covered Trump's presser or watched it online."

Source: Raw Story 1/12/17 <http://www.rawstory.com>

## Trump's plan to neuter the White House press corps, and neuter our democracy

ROBERT REICH

Tyrants don't allow open questioning, and they hate the free press. They want total control. That's why, according to three senior officials on the transition team, the incoming Trump administration is considering evicting the White House press corps from the press room inside the White House and moving them — and news conferences — to a conference center or to the Old Executive Office Building. This may sound like a small logistic matter. It's not. The White House "press room" contains work stations and broadcast booths, and the briefing area for presidential news conferences. Reporters have had workspace at the White House since Teddy Roosevelt was president, in 1901. But we're in a new era, the reign of King Trump.

Sean Spicer, Trump's press secretary, acknowledges "there has been some discussion about how" to move the press out of the White House. Spicer says it's because the new administration would like a larger room to allow more members of the press to attend press conferences.

Rubbish. It's because a larger room would allow the administration to fill seats with "alt-right" fringe journalists, rightwing social media, Trump supporters and paid staffers. They'd be there to ask the questions Trump wants to answer, and to jeer at reporters who ask critical questions and applaud Trump's answers. The move would allow Trump to play the crowd.

That's exactly what happened at Trump's so-called "news conference" on January 11 — the first he's held in six months. It wasn't really a press conference at all, and shouldn't have been characterized as one. It was a fake news conference that took place in a large auditorium. In the audience were paid staffers who jeered and snickered when reporters asked critical questions, and cheered every time Trump delivered one of his campaign zingers. It could easily have been one of his rallies. In this carnival atmosphere it was easy for Trump to refuse to answer questions from reporters who have run stories he doesn't like, and from news outlets that have criticized him. He slammed CNN for dispensing "fake news," called Buzzfeed "a pile of garbage," and sarcastically called the BBC "another beauty." The audience loved it. Just as he did in his rallies, Trump continued calling the press "dishonest" — part of his ongoing effort to discredit the press and to reduce public confidence in it. And he repeatedly lied. But the media in attendance weren't allowed to follow up or to question him on his lies.

For example, Trump wrongly stated that "the Democratic National Committee was totally open to be hacked. They did a very poor job. ... And they tried to hack the Republican National Committee, and they were unable to break through." Baloney. FBI Director James B. Comey said there was evidence that Republican National Committee computers were also targeted. The critical difference, according to

Comey, was that none of the information obtained from the RNC was leaked. Also, according to Comey, the Russians "got far deeper and wider into the [DNC] than the RNC," adding that "similar techniques were used in both cases." Trump further asserted at his fake news conference that "I have no deals that could happen in Russia, because we've stayed away. And I have no loans with Russia." Wrong again. Trump repeatedly sought deals in Russia. In a 2008 speech, Donald Trump Jr. said "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets," and "we see a lot of money pouring in from Russia."

Trump's statements at his fake news conference were, and are, big lies. They influence public understanding and opinion about two critically important issues: Did the Russians help Trump win the election, and, if so, why might they have done so? At the very least, they should have been followed up with questions from the White House press corps. That would have happened at a real news conference in the White House press room, holding 45 correspondents from major media outlets who are assigned full-time to report on the president. Which is the danger of evicting the press from the White House and putting press conferences into a large auditorium: Trump won't be called on his lies, and the White House press corps will lose the leverage they have by being together in one rather small room. And that's precisely why Trump wants to evict the press from the White House.

A senior official admitted the move was a reaction to hostile press coverage. The view at the highest reaches of the incoming administration is that the press is the enemy. "They are the opposition party," said the senior official. "I want 'em out of the building. We are taking back the press room." The incoming Trump administration is intent on neutering the White House press corps. If it happens it will be another step toward neutering our democracy.

**\*ROBERT REICH\*, ONE OF THE NATION'S LEADING EXPERTS ON WORK AND THE ECONOMY, IS CHANCELLOR'S PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY AT THE GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY. HE HAS SERVED IN THREE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS, MOST RECENTLY AS SECRETARY OF LABOR UNDER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON. HIS WIDELY-READ BLOG CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.ROBERTREICH.ORG](http://WWW.ROBERTREICH.ORG).**

Source: RobertReich.org 1/16/17 <http://robertreich.org/>







# I have come to the conclusion the country does not need a CIA

JOHN KIRIAKOU

President-elect Donald Trump is accusing CIA Director John Brennan of being the source of “fake news” about him, essentially calling our new supreme leader a Russian stooge and accusing him of taking part in a sexual kink in full view of Russian intelligence cameras in a Moscow hotel room several years ago. I have no idea whether or not Trump, during a visit to Moscow in 2010, hired prostitutes to urinate on a Four Seasons Hotel Presidential Suite mattress because the Obamas had once slept there. I don’t care. I also have no idea if the Russian government “hacked” the Democratic National Committee and stole Clinton campaign manager John Podesta’s emails. I have not seen any CIA, FBI, or NSA evidence, so I have come to the personal conclusion that the hacking story is overblown. All countries spy on each other. It’s a fact of life. The U.S. spies on just about everybody in the world. So I have a problem with the righteous indignation that I’m seeing from so many of my friends and former CIA colleagues about the Russians.

With that said, the Russia hacking story distracts from real and important issues surrounding the CIA and its future in U.S. policy. One of those real issues is that the CIA has consistently lied to the American people for many, many years. Why would Trump conclude that Brennan was spouting fake news? Well, in the past 15 years, the CIA said that it

was not torturing its prisoners. That was a lie. The CIA said that it had not created an archipelago of secret prisons where it was holding hundreds of people, including innocent civilians. That was a lie. The CIA said that it had not created and used a dungeon torture center called the “Salt Pit” in Afghanistan. That was a lie. The CIA said that it was not sending prisoners to third world countries to undergo torture with a wink and a nod from the CIA’s leadership. That was a lie. The CIA said that it had not hacked into computers belonging to investigators of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence while they were writing the definitive report on the CIA torture program. That was a lie.

I won’t even get into CIA protestations that it hasn’t overthrown governments, influenced elections, committed assassinations, or otherwise mucked up U.S. foreign policy since the late 1940s. I’m no fan of Donald Trump. At all. But he does have a good and important point when he complains about the Intelligence Community. When Trump said recently that the CIA was bloated and inefficient, he was right. When he said that it needed to be pared down and restructured, he was right.

First, it’s good for the country that, in a few short days, John Brennan will be out of a job. Brennan has been a disaster for the CIA. His ill-advised “restructuring” of the organization two years ago, which did away with geographical “divisions” and created 10 new “fusion centers” that paired

operators and analysts, was ill-advised and typical of somebody with no operational experience. It diluted expertise, forced the CIA to rely more on electronic eavesdropping, and pushed human source intelligence collection to the side.

Second, try as he might, Brennan was never able to, and indeed, should not have been able to, deny his role in the Bush administration’s torture program. He was Bush’s Deputy Executive Director of the CIA – the organization’s fourth-ranking officer – from 2001 to 2003 and director of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center from 2003 to 2004. He was in the center of the CIA action and up to his neck in counterterrorism in the Agency’s darkest days. To say that he had no idea there was a CIA torture program at the time is utterly laughable.

Third, I have no idea what kind of CIA director Michael Pompeo will be. I’m not optimistic. But with that said, if he does only one thing during his tenure, I hope he would clean house by forcing out every CIA officer who ever had anything to do with the torture program, every officer who had anything to do with the Senate hacking scandal, and every officer who has ever provided false information to the oversight committees. As my CIA recruiter told me in 1989, “The CIA wants honest people, not perfect people.” Well, even all these years later, the dishonest people have to go.

Fourth, we can certainly have a discussion about whether or not the

country even needs a CIA. I have come to the conclusion that it does not. The excellent civil servants in the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research can do the analysis. The Pentagon’s Defense Services can recruit and run human sources around the world. A myriad of DoD and other civilian offices and bureaus can do the science and technology development.

In the meantime, however, the job of the CIA ought to remain simple: To recruit spies to steal secrets. When it can’t do that, when a majority of CIA officers are sitting fat and happy in Langley, Virginia, there’s a problem. They are doing the American taxpayer a disservice. The top leadership has to go. Employees who don’t respect U.S. and international law have to go. The purge should start on January 20.

**JOHN KIRIAKOU IS A FORMER CIA COUNTERTERRORISM OFFICER AND A FORMER SENIOR INVESTIGATOR WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. JOHN BECAME THE SIXTH WHISTLEBLOWER INDICTED BY THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE ESPIONAGE ACT – A LAW DESIGNED TO PUNISH SPIES. HE SERVED 23 MONTHS IN PRISON AS A RESULT OF HIS ATTEMPTS TO OPPOSE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION’S TORTURE PROGRAM.**

Source: Reader Supported News 1/17/17  
<http://readersupportednews.org>

## Obama opens NSA's vast trove of warrantless data to entire intelligence community, just in time for Trump

ALEX EMMONS

With only days until Donald Trump takes office, the Obama administration on Thursday announced new rules that will let the NSA share vast amounts of private data gathered without warrant, court orders or congressional authorization with 16 other agencies, including the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security.

The new rules allow employees doing intelligence work for those agencies to sift through raw data collected under a broad, Reagan-era executive order that gives the NSA virtually unlimited authority to intercept communications abroad. Previously, NSA analysts would filter out information they deemed irrelevant and mask the names of innocent Americans before passing it along.

The change was in the works long before there was any expectation that someone like Trump might become president. The last-minute adoption of the procedures is one of many examples of the Obama administration making new executive powers established by the

Bush administration permanent, on the assumption that the executive branch could be trusted to police itself.

Executive Order 12333, often referred to as “twelve triple-three,” has attracted less debate than congressional wiretapping laws, but serves as authorization for the NSA’s most massive surveillance programs – far more than the NSA’s other programs combined. Under 12333, the NSA taps phone and internet backbones throughout the world, records the phone calls of entire countries, vacuums up traffic from Google and Yahoo’s data centers overseas, and more. In 2014, The Intercept revealed that the NSA uses 12333 as a legal basis for an internal NSA search engine that spans more than 850 billion phone and internet records and contains the unfiltered private information of millions of Americans. At that time, a former state department official described NSA surveillance under 12333 as a “universe of collection and storage” beyond what Congress has authorized.

### SHARING

As the rule change made its way

through the review process, Robert Litt, the top lawyer for the intelligence community, publicly explained the rationale: The rules “respond to the widely recognized lesson learned from the 9/11 attacks that intelligence should not be ‘stovepiped’ by individual agencies but should be shared responsibly within the intelligence community.” But this massive database inevitably includes vast amount of American’s communications – swept up when they speak to people abroad, when they go abroad themselves, or even if their domestic communications are simply routed abroad. That’s why access was previously limited to data that had already been screened to remove unrelated information and information identifying U.S. persons. The new rules still ostensibly limit access to authorized foreign intelligence and counterintelligence purposes – not ordinary law enforcement purposes – and require screening before they are more widely shared. But privacy activists are skeptical.

Activists have long been concerned about the erosion of barriers between law enforcement surveillance and NSA spying.

With access to the NSA’s intercepts, law enforcement could search Americans’ private information for evidence of criminality without going to a judge – a loophole privacy activists have called the “backdoor search loophole.”

Neema Singh Guliani, legislative counsel with the ACLU, said in a statement that the procedures raise “serious concerns that agencies that have responsibilities such as prosecuting domestic crimes, regulating our financial policy, and enforcing our immigration laws will now have access to a wealth of personal information that could be misused.” Nathan White, legislative manager for the digital rights group, Access Now, wrote in an email: “One of the fundamental tenets of privacy among the intelligence community has been that when the collection is large on the front end, you need tighter minimization procedures on the back end.” He continued: “This decision will be added to the timelines of the most significant expansions of domestic surveillance in the modern era.”

Source: The Intercept 1/13/17 <https://theintercept.com>




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

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## Ticking carbon clock warns we have one year to avert climate catastrophe

NIKA KNIGHT

Our window of time to act on climate may be shrinking even faster than previously thought. We may only have one year remaining before we lock in 1.5°C of warming—the ideal goal outlined in the Paris climate agreement—after which we'll see catastrophic and irreversible climate shifts, many experts have warned. That's according to the ticking carbon budget clock created by the Mercator

Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC). The clock's countdown now shows that only one year is left in the world's carbon budget before the planet heats up more than 1.5° over pre-industrial temperatures. That's under the most pessimistic calculations. According to the most optimistic prediction, we have four years to kick our carbon habit and avert 1.5° of warming. And to limit warming to 2°C—the limit

agreed upon in the Paris climate accord—we have nine years to act under the most pessimistic scenario, and 23 years to act under the most optimistic. "So far, there is no track record for reducing emissions globally," explained Fabian Löhe, spokesperson for MCC, in an email to /Common Dreams/. "Instead, greenhouse gas emissions have been rising at a faster pace during the last decade than previously—despite

growing awareness and political action across the globe. Once we have exhausted the carbon budget, every ton of CO<sub>2</sub> that is released by cars, buildings, or industrial plants would need to be compensated for during the 21st century by removing the CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere again. Generating such 'negative emissions' is even more challenging and we do not know today at which scale we might be able to do

that." (Climate activists and environmentalists have also long warned of the potential negative consequences of geoengineering and other carbon capture schemes) "Hence, the clock shows that time is running out: it is not enough to act sometime in the future, but it is necessary to implement more ambitious climate policies already in the very short-term," Löhe added. "Take all of the most difficult features of individual pathways to 2°C—like fast

and ambitious climate action in all countries of the world, the full availability of all required emissions reduction and carbon removal technologies, as well as aggressive energy demand reductions across the globe—the feasibility of which were so heatedly debated prior to Paris," Löhe said. "This gives you an idea of the challenge associated with the more ambitious 1.5°C goal."

Source: Common Dreams 1/10/17  
<http://www.commondreams.org/>

## Film: Before the flood Draw It Out: Apply by Feb 1

**Thursday, Feb 23, 2017 6:30pm**  
First Unitarian Universalist Church  
2737 Pacific Ave  
Stockton, CA  
Free and open to the public.

The Stockton Citizens' Climate Lobby and the First Unitarian Universalist Church Social Justice Committee are co-sponsoring a screening of the film *Before the Flood*. Actor and environmental activist Leonardo DiCaprio traveled the world documenting the devastating impacts of climate change. During his journey, he speaks with such influential figures as President Barack Obama, Pope Francis, and tech innovator Elon Musk, and speaks before the United Nations calling for greater action on this issue. This film gives us a sense of urgency and questions humanity's ability to reverse what may be the most catastrophic problem humankind has ever faced. There will be a brief presentation about Citizens' Climate Lobby prior to the screening and a short discussion on possible actions after the film.

### Wanted: Peaceniks!

#### Requirements:

- **Outgoing attitude**
- **Able to arm-wave**
- **Available 1 hour / week**

For many years, the San Joaquin Peace & Justice Network has maintained a presence every Thursday afternoon (except Thanksgiving) on Pacific Avenue in front of Delta College. We have a very dedicated group of five who come out most Thursdays for our "Honk and Wave" vigil. We have a nice collection of provocative signs and are seeing enthusiastic responses from motorists. We consider this "basic education" about war and peace for the Stockton public.

We, the experienced, have been in this work for many years and would be delighted with some fresh company. No upper or lower age restriction! No need to bring anything but yourself. 4:00-5:00pm standard time (5:00-6:00 during daylight savings).

Info: wallpatrick@hotmail.com or 209-954-5438



ART AGAINST VIOLENCE - 2017

Start creating your art pieces for the Art Against Violence exhibit "Our Anguish, Our Resolve," which will be on display for the entire month of March 2017 at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds. The deadline to submit your application is February 1, 2017. The Call for Artists and application are online at <http://tiny.cc/dbpie> or at <http://cleveland-schoolremembers.org/draw-it-out/call-for-artists-2017-art-against-violence>, the Cleveland School Remembers website at the Draw It Out tab.

The "Our Anguish, Our Resolve" theme of the 2017 art show arises from recent local and global events of violence. Artists are invited to submit pieces exhibiting their visual expressions of, and reactions to, the pain caused by these acts, along with visual expressions of resolve and solutions. The Call for Artists asks artists to examine how we can move as a community to end the violence in our city or what we can do as a people to stop the global perpetuation of violence and intolerance, and the extreme positions that encourage them.

Artists of all ages, cultures and viewpoints are invited to submit original artwork in any media, in-

cluding painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video, garden art, banners, and fabric art. The "Our Anguish, Our Resolve" exhibit is sponsored by Draw It Out, a program of Cleveland School Remembers, a Brady Campaign Group non-profit organization.

The exhibit venue is the Plants and Flowers Building at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds during the month of March from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Admission to the exhibit and all events is free, with free guided tours available on request. An Artists Reception will kick-off the exhibit at the venue on Sunday, March 5, 2017 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Participants are also solicited for the Spoken Word Event on Saturday, March 18 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The exhibit concludes on Sunday, April 2 with an Afternoon of Music and Dance from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Performers are needed for this event.

Artists with questions not answered in the Call For Artists or those who wish to sign up for the Spoken Word Event or the Afternoon of Music and Dance may contact the exhibit information line at (209) 910-3461.





FEB/MAR 2017 CALENDAR

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

THUR - SUN JAN 11 - 29

Unnecessary Farce, Thu 7:30 pm, Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun 2:30 pm. Stockton Civic Theatre, 2312 Rosemarie Lane, Stockton. In a cheap motel room, an embezzling mayor is supposed to meet with his female accountant, while in the room next door, two undercover cops wait to catch the meeting on videotape. But there's some confusion as to who's in which room, who's being videotaped, who's taken the money, who's hired a hit man, and why the accountant keeps taking off her clothes. This new play by Paul Slade Smith has received numerous regional awards, including a Thespie Award for "Best New Show" in 2007. \$15 - \$27. 473-2424. www.sctlivetheatre.com

JAN 26 - FEB 10

Delta Center for the Arts LH Horton Jr Gallery Alumni Shows, featuring works by Bruce Duke and Stephen Gyernek. SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. T 11am-4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am-1pm. Free and open to the public. 209-954-5507.

SAT, JAN 28

Stockton Symphony Classics III concert: Exotic Musical Tales. Featured Artist: Gabriela Martinez, piano. 6 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$25-63 209-954-5110

SUN, JAN 29

Washington Street: The Heart and Soul of Stockton Chinatown exhibit, 12-4 pm. San Joaquin County Historical Museum (in Micke Grove Park), 11793 N. Micke Grove Rd., Lodi. Go back in time and relive Stockton Chinatown when it was a colorful, bustling business district in the area now traversed by the Crosstown Freeway that links Highway 99 and Interstate 5. Free admission. 209-331-2055

Central Valley Youth Symphony Winter Concert, 3 - 5 pm. Hutchins Street Square, 125 South Hutchins Street, Lodi. \$16 general admission, children under 18 free. 209-333-5550.

MON, JAN 30

Delta Sierra Club meeting: "Wheel chair" Bob, presented by Bob Coomber, 7-8:30 pm. Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. All welcome. 209-670-4442. (p 18)

The Age of the Anthropocene

- Living in a Human-dominated Environment, 6 - 7:30 pm UOP President's Room, 3651 Atchley Way, Stockton. Professors from engineering, law, history and the geosciences will discuss the idea of the Anthropocene, the significance of naming a new geologic age, what it means for our environmental policies and what demands this era will place on our water management systems in California. Free. 209-946-2285.

THUR, FEB 2

Astronomy at the Troke Library, 6:30 - 7:30 pm, Troke Library, 502 W. Benjamin Holt Dr., Stockton. Weather permitting, the members of the Stockton Astronomical Society will set up telescopes outside the library for everyone to observe the sky and to learn about the fascinating science of Astronomy. Free. 209-937-8221

Pacific Avenue Clarinets at the Haggin Museum. Playing a variety of music from blues and jazz to pop and country, this guitar duo comprised of Jim and Lizzie Damiano from the Ms Lizzie & Her Cadillac Kings is sure to please. 6:30 pm. Adult \$8, youth \$5, under 10 free with adult. Haggin Museum, Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, CA (209) 940-6300

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

FEB 2 - APR 2

86th annual Robert T. McKee Student Art Contest and Exhibition. The Haggin Museum is proud to feature the work of student artists from kindergarten through grade 12. All schools in San Joaquin County—public, private, charter and homeschools—receive invitations to submit their work. Every year we receive on average 1,000 pieces of art chosen by teachers as the best of their class. Sat-Sun 12-5 p.m, Wed-Fri 1:30-5 p.m, 1st & 3rd Thur, 1:30-9 p.m. Adult \$8, youth \$5, under 10 free with adult. Haggin Museum, Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, CA (209) 940-6300

SAT, FEB 4

Andrew Young to speak at 23rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration, 7 pm, Modesto Junior College Performing Arts and Media Center, 435 College Ave., Modesto. Andrew Young is the highly respected leader in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, former

United Nations ambassador and Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. Join us for this much-needed inspirational talk. Free admission, donations welcome.

Columbia Big Band Concert 5 pm, Columbia College Dogwood Theater. Featuring Marvin McFadden, Paul Contos, Jamie Dubberly, Bob Secor and more. \$20 reserved. Advanced tickets at Mt. Bookshop Sonora or Columbia College Bookstore @ 588-5126.

SUN, FEB 5

Fauré Piano Quartett Chamber Music Concert, 2:30 - 4:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. The Fauré Piano Quartett will provide one of the most interesting and varied classical chamber music concerts presented by Stockton's Friends of Chamber Music. \$25 general, students free. 209-956-2868.

SAT, FEB 11

Delta College Dance presents Gospel Extravaganza, 8 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. \$25 adult. A portion of the proceeds from this event will benefit Heart Health Awareness 209-954-5110

TUES, FEB 21

An Evening with Shaun King, sponsored as part of University of the Pacific's Black History Month Celebration. The prominent social justice advocate and author will be the speaking at Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3601 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7 pm. Free and open to the public. Due to space constraints, seating will be limited.

FEB 23 - MAR 17

Delta Center for the Arts LH Horton Jr Gallery displays Print, presenting works using traditional and experimental print-making processes and new technologies, in 2D and 3D forms. SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. T 11am-4pm, W-Th 11am-6:30pm, F 11am-1pm. Free and open to the public. 209-954-5507.

SAT, FEB 25

University Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Winners of the Student Concerto Competition are featured followed by a performance of Stravinsky's Firebird Suite. \$10 general, \$5 senior, students free.

MON, FEB 27

Delta Sierra Club meeting: Vernal Pool Genesis, Function, and Ecology - It's All About Water

presented by John Gerlach, 7-8:30 pm. Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church Fireside Room, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. All welcome. 209-670-4442. (p 18)

TUES, FEB 28

University Concert Band, 7:30 pm, Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 senior, students free.

WED, MAR 1

Pacific Arts Woodwind Quintet, 7:30 pm, UOP Recital Hall, 3515 Pacific Circle, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 senior, students free.

THUR, MAR 2

Heart of Soul at the Haggin Museum. Playing a variety of music from blues and jazz to pop and country, this guitar duo comprised of Jim and Lizzie Damiano from the Ms Lizzie & Her Cadillac Kings is sure to please. 6:30 pm. Adult \$8, youth \$5, under 10 free with adult. Haggin Museum, Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, CA (209) 940-6300

Peace & Justice Network board meeting, John Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 7 pm. All welcome. 467-4455

SAT, MAR 4

UOP Symphonic Wind Ensemble, 6 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 senior, students free.

TUES, MAR 7

Community Band Concert featuring the Lodi Community Band and Stockton Concert Band. 7 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. \$8 adult; \$5 student/senior over 61. 209-954-5110

WED, MAR 8

Delta College Symphonic Band. 7 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, Stockton. \$8 adult; \$5 student/senior over 61. 209-954-5110

WED, MAR 8

Pacific Jazz Ensembles, 7:30 pm. Faye Spanos Concert Hall, 3511 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$10 general, \$5 senior, students free.

THUR - SUN MAR 9 - 12

Delta Drama presents Eurydice, Thu-Sat 7 pm, Sat-Sun 2 pm. Sarah Ruhl reimagines the classic myth of Orpheus through the eyes of its heroine. Dying too young on her wedding day, Eurydice must journey to the underworld where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. Alfred Muller Studio Theatre, SJDC, 5151 Pacific Ave, Stockton. \$9 general, \$4 students/seniors. 954-5110

TUES, MAR 14

Delta College Choir and Vocal Jazz presents Fables, Fairytales and Folk Songs: Spring Festival of Choirs. With the Tale of John Henry, O Susanna, and others, this concert highlights songs that tell stories. 7:30 pm. Atherton Auditorium, SJ Delta College, 5100 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5, children under 12 free. 954-5110.

THURS, MAR 16

Delta College Jazz Band, 7:30 pm. Tillie Lewis Theater, SJ Delta College, 5100 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Adult \$8, student/senior \$5, children under 12 free. 954-5110.

SUN, APR 23

Earth Day Festival San Joaquin County, 11 am - 4 pm, Victory Park, 1001 N Pershing Ave, Stockton. The theme, "Water is Life" will be the focus of the event. The Festival will have an array of informative, interactive booths, demos, displays and exhibits. Local area schools will be teaching how to better take care of our Earth with a variety of hands-on activities, and environmental organizations will provide education about the important issues and how we can make a difference. Over 100 vendors will border the oak trees and cross the grass field at Victory Park, including purveyors of some great food. Come join us for yoga in the park, local music and entertainment, delicious, healthy food and fun learning activities and exhibits like Passport Earth. It's a fun day for kids and families, and admission is free. 209-559-6279.

Earth Day Celebration, 11 am - 5 pm, Utica Park, Angels Camp. Come celebrate and learn about what we can do about the future of our earth - locally and globally. 209-559-6279

FIRST SATURDAYS

Free Yoga. Victory Park, 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton, 9 - 10 am. Yoga in the Park is every first Saturday of the month until November. Free admission.

SECOND THURSDAYS

Single Payer San Joaquin, 6:30 pm at the John Morearty Peace and Justice Center.

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.

LAST FRIDAYS

Waterfront Fridays, Brick & Mortar, 125 Bridge Place, Stockton - on the first floor of historic B&M building - will be transformed into a well-curated specialty food and craft event. Local entrepreneurs will have a chance to test their prod-

uct and artist to display their works. Every last Friday of the month, the outdoor deck will become a stage for live entertainment from local performers. The event is free and will also feature kids art projects.

ALTERNATING WEDNESDAYS

Community Radio Council Meeting, 7 - 9 pm, Morearty Peace & Justice Center, 231 Bedford Rd, Stockton. 467-4455.

THURSDAYS

Peace demonstration, 4-5 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, 7 pm, Whirlow's Tossed & Grilled, 1926 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Enjoy a live jazz jam session every Friday at Whirlow's on Stockton's historic Miracle Mile! Bring your instruments and join the jam! Hosted by Philip Bailey. Free cover. 466-2823

Live Music at Mile Wine Company, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463

SATURDAYS

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

Live Music at Mile Wine Company, 7 - 10:30 pm. 2113 Pacific Ave, Stockton. Free. 465-9463 Live Music Rosa's at Tower Park, 9 pm - 1 am. Classic rock & roll. \$5 cover.

A big thanks to our long-serving distributors!!



# Working Locally for a Better World

Community radio rising

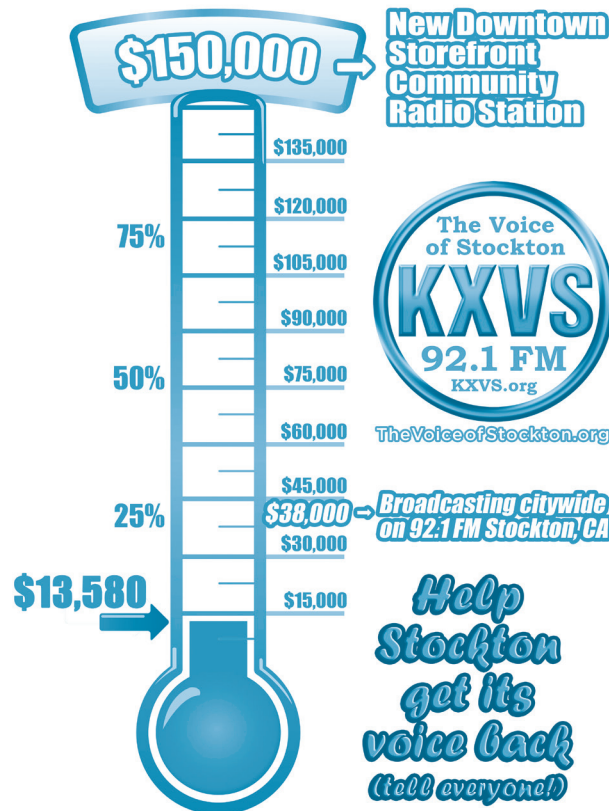
## KXVS voice of Stockton is building your FM radio station - now more than ever

When a community has a voice, it has the power to shape its own destiny. That is why KXVS - The Voice of Stockton is bringing community radio back to Stockton, to give us back our voice, powered by local news and information from local sources, with local sports, entertainment, arts, music, education, and other community content. KXVS is a radio station like no other in our area. Our mission is to uplift and improve our community, focused on positive communication, involvement, inclusion, development, and sustainability.

We stream online at [TheVoiceofStockton.org](http://TheVoiceofStockton.org), and we are building an FM station that will broadcast across the whole city on our FCC licensed frequency of 92.1 FM. That is why our station can be sustained locally, because no other outlets provide city- and world-wide coverage

that local nonprofits, organizations, institutions, businesses, and individuals can use to get their message delivered in such a timely and cost effective way. While most other stations are corporate-owned and controlled, dependent on selling airtime for commercials, or otherwise funded by special interests, we have found a way to be community-produced and community-funded.

KXVS The Voice of Stockton is seeking your help to build our community radio station, for the people, and by the people. Our operations are funded by sponsors, underwriters, donors, and members - but start-up costs need to be met to establish our FM station. There are equipment costs and construction costs that must be covered. Fortunately, these initial expenses are great investments, as most radio equipment and apparatus have very long life spans,



projected to last several decades at full capacity. Considering that the cost of building a commercial station is in the millions of dollars, it is quite a bargain

for what the station can provide to the community.

We are building our programs and facilities with full consideration of the need for ongoing funding,

with permanent and continuous value-added fundraising, a growing and diverse membership of regular supporters, building relationships with philanthropists, and providing a cost effective marketing alternative to nonprofits, organizations, institutions, businesses and individuals that support our mission of community improvement. Through community support, Stockton will have an FM radio station that delivers informative, educational, entertaining, and essential local programming, around the clock, from the most diverse perspectives that Stockton has ever seen in one place, providing local listeners with programming not available anywhere else on the dial.

This year, KXVS is growing our membership with a year-long membership drive. We are seeking 2,000 new members so we can fund our operations

and expand our work covering important topics, promoting local events and activities, producing informative community programs, and supporting local nonprofits and causes.

Action: Please become a KXVS member today, and let us work together to improve our community. KXVS The Voice of Stockton exists only because of the hard work and dedication of individuals and organizations that believe so much in our community that they have sacrificed many hours over many months to produce community programs for broadcast. You are also invited to be a part of the magic of radio as we document and broadcast our journey towards self-determination. Please join us, and let's make Stockton better, together.

Thank you for your support! For more information, please visit: [TheVoiceofStockton.org](http://TheVoiceofStockton.org)

## 5 steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change

DR. DAVID SUZUKI

The longer we delay addressing environmental problems, the more difficult it will be to resolve them. Although we've known about climate change and its potential impacts for a long time, and we're seeing those

impacts worsen daily, our political representatives are still approving and promoting fossil fuel infrastructure as if we had all the time in the world to slow global warming. We can't say we weren't warned. In 1992, a majority of living Nobel prize-winners and more than 1,700 leading scientists worldwide signed a remarkable document called "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity."

It begins, "Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our

current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that we will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know.

Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about." It then outlines critical areas where the collision was and

is still occurring: the atmosphere, water resources, oceans, soil, forests, species extinction and overpopulation. In the 25 years since it was published, the problems have worsened.

The document grows bleak: "No more than one or a few decades remain before the chance to avert the threats we now confront will be lost and the prospects for humanity immeasurably diminished. We the undersigned, senior members of the world's scientific community, hereby warn all humanity of what lies ahead. A great change in our stewardship of the earth and life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."

Now, as monthly and annual records for rising global average temperatures continue to break, as extreme weather events become more frequent and severe, as refugees overwhelm the capacity of nations, and as tipping points for climatic feedback loops and other phenomena are breached, the need to act is more urgent than ever. The warning suggests five steps needed immediately. That was a generation ago. They can still help prevent the worst impacts:

1. "We must bring environmentally damaging activities under control to restore and protect the integrity

of the earth's systems we depend on." It specifically mentions reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air and water pollution. It also highlights the need to address deforestation, degradation and loss of agricultural soils and extinction of plant and animal species.

2. "We must manage resources crucial to human welfare more effectively." This one is obvious. Finite resources must be exploited much more efficiently or we'll run out.

3. "We must stabilize population. This will be possible only if all nations recognize that it requires improved social and economic conditions, and the adoption of effective, voluntary family planning."

4. "We must reduce and eventually eliminate poverty."

5. "We must ensure sexual equality, and guarantee women control over their own reproductive decisions."

The warning recognizes that we in the developed world are responsible for most global pollution and therefore must greatly reduce overconsumption while providing technical and financial aid to developing countries. This is not altruism but self-interest, because all of us share the same biosphere. Developing nations must

realize environmental degradation is the greatest threat to their future, while rich nations must help them follow a different development path. The most urgent suggestion is to develop a new ethic that encompasses our responsibility to ourselves and nature and that recognizes our dependence on Earth and its natural systems for all we need.

The document ends with a call for support from scientists, business and industrial leaders, religious heads and all the world's peoples. Like Pope Francis's groundbreaking 2015 encyclical, "Laudato Si," the "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" was an attempt to galvanize the world to recognize the dangerous implications of humanity's path and the urgent need for change. Forewarned is forearmed. We can't let the lure of the almighty buck blind us. We must come together, speak up and act for the good of all humanity.

**DAVID SUZUKI IS A SCIENTIST, BROADCASTER, AUTHOR, AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION <[HTTP://WWW.DAVIDSUZUKI.ORG/](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/)>.**

Source: David Suzuki Foundation 1/7/17  
<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs>