Feb. 21st is Senior Lobby Day

By Chuck Richards & Tom Lux, Co-Chairs of PSARA Government Relations Committee

The 2013 legislative session begins with some new names on the doors to offices of power. Washington State has a new governor and two legislative chambers ruled by opposing parties. State government has a looming $1 billion deficit, while the state Supreme Court has ruled the state must increase funding for education. Health and human services dread the approaching budget cuts.

Into this mix come members of the Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action during Senior Lobby Day on Thursday, February 21st to remind legislators of essential priorities for Washington residents in the years ahead.

Working arm in arm with labor and community allies, we are promoting PSARA’s 2013 Legislative Agenda:

FIRST, support for the Healthy Washington Coalition Legislative Priorities for implementation of the Affordable Care Act which includes:

• Securing the full Medicaid Expansion to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level.
• Ensuring affordability and continuity of care for low-income working families by pursuing available affordability programs, such as the Federal Basic Health Option.

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The Soul of America

By Sen. Bernie Sanders

Despite such terminology as “fiscal cliff” and “debt ceiling,” the great debate taking place in Washington now has relatively little to do with financial issues. It is all about ideology. It is all about economic winners and losers in American society. It is all about the power of Big Money. It is all about the soul of America.

In America today, we have the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on earth, and more inequality than at any time period since 1928. The top 1 percent owns 42 percent of the financial wealth of the nation, while, incredibly, the bottom 60 percent own only 2.3 percent. One family, the Walton family of Wal-Mart, owns more wealth than the bottom 40 percent of Americans.

Despite the reality that the rich are becoming much richer while the middle class collapses and the number of Americans living in poverty is at an all-time high, the Republicans and their billionaire backers want more, more, and more. The class warfare continues.

My Republican colleagues say that the deficits are a spending problem, not a revenue problem. What these deficit-hawk hypocrites won’t talk about is their spending. They won’t discuss what they did to dig the country into this $1 trillion deep deficit hole. They waged wars in Afghanistan and Iraq without paying for them. They gave away huge tax breaks for the rich. They squandered taxpayer dollars on the pharmaceutical industry by making it illegal for Medicare to bargain for lower drug prices. They also rescinded financial regulations that enabled Wall Street to operate like a gambling casino, leading to a severe recession that eroded tax revenue and left more than 14 percent of American workers unemployed or underemployed.

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Here We Grow

By Robby Stern

Fifty-two years ago, when I began my life as an activist, I needed the guidance of others to figure out how I could be most effective in changing those things that seemed wrong. It was a time of segregation and vicious racial discrimination. I came from a family that had suffered terrible things in Germany. I was first generation in the U.S. and my family history had awakened me to the horrors of segregation and racial discrimination.

I also believed that our country could do better. Inspired to participate by the combination of idealism articulated by Pres. John F. Kennedy and the incredible bravery of the mostly young black but also young white women and men who were challenging the terrible barriers of that time, I became involved.

That was my first conscious awareness of the power of organization. The more people that could be mobilized and inspired to take action, the greater hope we had of being able to make the changes that needed to be made.

Fast forward to today. The same principles hold true. Our communities, our country and our world desperately need repair. PSARA is committed to contributing to the efforts to fix some of the huge problems we face.

If we are determined, thoughtful and if we grow we can be more effective in trying to repair our world. If more people read this newsletter and are informed through it, if more people decide to take the next step and participate with us, and if more people decide to take responsibility for the health and well being of PSARA, we will be more effective.

In our January Executive Board meetings we set a new membership goal for the coming year. This year we have set a goal of 250 new members.

Please help us reach our goals for growth in 2013! Reach out to your family, friends, coworkers and neighbors. Give the gift of PSARA membership.

Senior Lobby Day

Continued from Page 1

• Supporting a broad-based assessment on health care insurers for the administration of the Washington State Health Care Exchange. This will reduce the cost of enrollee premiums and give the exchange a stable and predictable source of financing.

SECOND, support the establishment of a State Investment Trust (aka, a “state bank”) that could create new jobs rebuilding our infrastructure and generate new revenue.

THIRD, support the Caring Across Generations Legislative Priorities:

• Restore cuts and support new investments in home care through the federal Community First Choice Option which provides additional funding to restore recent cuts to home and community-based long-term care services and prevents additional cuts to these Medicaid programs through increased federal matching dollars.

• Ensure all workers are able to take leave to tend to health needs or care for a family member through Family and Medical Leave Insurance and mandated Paid Sick Days.

• Support legislation that facilitates immigrants playing the critical role of caregivers and domestic workers in our communities.

And FOURTH, support for increased revenues to address the need for quality education, protect critical services and the jobs associated with those services and also meet the states obligation to fund pension programs.

• End unjustified tax breaks and reform our tax system.

And, as in years past, PSARA is offering its members transportation to reach Olympia on February 21st. If you haven’t already signed up, contact us at govrelations@psara.org or the PSARA office at (206) 448-9646.
Walmart Expansion – Not!

By Elena Perez

Until Walmart becomes a responsible employer, challenging its expansion is an essential element of the work of the coalition, Making Change at Walmart Puget Sound. Walmart’s new, smaller and primarily grocery footprint for urban expansion, the Neighborhood Market, recently opened its first stores in Washington State in Bellevue and Lynnwood.

Promenade 23, a shopping center in Seattle’s Central District might be the site of the next Walmart. Its current owner, Weingarten Realty, expressed interest last year in replacing the locally owned and union operated Red Apple with a Walmart. Since then, pressure from our coalition has forced Weingarten to pull back from that position, but its latest public statement still emphasizes that all options are on the table.

In response to this and other development concerns in the Central Area, coalition partners joined leaders in the area to form the Central Area Community Development Coalition (CACDC). It provides space and support for Central Area residents, business owners and organizations to organize for transparent and community-controlled development that preserves the existing culture and economic character of the community, living wage jobs, and locally owned businesses.

If you live or work in the Central Area, please join us at the next meeting:
Date: Wednesday, February 20th
Time: 4pm – 5:30pm
Location: Greater Mt. Baker Baptist Church (2425 S. Jackson Street, Seattle)

The Fiscal Showdown

By Buck Teller

It now appears that the showdown on the debt limit has been postponed for several months. The House Republicans have received a well-deserved political battering for holding the economy hostage in order to impose their austerity agenda on the American people.

But, we are far from out of the woods. Republican leadership is trying to discredit the idea of raising additional revenue. The threats to cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are still at the top of their agenda. The tax deal passed by Congress on December 31 simply postponed sequestration and across the board cuts.

The fight back strategy is being formulated by a broad national coalition called Americans for Tax Fairness. The basic theme is that any further deficit reduction must come from new revenue. The coalition has targeted raising approximately $1 trillion in revenue to replace across the board spending cuts. Specific revenue proposals include:
- Reducing the value of tax deductions to 28% (instead of 35% for high income taxpayers) which is estimated to raise $400 billion and affect only the richest 2%.
- Closing corporate tax loopholes that encourage U.S. companies to ship profits and jobs overseas. That is estimated to raise up to $200 billion.
- Placing a surtax of 5% on incomes of $5 million or more a year. This is estimated to raise $200 billion.
- Establishing a small tax on Wall Street trading in financial instruments such as stocks, bonds, foreign currencies and derivatives.

Not yet on the agenda of this broad coalition is Scrapping the Cap on Social Security premiums so we all pay at the same rate, 6.1%, and we all receive benefits from our premiums. That change would take the financial solvency of Social Security off the national debating stage for many decades.

There will be many opportunities to participate in activities designed to encourage our entire statewide congressional delegation, Senators and Representatives, to support raising revenue rather than cutting programs critical to seniors, working people, veterans, the poor, children and the vulnerable. Some very rich Americans will have to pay a little more. But the tax deal left many loopholes untouched (and opened up some new ones!). Many very wealthy people will still pay a lower tax rate than the vast majority of working Americans.

PSARA will use our blast email program to let you know what activities are coming up and what you can do to help.

Social Security Forum

Continued from Page 1

for the wealthy (both purchased on the national credit card) as well as a pandemic of Wall Street greed that nearly sunk the American economy, they pointed their finger at America’s last stronghold of economic safety: Social Security.

Now, well-known economist Dean Baker is visiting Washington State to talk about how to defend and improve Social Security for future generations.

Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., Baker refutes the misguided idea that the benefits workers have earned should be used to pay down the debt or finance ongoing tax cuts for the wealthy – or that the retirement age should be raised any further. Instead, Dean makes a strong case for increasing benefits, especially given the uncertainty most Americans are facing in retirement.

Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director at the Economic Opportunity Institute, will also be a featured speaker. For more information visit www.sssworkswa.org

Alex Stone is Communications and Technology Manager at the Economic Opportunity Institute, and a PSARA member.
Two Republicrats: The Coup in the State Senate

By Robby Stern

A coup in the state senate augurs a very different legislative session than we had anticipated after the November election. Two Senate Democrats have defied the voters that elected them as Democrats. Rodney Tom, a wealthy real estate broker from the 48th district, and Tim Sheldon, from the 35th District have joined 23 Senate Republicans to constitute a majority caucus.

I remember Tim Sheldon from my days as a lobbyist for the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC). He consistently sided with business interests and against the interests of working people. He had a 17% voting record on bills important to labor in 2012 and has a lifetime labor voting record of 29%. He voted against Marriage Equality and against legislation necessary to implement the Health Benefit Exchange. The list of labor bills he opposed goes on and on.

Tim is a double dipper holding two full time elective offices simultaneously. Elected to the State House in 1991, he became a state senator in 1997 and then was elected a Mason County Commissioner in 2005. The Senate job is full time during the legislative session and the Mason County Commissioner job is also full time. Nevertheless, voters in the 35th District and in Mason County have seen fit to reelect Tim.

Rodney Tom was a Republican who switched to the Democratic Party to challenge Luke Esser for his Senate seat. He switched from Republican to Democrat when the 48th District began leaning more Democratic.

By his second term in the Senate, he had become a huge thorn in the side of Democrats who wanted to enact progressive economic policy. The 48th is still a heavily Democratic District. In 2012, Democratic margins ranged from 51.8% to 69.3%.

Tom defied the voters who elected him. For engineering the coup, the minority Republican caucus awarded him the powerful position of "Majority" Leader. He meets and plans strategy with the Republicans. Tom asserts that the Republicans agreed to avoid divisive social issues (Tom supported gay marriage and supports reproductive rights). Tom finds the views of the Republicans on economic issues and the role of government to be more consistent with his outlook. When Tom stands for election again in 2014, a flood of corporate dollars will be donated to defend his seat.

This shift means the Senate Republican Caucus controls what issues get considered.

The legislature must adopt a two-year budget in 2013. The Senate Republican Caucus will insist on cuts to safety net programs, no new revenue, attacks on jobs and union standards of state employees, teachers and city/county employees.

The Supreme Court's McCleary decision requires the legislature to allocate at least an additional billion dollars to public education. That money will likely come from existing resources. It is difficult to imagine the Senate majority caucus raising new revenue through closing tax loop holes or passing a progressive revenue source. The Senate "Majority" caucus will be promoting an austerity approach to the state fiscal crisis.

What will Governor Inslee and the House Democrats do? My hope is that the House will pass more progressive policies and present the people of our state with a genuine alternative to what the Senate will be promoting. Ultimately, the Senate, the House and the Governor will have to reach an agreement on the budget. Negotiations will be intense, and I would predict, bitter.

The Republican Chair of the Senate Health Care Committee, Sen. Randi Becker of the 2nd Legislative District, was opposed to the Affordable Care Act (and not because she supports universal health care!). How her opposition will impact the expansion of Medicaid eligibility to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (which is fully funded by the federal government and saves the state more than $250 million while covering an additional 250,000 residents) is still to be seen. Additionally, efforts to fund administration of the Health Care Exchange by assessing all insurers who write health care insurance in our state is likely to run into opposition from Sen. Becker, who strongly identifies with the insurance industry.

By Tom's second term in the Senate, he had become a huge thorn in the side of Democrats who wanted to enact progressive economic policy.

Because of Republican opposition, the WA State Investment Trust, statewide Paid Sick Day and Family Medical Leave Insurance are not likely to be considered by the State Senate. We hope to pass them through the House in order to create a contrast between the two chambers.

This session is likely to be a theater of contrasts. Many, if not all of the Senate majority caucus will argue that government should get out of the way and let unfettered markets rule the economy. PSARA believes that government needs to expand its role to help create good family jobs, assist those who need the help, address the crisis of climate change and provide quality public education for all. Whose side should government be on?
COAL TRAINS CARRY DEATH TO THE PHILIPPINES

By Steve Ludwig and Roger Rigor

On Dec. 3, 2012, “Bopha” hit the southern Philippine island of Mindanao as a category-5 typhoon. Residents were stunned. While tropical storm Washi had caused severe flooding and left 1200 dead in 2011, no one could remember a storm the likes of Bopha. “We never thought this would happen to us. Our ancestors, our grandparents – it never happened to them,” Remy Camarling reported to BBC News (he had lost his wife and his two children were hospitalized). The number of people killed by Bopha will likely surpass Washi’s toll, and damages will be over one billion U.S. dollars, making Bopha the most destructive storm ever to hit the Philippines.

Because of the typhoon’s strength and unusual southern track, many are pointing to global warming as a contributing factor. Ironically, the storm was raging as the the UN Conference for Climate Change in Doha, Qatar was being held and where industrialized nations practically snubbed an urgent appeal for action by developing countries like the Philippines. Japanese researchers have predicted a ten-fold increase in super typhoons by the year 2100 if “business-as-usual” attitudes allow current warming trends to continue. Can the people of the Philippines withstand such an onslaught?

Peabody Coal, in partnership with BNSF Railroad and SSA Marine, wants to help us find out. As coal sales in the U.S. fall, Peabody plans to keep its profits up by extending sales to Asian markets. Already, three or four coal trains make their way each day up our Puget Sound coastline to be exported from Canadian ports. A proposed new coal port near Bellingham would double or triple that number. Marketing surplus coal has already depressed coal prices and caused energy companies around the world to postpone switching to cleaner, but more expensive, sources of power.

Is a different future possible? States such as Vermont and California are proving that clean energy sources, lower greenhouse gas emissions and more jobs can coexist. Surely Washington can follow their example. For the sake of the Philippines and all of us – Stop Peabody’s coal trains!

Steve Ludwig and Roger Rigor are members of the Philippine - U.S. Solidarity Organization and PSARA members

PSARA Statement on the Cherry Point Coal Terminal

On Thursday, January 17, the PSARA Executive Board voted to oppose the proposed Cherry Point deep water coal terminal. We sent the following statement to the Army Corps of Engineers:

The Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action voted to indicate our opposition to the construction of a deep water coal terminal at the Bellingham Cherry Point location. As a multi generational organization with a large proportion of seniors, we believe that the issue of climate change is the transcendent issue of this time in history. As one of our members said, “we are cooking the planet with the use of fossil fuels.” We have a legacy and obligation to do all that we can to diminish the use of fossil fuels which is destroying air quality and negatively impacting the health and well being of all living things. In addition, the increase in train traffic will have a deleterious impact on the movement of people in the Puget Sound region.

We call on the Army Corps of Engineers to consider and include in your EIS the overall crisis our planet is facing and the negative impact the use of fossil fuels like coal are having on present and future life on the planet. If the Army Corp of Engineers is charged with making a recommendation through the EIS process, we urge you to recommend that the plans to build the deep water coal terminal not be approved.

Seattle cleans up its portfolio

By Will Parry

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn has formally requested that the city’s two chief pension funds “refrain from future investments in fossil fuel companies and begin the process of divesting our pension portfolio from those companies.”

“Climate change is one of the most important challenges we currently face as a city and as a society,” McGinn said in a letter to the Seattle City Employees’ Retirement System (SCERS) Board and the City of Seattle Voluntary Deferred Compensation Plan Committee.

“I believe that Seattle ought to discourage these companies from extracting that fossil fuel, and divesting the pension fund from these companies is one way we can do that.”

Student activists at campuses across the country are calling on their college administrations to divest their fossil fuel holdings. Seattle is the first major city to take part in the campaign.

McGinn also committed to making sure that city funds stay out of the industry, writing that “The city’s cash pool is not currently invested in fossil fuel companies, and I already directed that we refrain from doing so in the future.”

Valued at $1.9 billion, SCERS is the largest investment portfolio yet to consider fossil fuel divestment.
Social Security

FEATURING
Dean Baker
Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research

Dean Baker, a renowned economist and author, will cut through the political rhetoric on Social Security. He’ll talk about challenges and opportunities facing the program, and offer ideas to strengthen it for current and future generations.

ALSO WITH
Marilyn Watkins
Policy Director, Economic Opportunity Institute

WHEN
Wednesday, Feb. 20th
5:30-7 PM

WHERE
UW-Tacoma, Philip Hall
1918 Pacific Avenue

GETTING TO UWT & PHILIP HALL

Philip Hall is located at 1918 Pacific Ave.

By car: Park in a pay lot on S. 21st Street (see map) or find street parking.

Transit: There is a Link Light Rail stop directly in front of UWT on Pacific Ave. Bus service includes the 1, 41, 42, 48, 53, 400, 500, & 501.
6th Annual PSARA Senior Lobby Day
In Olympia

Thursday, Feb. 21st

Join others from your Legislative District to visit your legislators.

RSVP now to join PSARA on Senior Lobby Day.

PSARA carpools leaving Seattle at 7:30 am!
For RSVPs and carpool information contact
govrelations@psara.org
or call PSARA at (206) 448-9646

Morning Updates: 9 to 11:30 am
Box Lunch provided: 12 noon
Afternoon legislative visits for our 3 issues:

• Implementation of Affordable Care Act
• Establishment of a State Investment Trust
• Support Caring Across Generations Legislative Priorities
• Support Increased Revenues, Quality Education & Protect Jobs

Let’s be heard in Olympia in the 2013 session!
Bernie Sanders: The Soul of America
Continued from Page 1

Now, despite the deficits their policies helped to create and despite the enormous suffering which exists in our society, the Republicans want to cut Social Security, veterans' programs, Medicare, Medicaid, education, nutrition programs, and virtually every program which benefits low- and moderate-income Americans. They choose to turn their backs on the economic reality facing a significant part of our population: high unemployment, reduced wages, 50 million without health insurance, college graduates saddled with enormous student debt and elderly people living in desperation. And they have tried to slam the door on any further discussion about how to raise revenue by ending tax loopholes and unfair tax breaks.

Republicans like Senator Minority Leader Mitch McConnell who say the revenue debate is over don’t want you to consider these facts:

• Federal revenue today, at 15.8 percent of GDP, is lower today than it was 60 years ago. During the last year of the Clinton administration, when we had a significant federal surplus, federal revenue was 20.6 percent of GDP.
• Today corporate profits are at an all-time high, while corporate income tax revenue as a percentage of GDP is near a record low.
• In 2011, corporations paid just 12 percent of their profits in taxes, the lowest since 1972.
• In 2005, one out of four large corporations paid no income taxes at all while they collected $1.1 trillion in revenue over that one-year period.

What about the Democrats? Will President Obama fulfill his campaign pledge to “protect the middle class” or will he surrender to right-wing blackmail? Will Democrats in the House and Senate stand with the vast majority of our citizens in the fight against cuts to Social Security and veterans' programs, or will they agree to a disastrous corporate-backed "chained CPI" concept which makes major benefit cuts to those programs and raises taxes on low-income workers?

The simple truth is there are relatively easy ways to deal with the deficit crisis - without attacking the elderly, the children the sick or the poor.

For example, we have got to eliminate loopholes in the tax code that allow large corporations and the wealthy to avoid more than $100 billion in taxes every year by setting up offshore tax shelters in places like the Cayman Islands, Bermuda and the Bahamas. This situation has become so absurd that one five-story office building in the Cayman Islands is now the "home" to more than 18,000 corporations.

We must also end tax breaks for companies shipping American jobs overseas. Today, the United State government continues to reward companies that move American manufacturing jobs abroad, despite the fact that millions of American jobs have been outsourced to China, Mexico, and other low wage countries over the past decade. The Joint Committee on Taxation (the official revenue scorekeeper in Congress) has estimated that we could raise more than $582 billion in revenue over the next decade by eliminating these offshore tax loopholes.

We must also recognize that Wall Street recklessness caused the economic crisis, and it has a responsibility to reduce the deficit. Establishing a 0.03 percent Wall Street speculation fee, similar to what we had from 1914-1966, would dampen the dangerous level of speculation and gambling on Wall Street, encourage the financial sector to invest in the productive economy and reduce the deficit by more than $350 billion over 10 years.

We are entering a pivotal moment in the modern history of our country. Do the elected officials in Washington stand with ordinary Americans - working families, children, the elderly, the poor - or will the extraordinary power of billionaire campaign contributors and Big Money prevail? The American people, by the millions, must send Congress the answer to that question.

PSARA members in action. We joined with Washington Community Action Network activists to draw attention to Wells Fargo, one of the "Dirty 30" corporations failing to pay taxes while calling for cuts to Social Security. Photos: Garet Munger
Stop the Big Rip-off and Rebuild the American Dream

By Mark McDermott, Chair PSARA
Education Committee

As a working class kid in the 1960’s, the rules of life seemed simple. For my parents, work hard, play by the rules, pay your taxes, share fairly in the wealth you create at work and have a secure retirement. For me, they were study hard, play by the rules, get an affordable college education, and reach for dreams beyond those of my parents.

This was the core of the American Dream although many still lacked full access to it because of racism, sexism and other barriers.

Today, these rules no longer work well. Consider the following: Between 1930 and 1975, working people earned 57% of the national income through wages and salaries. By 2010, they only earned 50%. This 7 percentage point difference is $950 billion. If the 96 million households with the lowest incomes got that $950 billion back, their incomes would rise by an average of $10,000.

Anybody opposed to a return to the good old days, when working people got closer to their fair share? Let’s organize to take back the $950 billion!

For the college kids today, they now owe over $1 trillion in student loan debt. Affordable college and reaching for their dreams has gotten awful hard. Wow! Pass the Prozac or a bottle of whiskey. Reality is not good. What to do with these growing long-term systemic sources of injustice? We want our $950 billion back, our kids to be able to reach for their dreams and much more. Wanting is good but making it happen is better.


It isn’t hard to build a comprehensive list. What is hard is drawing strong connections between these badly needed reforms and laying out how we will achieve them.

Here is a framework to make these key connections and refine our strategies to educate and organize for a brighter future for all. These are the six levels of struggle:

1. Ensure fair elections which express the will of the people
2. Make and enforce laws which serve the people and promote justice for all
3. Create and share fairly in the wealth we produce at work
4. Raise adequate levels of taxes fairly and require everyone to pay what they owe
5. Provide real affordable quality education for everyone
6. Strengthen our safety net for everyone to meet their basic needs

A simple exercise is to take your list of reforms and put them in the six categories. But how are they connected and how do we win all of these reforms?

Let’s use a specific example. I assume you agree that the $950 billion decline in working people’s share of the national income is a big problem. It is hard to imagine a working household that could not use the money.

What are some of the major impacts of this $10,000 loss per household? It is harder to pay the mortgage or rent, buy a house, send your kids to college, save for retirement and more.

So let’s sum up. When we lose the ability to demand our fair share at work (Level 3), we have a harder time sending our kids to college (Level 5). We will need more of the safety net (Level 6) and additional tax revenues will be needed (Level 4).

Let’s change the rules to restore fairness at work and the right to organize unions so we can get our fair share (Level 2). This will reduce pressure on the bottom four levels. But wait, how do we elect leaders who will serve our interests and not those of corporate America and the wealthy? (Level 1).

We working people and our allies must overcome the power of entrenched money in elections and then elect people who will make and enforce laws barring the influence of the wealthy.

Working people and our allies must overcome the power of entrenched money and elect people who will make and enforce laws barring the influence of the wealthy.

So how will we gain the economic and political power to get our $950 billion back? We support unions when they are under attack and when they are organizing new members. As a community, we organize economically and politically to ensure our elected leaders will change the laws in our interest. We can do this just as our ancestors did before us.

To be continued...

Check out my new website on re-claiming the American Dream. www.markmmcdermott.com
Caring Across Generations: What will 2013 bring?
By Susie Levy and Araceli Hernandez

Our Caring Across Generations campaign has made huge headway in Washington and across the country this past year. Last February 11th, Seattle hosted our Care Congress, a town-hall event, with over 200 people at the Greenwood Senior Center. We began the conversations, story-sharing and movement building that has propelled our campaign forward.

At its core, Caring Across Generations is talking about respect and dignity. We all deserve respect and dignity, and we have the capacity to receive it in our homes. Caring Across Generations seeks to transform care in this country by moving federal legislation to create 2 million new, quality jobs in home care; improve access to affordable care and support services; develop career advancement models and a path to citizenship for domestic and home care workers.

Here in Washington, 2013 will be the first year that we take our campaign to Olympia! Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on March 28th for lobby day, were we will be talking to our lawmakers about how we can transform care in Washington state by:

- implementing Medicaid expansion and the Basic Health Option
- restoring home care services previously cut
- updating our Family and Medical Leave Insurance program and granting paid sick days to all workers in Washington
- protecting immigrant rights

It will be a wonderful day to connect with people from across constituencies, generations, and the state!

We know this is a long-term campaign, and see 2013 as a year of opportunity to continue to build our movement. We will continue to fight to protect and expand Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, and see 2013 as a year of opportunity to continue to build our movement.

We will continue to fight to protect and expand Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, and see 2013 as a year of opportunity to continue to build our movement.

Local Progress: Towards a National Municipal Network
By Nick Licata, Seattle City Council and a PSARA member

Urbanized areas of 50,000 or more people account for 71% of nation’s population. Many of the most exciting, innovative and progressive legislative initiatives emanate from these cities. And yet, I have found that while serving on the Seattle City Council for 15 years, there is no national network connecting elected public officials to exchange and promote progressive legislation.

In March of 2012, 30 people representing a handful of cities and a dozen national grassroots organizations met to discuss the need for creating a progressive national municipal network. Representatives from Progressive Majority and the national office of SEIU encouraged the elected officials there to pursue this effort. With the additional assistance from the Center for Popular Democracy, we met again in November.

At that meeting 41 elected officials from 32 towns and large cities, including three other Washington State municipal officials, Greg Taylor from Renton, Ryan Mello from Tacoma and De'Sean Quinn from Tukwila, came together and founded a new national organization, Local Progress, a national municipal policy network www.localprogress.net.

Our goal is to create more just and equitable cities to counter the increasing disparity in income and wealth that our nation has been experiencing. We have seen huge cuts in programs designed to maintain infrastructure, provide basic health and safety services, and sustain local economies. These regressive policies do not happen by accident. They are reinforced by the growing influence of money in politics, through groups that work in a coordinated way to weaken health and safety regulations, roll back civil rights, lower taxes on moneyed interests, and demonize, privatize, and eliminate public programs and services.

In many cities there is a counterforce: progressives working in coalitions of elected officials, community groups, labor unions, and advocacy organization. Working together, we have adopted legislation at the local level to advance progressive policies. Living-wage laws make sure that public dollars don’t pay for poverty jobs. Cities, like Seattle, are leading the effort to make sure that all workers can take paid sick days, instead of choosing between their jobs and their health. Inclusionary housing policies create affordable housing in diverse neighborhoods. Responsible banking acts make sure that banks use the people’s money to meet community needs. Municipal campaign finance reforms return government to the people.

The success of Local Progress depends on three elements working together: elected officials, national progressive organizations and a useable, reliable database of municipal legislation. City Councilmembers and Mayors pass legislation, organizations mobilize citizens and a database allows both of these groups to share information and to find one another to pursue coordinated campaigns.

As the new chair of this organization I look forward to sustaining this effort and producing results.

Security, and will also be demanding comprehensive immigration reform, supporting the caregivers and domestic workers whose own families and security are threatened by separation every day. Having gained the support of Senators Cantwell and Murray, we will begin to take our campaign to our congressional representatives.

By respecting our seniors enough to protect and expand the systems that allow them to remain at home, we care across generations. By ensuring the rights of people with disabilities to live in their own homes, we care across ability. By working together we care across the divisions that inhibit our nation’s progress.

Susie Levy is lead organizer for Washington State Caring Across Generations and Washington Community Action Network. Araceli Hernandez is Program Director for Casa Latina. Both are PSARA members.
Complementing FMLI are earned sick leave standards that will assure most employers provide a few days of paid sick leave annually. With earned sick days, workers no longer risk penalties and lost pay when they act responsibly by staying home sick or with a sick child.

Seattle, San Francisco, Washington, DC, and Connecticut have already successfully implemented paid sick days standards. New Jersey, California, New York, Rhode Island, and Hawaii have had insurance systems for decades protecting every worker in those states with benefits for more extended leaves.

Studies have found that in the states with family and medical leave insurance, parents take longer leaves with their new babies, babies and moms are healthier, mothers are more likely to be employed a year after giving birth – and states save money on public assistance and food stamps.

Employers benefit from FMLI and earned sick days, too, with healthier workers, higher morale, and less turnover.

Our legislature is facing big issues this session: continuing budget deficits, unmet needs in education, escalating healthcare costs, an aging population, and an economy still on the rocks. The

Work and Family Agenda helps solve some of these problems by boosting family income, enabling workers to provide better care for themselves and their family members, giving every child the chance of a good start in life, and providing businesses new tools for insuring worker health and productivity.

These are proven, common sense policies, but supporters of the status quo have powerful lobbies. We will only win if your legislators hear from YOU. Sign up for regular updates at waworkandfamily.org, follow Washington Work and Family Coalition on Facebook, and volunteer to share your story in Olympia by contacting gabriela@eoionline.org.

Marilyn Watkins is Research Director, Economic Opportunity Institute and a PSARA member

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Meetings and Events

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, Feb 13, Seattle Office, WA State Labor Council, 314 First Av West, (lower Queen Anne) Seattle. All PSARA members are welcome.

Forum: Social Security-Preserve It, Strengthen It, Pass It on: 5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 20. UW-Tacoma, Philip Hall, 1918 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma. Featuring noted economist, Dean Baker, Co-Director, Center for Economic & Policy Research and Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director, Economic Opportunity Institute. More information available at www.ssworkswa.org

Senior Lobby Day: Thursday, Feb. 21, 8 a.m. registration, 9 a.m. program begins, United Churches, 110 11th Ave. SE, Olympia WA. Join with PSARA members and others from across the state to make our priorities known to our legislators. PSARA will be organizing car pools for our members. Please contact Chuck Richards, legaffairs@psara.org or call the PSARA office if you can drive or if you need a ride.

Green Lake Discussion Group will be meeting in February. E-mail Susan Levy at sjlevy.01@gmail.com for details of date and time

CASA Latina: Partners for the next generation
By Araceli Hernandez—Program Director at Casa Latina and a PSARA member

For the past year and a half, PSARA has joined forces with CASA Latina in Seattle to build the Caring Across Generations Campaign. CASA Latina members have learned so much from our collaboration and the relationships we are building, and we wanted to share with you a bit more about CASA Latina.

CASA Latina was founded in 1996, with the mission of empowering the Latino community through education and employment opportunities. CASA Latina has many different programs, though we are most known for our Day Worker Center, which connects employers with day laborers and domestic workers. CASA Latina members come to the workers’ center each morning, and while they wait for work, they have the opportunity to take English classes and participate in vocational and safety trainings.

This February, we will be launching our first training for private-pay caregivers, responding to the needs that we have found through our involvement with Caring Across Generations.

In addition to employment and educational programs, CASA Latina is building a powerful base of workers, organizing to stop wage theft, demand immigration reform, and transform care in the US.

One of the most powerful roles CASA Latina plays is preparing trained and competent workers for employers to hire. If you ever need help in your yard, or someone to clean your house, please call CASA Latina to hire a worker!

To hire a worker, call 206-956-0779. To learn more about our caregiver training, call Veronique (ext 119).