

# The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

The Monthly Publication of  
**PSARA EDUCATION FUND**  
“Uniting Generations for a Secure Future”

Vol XXXIII, No 2

February 2018

**Vote 'em Out!**

Social Security Works tells  
you how to protect Social  
Security, Medicare, Medicaid

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## Exclusive Interview: Rep. Pramila Jayapal

By Mike Andrew

“How is life on the front lines?” I asked Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal when she called from D.C.

“Oh, man,” she laughed, “we are waiting to see what happens! I have to say I’m proud of the Democrats for standing up strong and sticking together. We’re really fighting for our principles.”

Jayapal noted how counter-productive the Republicans’ legislative agenda has been, even from the point of view of their own party.

“By trying to take away the ACA and passing the so-not-progressive tax package, they’ve really shown people who they are,” she said. “By trying to take this away, it’s put people on notice, and it’s moved us to a place where the majority agrees that health care is a human right.”

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## You Still Have Time to Register for Senior Lobby Day

**Thursday, February 22**

**Now is the time to be heard!**

The 2018 Senior Lobby Day – February 22 – will be our best chance in years to work toward PSARA’s legislative goals. Democrats are now in control of both the State House and Senate, so let’s move on this opportunity to promote PSARA’s progressive legislative agenda.

Our elected officials need to hear your stories!

Our representatives have told us that what makes the most impact on them in deciding what bills are passed are the personal stories they hear directly from you.

When you take time to travel to Olympia and sit across from an elected official, telling them about how their vote will affect your life, that kind of emotional involvement makes the biggest impact.

You’ll find PSARA’s legislative agenda outlined on Page 6. On Page 7 is a flyer with information about Senior Lobby Day.

Review the agenda and find an issue that personally affects you or your loved ones. Take this opportunity to speak in person to the people who can make changes. Registration is paid by PSARA for any of our members who wish to attend.

**So let’s go!**

**We urge you to sign up and show up. It’s important for us to know as soon as possible the number of people that intend to go. To register for Senior Lobby Day, email [govrelations@psara.org](mailto:govrelations@psara.org) or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.**

Carpools are being organized with other PSARA members. Let us know if you need a ride or you can provide rides. Rides may also be available in vans provided by IAM District 751.

## Letter from Senator Patty Murray

Dear PSARA friends,

One of the hallmarks of President Trump’s first year in office, unfortunately, has been a sense of uncertainty. This uncertainty has been driven in no small part by President Trump’s own efforts to undermine our trust in government. Every day he has been doing everything in his power to create chaos and dysfunction, to attack and bully people, to tear our country apart, lurch us into crisis, and bait us into controversy.

However, as you have shown, there is so much that is not in his power.

In stark contrast to the uncertainty created by the Trump Administration’s actions has been the rock-solid certainty that local groups of committed citizens, like Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, would stand up, speak out, and fight back against his tactics at every turn.

This past year your support has helped hold the line for the hard-won progress we have made together. Your action and advocacy have prevented Republicans from passing Trumpcare,

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## The Retiree ADVOCATE

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## House Concert with Rebel Voices

Saturday, February 17, at 2:00 p.m.

You'll love this fundraising concert! Celebrate Valentine's Day and show your love for PSARA by listening to Rebel Voices, featuring Janet Stecher and Susan Lewis, who are donating their talent and time to raise funds for PSARA.

Their songs focus on the struggles and triumphs of real people -- workers from many lands and many times. Included, too, are the voices of today's rebels: union activists, gays and lesbians, pro-choice advocates, environmental activists, persons with disabilities, and those who are usually powerless and therefore too frequently voiceless: children, immigrants, and political prisoners.

Robby Stern and Dina Burstein have graciously offered their home for this event. We'll have beer, wine and finger food for you to enjoy along with the music. This is a give-what-you-can fundraising event, so bring your check made out to PSARA. We will also happily accept cash donations.

We originally advertised that the band Clallam County was our featured performance. However, as a result of a health issue, they are unable to perform. We hope to feature them later in the year.

Robby and Dina's home holds 40 people for an event like this, so get your reservation in soon. Email [organizer@psara.org](mailto:organizer@psara.org) or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646 before February 14.



*Rebel Voices: Susan Lewis and Janet Stecher*

## PSARA Presents "Herstory" in Port Townsend Friday, February 16

Following the successful presentation of readings from the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project (OLOHP) before the October 2017 Executive Board Meeting, PSARA decided to sponsor OLOHP to do a similar program for its Port Townsend members and other interested people in that community. The presentation will be on Friday, February 16, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. It will be held at the Port Townsend Community Center, 620 Tyler St, Port Townsend. If you live nearby or have friends and acquaintances in the area, be sure to let them know.

For more information, contact [organizer@psara.org](mailto:organizer@psara.org), or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

OLOHP has been collecting oral herstory narratives, usually from women who are over 70 at the time of the interview. The group already has close to 650 completed interviews with women from all over the United States and several other countries. The program will include dramatic readings from some of these herstories, plus portions of a DVD about OLOHP that was funded by a grant from the Pride Foundation.

Don't miss this educational and very moving presentation.

Visit our website for up to date information or to renew:  
[www.psara.org](http://www.psara.org)  
or visit PSARA on Facebook

# Take a Knee...

By Kristen Beifus

*Editor's note: This is the speech Kristen made on behalf of PSARA at the 2018 MLK Day rally, January 15, at Garfield High School.*

Thank you so much to the incredible MLK Day Celebration Committee, who put together this event, with numerous volunteer hours and diligent planning, to make space for many voices to come together into one action. PSARA is humbled to be here. We are an inter-generational organization, and I am one of our younger members, however not our youngest.

As a white person, speaking on behalf of a predominantly white organization, I see two urgent questions before us:

1) How do we un-guard our hearts and open up to our collective and individual histories of white supremacy and the suffering it has caused and continues to cause?

2) How do we act from our deepest desire for freedom from all forms of oppression, so that we can all know our full human potential?

We know racism was created to shore up the resources of the many in the hands of the few. Those white ancestors of ours who held the wealth sowed fear and scarcity into the hearts and minds of everyday people like me, convincing us to believe that me and mine won't have enough, and that black and brown people are the cause of that, native people are the cause of that, people from Mexico and Asia are taking things from me.

White wealthy men in government passed policies to institutionalize that fear and keep working people divided, white people and communities of color separated from each other and fundamentally from our true selves.

It's heartbreaking to know our racist history, how my ancestors were complicit. How I too am complicit. It hurts. A lot.

However, what hurts so much more is that black people and all people of color are not safe in our communities. They are at risk every moment of every day. They face aggression that wears down their bodies, their minds, their hearts, leading to stress, depression, lower life expectancy, and death. We just lost Erica Garner, 27 years young, and many, many others.

This reality is unacceptable and drives me to be willing to put myself at risk because I can simply no longer "play it safe." I need to take action to interrupt the perpetuation of racial inequity in my family, with my friends and neighbors, in my workplace.

I need to be willing for my own words and actions steeped in white supremacy to be named, and I know that will be uncomfortable. I need to humbly listen, to be honest with myself about what I don't know and what I don't understand, and seek those answers myself, not rely on people of color to teach me. I need to let go of being "good" or better than other white folks, and instead I need to be real and commit my authentic, imperfect, messy self to racial equity.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr: "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but [they] must take it because conscience tells [them] it is right."

And what does that really mean...in action for white people?

I have to reconcile, that while I didn't choose this white body or invite the privilege I have, it is there just the same. However, the choice of what I am going to do with it is under my control.

Every day I get to choose what I think, what I say, and how I act. Yes, it can be daunting, an enormous responsibility. However, I choose to see it as unbelievably exciting. Every day I have infinite opportunities to further racial equity in what I do. This is real, endur-



Kristen Beifus

ing racial equity that is far beyond any one policy or protest.

PSARA as a community is not playing it safe. We are doing the often painful work of knowing ourselves and confronting our history. Of having to starkly see who is not in the room, whose voice is not heard, who does not feel valued or welcomed, in advocating for Social Security and Medicare programs that are meant to support everyone.

PSARA's Environmental Committee saw clearly that events to discuss climate change drew very few people of color. One might say people of color are just not interested in climate change. However, we know that is not true. Not only are communities of color interested, they know their survival is dependent on policies that control climate change. So the Environmental Committee reached out to PSARA's Racial and Gender Equity Committee, which, I might add, recently changed its name from the Diversity Committee to better reflect the aspiration for racial and gender equity to be a part of everything PSARA does. Going forward, PSARA climate justice events will be

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# Breakthrough on Health Care for All?

## Mark Dudzic Speaks in Seattle

By Mike Andrew and David Loud

“We live in bizarre and perilous times,” Mark Dudzic told the January meeting of the Health Care Is a Human Right coalition (HCHR).

Dudzic, National Coordinator for the Labor Campaign for Single Payer, was in Seattle to talk about strategy with local health care activists.

“This goes beyond the politics of health care,” Dudzic continued, because the forces that oppose healthcare for all also want to “eliminate the very concept of collective rights. They want to attack all social programs, and their reactionary endgame is now in view.

“But support for Medicare for all has never been stronger.”

Building winning movements at the state level is crucial, Dudzic said, because the country is experiencing a rapid “paradigm shift” on healthcare, “almost as quick as marriage equality” in the early part of this decade.

“Breakthrough victories at the state level could build momentum,” Dudzic has concluded.

He should know. Dudzic was a key Bernie Sanders ally in the 2016 presidential campaign and previously was Chairman of the US Labor Party and President of OCAW (Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union) Local 8-149.

His current organization, Labor Campaign for Single Payer, was founded in 2009, just before the inauguration of President Obama, and is supported by 13 national unions and 10 state labor councils, including the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC). WSLC President and PSARA member, Jeff Johnson, serves on the group’s board.

Lining up support from labor unions and other organized groups is fundamental, Dudzic says, because “victory does not go to the best policy ideas but to the side that can build a powerful social movement to overcome the concentrated economic power of those who stand between us and health care for all.”

According to Dudzic, “labor must be in the forefront,” not only because labor unions still represent political power, but also because health care for all would relieve unions of the need to bargain for insurance coverage.

“It’s unsustainable to maintain health care through employment relationships,” Dudzic says.

The average cost of employer-paid health care coverage is \$12.95 per hour worked, Dudzic noted.

“How do you bargain for that if you’re organizing \$11.00 per hour hotel workers in the Central Valley in California?” he asked. “It provides an incentive for employers to fight union negotiations. To win we have to take healthcare off the table.”

Major health care legislation would benefit a huge number of Americans – the 75 million Americans who depend on Medicaid and/or CHIP and the many millions who are uninsured or underinsured, for example – but there is “built-in structural opposition” from the “medical industrial complex,” Dudzic warns. “Trillions of dollars are at stake.”

Legislation is possible at the national level, but it’s more likely that there will be breakthroughs in one or more states, Dudzic says.

On the national level, HR 676, the Medicare for All Act, has 120 Congressional co-sponsors in the House, “more than half the Democratic Caucus,” Dudzic notes. “In 2014 Bernie introduced a Medicare for All bill and there were no [Senate] co-sponsors. Now there are 16 [for S. 1804], including many potential Democratic presidential candidates.

“[Health care] is going to be an issue in the 2020 elections, and that opens the possibility of legislation post-2020.”

Nevertheless, Dudzic is also looking for legislation in several states.

“You’d look for ‘blue states’ with a strong labor movement,” he says. “In California and New York the Assemblies have passed bills, but they were



Mark Dudzic

blocked in the Senate. Washington should also be on the list. You’ve been leaders in progressive reforms, and you have one of the highest proportions of union members.

“In fact, you could think of a West Coast breakout, with Washington, Oregon, and California passing bills, and possibly multi-state resourcing.”

Nevertheless, Dudzic warns that the political landscape is littered with statewide efforts that have failed.

“Colorado ran an initiative [in 2016]. It lost 4 to 1. The same in Oregon in 2002. It lost by a similar margin, 78-22 percent; and in California in 1994, Prop 186 lost by 73-26 percent.”

“A breakthrough on healthcare could revolutionize American politics,” Dudzic says, “so we have to prepare people to win.

“We know we can’t match the medical industrial complex dollar for dollar, but we can know how much it costs to win a statewide initiative campaign. And we can know – from real polling, not just ‘Do you want ice cream today?’ – where voters are around it.”

*Mike Andrew is PSARA's staff organizer and editor of the Retiree Advocate. David Loud is a PSARA member and represents PSARA at HCHR. He formerly served as community liaison for Rep. Jim McDermott.*

# How the "Millenium Migration" from Latin America Shaped the US for the Better, Part III

By Peter Costantini, Reprinted from Policy in Focus

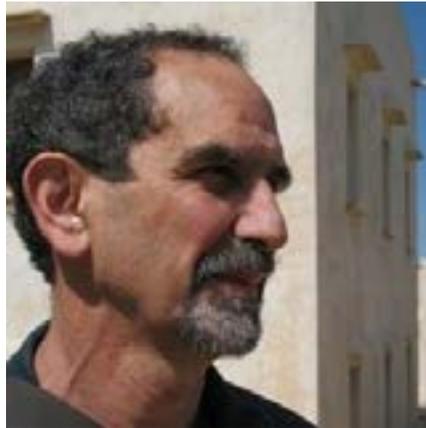
## Juan Crow

The whole juggernaut of ICE raids, kangaroo courts, and privatized detention has been dubbed "Juan Crow" by immigrant advocates. In an echo of the Jim Crow system that institutionalized segregation and repression of African Americans, Juan Crow has alloyed racist and xenophobic scapegoating of immigrants with authoritarian repression.

However, in defying unjust laws and enforcement, the immigrant rights movement is following a deep moral tradition of our country, walking in the footsteps of movements for civil, labor, and women's rights, of abolitionists and the original American revolutionaries. Previous mass migrations, from the Irish and Chinese of the 19th century to the southern and eastern Europeans of the early 20th century, also faced demonization by sociopathic movements, from the Know-Nothings to the Klan, with family resemblances to today's nativists.

The gratuitous cruelty of Juan Crow has been complemented by decades of futile but pricey efforts to militarize the border. Through most of the Millennium Migration, the border-enforcement budget multiplied eight times, but efforts to keep out immigrants grew less effective. A billion dollars was lavished on Boeing for its failed Secure Borders Initiative, a high-tech "virtual fence" that never worked. Further public funds have been squandered calling out the National Guard to the border. Since the end of the migration nearly a decade ago, they keep slathering more gold plating onto the iron fist. But the US-Mexico border has continued to resist efforts to hermetically seal it.

Instead, extreme border hardening has had major unintended consequences. While it may have slightly slowed immigration, which had already declined sharply, it also discouraged most return crossings to the south. Many undocumented immigrants who would have continued moving back and forth across the border opted to avoid the increased costs and dangers, and stayed put in the States. In many cases, they brought their families over.



Peter Costantini

As enforcement was broadened, pushing crossers out into the Sonoran Desert, the costs and dangers rose sharply. In effect, border militarization backstopped and subsidized Mexican organized crime. Recognizing a growing profit center, the cartels who control the Mexican side of the borderlands increased their taxation of coyotes and, in some areas, took over their operations. Some narcos may now earn more from trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion than from drug smuggling. The worst have committed mass murders of Central American migrants.

In the face of worsening odds, travelers began to rely more on two methods that made an end run around the border buildup. In recent years, an estimated one-half to two-thirds of migrants have been entering the US by either overstaying a visa, or by crossing at a legal port of entry concealed or with false papers.

### **"Something there is that doesn't love a wall"**

Despite the millions of deportations carried out by the Obama administration, during his second term President Obama introduced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which offered renewable relief to undocumented people brought to the US as small children — also known as the Dreamers — and another effort to give similar temporary protections to their parents, the latter of which was ultimately defeated in court. With the advent of

President Donald Trump, though, Juan Crow has strutted back to the front of the parade.

The border wall is above all a big beautiful decoy, a middle-finger salute to Latin America, immigrants, and refugees, and an embodiment of the mass psychosis of Trump's followers. It would have little value for border enforcement. (Now that more Chinese immigrants are entering than Mexicans, though, maybe Trump can demonstrate his deal-making artistry by convincing Xi Jinping to pay for a wall across our border with China.)

The real action is in terrorizing, jailing, and expelling immigrants and breaking up their families. As attorney general Jeff Sessions, Kansas secretary of state and Trump adviser Kris Kobach, and Trump protégé Steve Miller oil their repressive machinery, you can catch a sulfurous whiff of Neo-Fascism Lite. It's redolent in Trump's pardon of ex-sheriff and convicted racial profiler Joe Arpaio, and in his holding Dreamers hostage to more punitive measures against their communities. Trump has turned the West Wing into a bouncy house for bigots, and they are lighting the torches of the Neo-Nazis and the Klan. Meanwhile, away from the hurly-burly, the congressional right is doggedly pursuing their shared legislative agenda not just on immigration, but also on voting rights, "law and order," and labor issues.

One sad irony of these circuses without bread is that many displaced manufacturing workers and coal miners share a parallel fate with immigrants: All are cast adrift on neoliberal riptides, the economic flotsam and jetsam of corporate-led globalization. Dollars and pesos flash across the border in fiber-optic cables, goods pour across on trains and trucks, but some of the human "factors of production" have to crawl across through sewers — or watch their jobs being shipped offshore or to "right-to-work" states.

*Peter Costantini is a PSARA member. We regret misspelling his name in our previous issue. This is Part III of a longer article first published in Foreign Policy in Focus. The fourth and final part will appear in a future issue.*



## *2018 Legislative Agenda*

*PSARA opposes cuts to programs that provide vital services to seniors, children, and low- and moderate-income families. We support efforts to pass progressive revenue measures that achieve the goal of funding education and protecting essential social service programs.*

*1. Budget: PSARA supports legislation to increase transparency and accountability in the budget process including, but not limited to:*

- Requiring the legislature to adopt a tax expenditure budget as part of the state biennial budget process.*

- The elimination of tax exemptions that do not have a demonstrated public benefit.*

*2. Housing: PSARA supports allocation of significant resources to provide a much larger stock of low-income housing for the growing population of seniors, many of whom rely on Social Security as their source of income, as well as for the many Washington residents who are unable to afford adequate housing.*

*3. Health Care: PSARA believes that comprehensive affordable health care is a fundamental human right. We support legislation that furthers the goal of universal health care coverage in Washington including:*

- The Washington Apple Care Trust Act, SB 5701 and the Washington Health Security Trust Act, HB 1026. {Two similar single-payer bills}*

*4. Retirement Security: PSARA supports state-based efforts to create a state-based social insurance program to help defray the costs of long term care.*

- PSARA supports the passage of the Long Term Care Trust Act, HB 2533/SB 6238.*

*5. Climate Justice: PSARA supports efforts advanced by the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy that create a carbon tax and use the revenue to promote renewable energy and provide assistance to workers impacted by the reduction in the use of fossil fuels, and to the communities in Washington most hard-hit by the impacts of climate change and global warming.*



# Register Now!

## Senior Lobby Day 2018 Thursday, February 22

*Join PSARA members from your legislative district to visit your elected representatives.*

***RSVP now to reserve a spot!***

***Email [govrelations@psara.org](mailto:govrelations@psara.org) or call the PSARA office 206-448-9646***

***FREE to PSARA members.***

Carpools are available. If you need a ride, or can offer rides, let us know. PSARA members can also ride on IAM vans leaving from the Machinists' Hall, but space is limited. Register now!

### **Senior Lobby Day Schedule:**

**8:00 a.m.:** We will gather at United Churches of Olympia, 110 11th Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501. A continental breakfast will be provided.

**9:00 a.m.:** Speakers, possibly including Governor Jay Inslee, will discuss legislative issues.

**11:30 a.m.:** PSARA members gather by legislative district to hear from PSARA's lobbyist, Pam Crone. A box lunch will be provided.

**In the afternoon:** Meet with your legislators to discuss PSARA's Legislative Agenda. See Page 6. Talking points will be provided.

A meeting has been scheduled with Speaker Frank Chopp, a PSARA member, at 1:30 p.m. All PSARA members who are at Senior Lobby Day and do not have a conflicting legislative meeting are invited to attend. Details will be provided when we gather in Olympia.

## Through the Looking Glass of Finance Capital: How “Saving for Retirement” Could Make You Poorer

By Mike Andrew

Saving for retirement is supposed to make you more secure financially, not less, but for many working people it does just the opposite. It makes you poorer.

That's the startling conclusion of a 2015 study by five business school professors published in *The Journal of Finance*.

The study looked at what happens when employers auto-enrolled their workers in 401(k) plans, taking regular fixed contributions out of their paychecks, compared to situations where workers have the choice to sign up for a retirement savings plan or not, and how much to contribute.

Four years after hire, the employees who were automatically enrolled in a 401(k) amassed an average of \$3,237 more than the group that was free to contribute or not on their own.

Sounds good, right? Well...No.

The auto-enrolled employees – the ones who had to save for retirement – also ended up with an average of \$1,563 more in consumer and auto debt than those who were allowed to sign up on their own.

When mortgage debt was factored in, the picture got even worse. The auto-enrolled employees owed an average of \$4,131 more on their homes than their counterparts.



In other words, the extra debt accumulated by people who were making automatic 401(k) payments more than offsets the extra money they saved, even when you count the matching funds contributed by their employer.

With the employer match, auto-enrolled employees would end up with \$3,237 more saved but \$5,694 in extra debts.

How is that possible?

We're living in a period of wage stagnation – a protracted period, in fact – where all the economic gains have gone to a tiny minority of financial manipulators. They, in turn, have bought up all the necessities of life – housing, health care, education – and turned them into money-making commodities.

Under the circumstances, when people's earnings are flat, anything they put aside in savings will mean less money available to pay off credit cards, auto loans, student loans, and mortgages. After all, there's only so much money to go around.

Savings funds like 401(k)s almost always return less than debts cost. It has to be that way, because otherwise people would just borrow money to put in savings accounts, and banks would go broke paying interest instead of getting rich collecting it.

That's why people whose wages are stagnant can actually end up further in the hole when they reduce their credit card and loan payments in order to put money away in savings accounts. And that's why so few people have adequate retirement savings to supplement their Social Security benefits.

Of course, the *Retiree Advocate* would never tell you not to save money, and for some workers some kinds of employer-sponsored retirement accounts are helpful, but they are never the whole solution to retirement security.

What we need is a robust Social Security system with expanded benefits, and also defined benefit pensions and higher wages in general, so that saving for retirement makes economic sense for the majority of workers.

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## PSARA Members at Seattle Women's March 2.0, January 20

In the left photo, PSARA members gather at Seattle Central College, and at right we hit the streets joining tens of thousands of others, for the Seattle Women's March 2.0.



## Vote 'em Out! The Only Way to Protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid

By Linda Benesch, Communications Director, Social Security Works

Donald Trump ran for president claiming to be a different kind of Republican: one who would protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. He made that pledge in the very first speech of his campaign and repeated it over and over again. But during his first year in the White House, Trump made it clear over and over again that this promise was a blatant lie. He is like every other Republican politician: determined to destroy all three programs.

For his cabinet, Trump picked men with long histories of working to cut and dismantle Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. That included Tom Price, his first Health and Human Services Secretary, who infamously said that “we will not rest until we make certain that government-run health care [AKA Medicare and Medicaid] is ended.” Price was forced to resign after less than six months on the job when he got caught spending at least \$500,000 in taxpayer dollars on private jet travel — which he apparently considered a worthier use of government funds than Medicare and Medicaid.

Another of Trump’s cabinet choices, this time for budget director, was Congressman Mick Mulvaney, a member of the far-right “freedom caucus.” During his confirmation hearing, Mulvaney promised Republican Senators that he would convince Trump to support cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Thanks to Mulvaney’s influence, Trump’s first budget proposal included cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance, an essential component of the program. That budget has thus far not become law.

Their failed Trumpcare bill would have gutted Medicaid by cutting it by over \$1 trillion and block-granting it to the states and raiding \$117 billion from Medicare. All of this makes it clear that despite Trump’s promises, Republicans have every intention of continuing to



Linda Benesch

pursue their long-held dream of benefit cuts.

The one piece of major legislation that Republicans did manage to pass in 2017 was their tax bill, commonly known as the GOP tax scam because they attempted to sell it to the public as a middle class tax cut even though the vast majority of tax cuts went to their billionaire donors. Republicans have made it clear that they plan to use the \$1.5 trillion increase in the deficit created by their tax scam as an excuse to go after Medicare, Medicaid, and even Social Security (despite the fact that Social Security is self-funded and doesn’t contribute a single penny to the deficit).

In a December 2017 interview with radio host Ross Kaminsky, House Speaker Paul Ryan referred to Medicare as “the biggest entitlement that’s gotta have reform” and said that he plans to pursue “reform” in the coming year. “Reform” is Ryan’s code for “massive cuts.” He has spent years releasing budget plans to turn Medicare from a guaranteed benefit into a voucher program that would provide seniors with woefully inadequate coupons to purchase insurance on the private market.

Now, Ryan thinks he finally has the opportunity to make his horrific vision a reality. He thinks that while the media is distracted by Trump’s tweets, he can achieve the dream he’s had since he was a college student attending frat parties — gutting Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

But Ryan’s plan will fail if the American people fight back. When Trump was elected president, many thought that it was a foregone conclusion that the Affordable Care Act would be repealed. They were wrong. Due to a massive uprising from grassroots activists around the country, who called, rallied, and lobbied their Members of Congress non-stop, every Republican health care bill failed. When the American people get angry, Congress has no choice but to listen.

However, given the GOP’s long track record of attacks on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, the only sure way to protect and ultimately expand these programs is to vote Republicans out of office. The people of Alabama made a good start on that last December when they elected Senator Doug Jones. Throughout last year’s health care fight, activists knew that we needed to flip three Republican Senators. Now, it is only two. That means our benefits are safer this year than they were last year, but they will only be truly safe when Republicans are no longer in control of Congress.

This year will go by quickly. Now is the time to find your nearest swing district or state. Knock on doors, donate, or help by contributing other skills. If somehow the unthinkable happens and Republicans retain control of both the House and Senate, there is little doubt that destroying Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid will be on the top of their agenda in 2019. We cannot let this happen. Our economic security is at stake.

# Letter from Senator Patty Murray

*Continued from Page 1*

which would have taken coverage away from tens of millions of families—and pushed back against damaging efforts to gut Medicaid and undermine Medicare.

Your vigilance has also been critical as Republicans have worked with President Trump to undermine the certainty and security of workers and seniors as they plan for retirement. Republicans have thwarted the work of states to expand access to retirement savings programs and delayed important protections to ensure financial advisers act in their clients' best interests.

The recent tax bill Republicans rammed through Congress is just the latest evidence that President Trump cares more about the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations than working families. Still, the outcry from advocates like you helped stop a proposal to cap pre-tax 401k contributions, which would've hurt families not only today but for years into the future.

In those efforts and so many others the relentless resistance of groups like PSARA was critical. I'm so thankful for the passion and courage you bring to every issue.

But we still have more work to do. In 2018 we must continue to resist efforts to move us backwards, and we will also need to offer a path to move us forward. We must continue to fight for the safety net that has helped so many workers, families, and retirees in times of need. However, we must also repair that net, strengthen it, and expand it to support those who are still at risk of falling through the cracks and offer them a hand up.

Our ability to help families address the challenges they face today will determine what challenges we as a nation will face tomorrow. We need to help parents and students invest in the future as they save to afford the costs of college. We need to help workers invest in the future, especially the 55 million without access to a workplace retirement plan, and empower them to plan for their long-term financial security.

From my position as a leader on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, I am going to continue standing against the Trump Administration's harmful policies and standing for

the people of Washington state and for solutions that help more families in our State and across the country feel safe and secure.

After so many broken promises, President Trump has made it clear to families they cannot trust him. However, we must not let them believe they cannot trust their government. Together we can continue to ensure that those who need health care can get it, that those who want a higher education can attain it, and that we can build a brighter future.

Most importantly, we can ensure that the kids growing up understand that government and politics isn't just about this divisiveness and dysfunction that we see too much of today. It is your activism, your passion, your hard work—that is what Democracy looks like. That is what will help move us back in the right direction. That is what I want kids growing up to see and to be inspired by. Thank you all so much for the work you do and for the example you set for the next generation.

Sincerely,  
Senator Patty Murray

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## Leaving a PSARA Legacy

*By Robby Stern*

When I was writing my will, I decided to leave a specific bequest for Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action. I felt it was a way to provide additional support to our kids and grandkids as PSARA carries on the struggle to preserve and expand Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare for seniors and future generations. I knew it would also help to continue PSARA's presence as a unique and valued voice in the fight for human rights and the struggle for social, economic, racial, gender, and climate justice.

I am not alone. Several late PSARA members have identified PSARA as worthy of receiving a financial bequest in their wills. Sadako Houghten, Nels Ekroth, Stanley Rosenberg, Juliet Cunningham, and Liz Yates all identified

PSARA in their wills as an organization they wanted support financially on the occurrence of their death.

Each one of the gifts helped PSARA meet the continuing challenges of our day-to-day work. They also touched the hearts of those of us carrying on and working to make PSARA a helpful force in mobilizing to build a more progressive vision for our region, state, country, and world.

Writing my will was a sobering and even somber experience. It makes real the death that each of us knows is inevitable. Of course, uppermost in my mind was doing the best I could to assist my immediate family in a world in which I am no longer physically present. At the same time, it feels good to know that some portion of what I have



to pass on financially will go to PSARA. I invite those of you who can to remember PSARA as you write your final will and testament.

## Take a Knee

Continued from Page 3

co-designed by both committees with input from people of color-led climate justice organizations in our community. We know this is just a start.

As individuals and as part of organizations, we need to ask ourselves: What ways do I play it safe, and how can I answer the call of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others to lead with my conscience?

In other words, what does it look like for me to "Take a Knee" in my life? How do I embody my truth?

My knee is coming out here today and being vulnerable and talking with you all.

My knee is to call out comments, jokes, or media that seek to normalize white supremacy.

My knee is taking action based not on what is convenient or most beneficial for me as an individual but what's best for creating the vibrant, thriving community where I want to live.

So this is what I ask (because I am an organizer and there is always an "ask," especially for the white people here). Decide what "Taking a Knee" is for you (in both small everyday ways and showing up as part of movement for change).

Name what that is and do it, not just once, but again and again and again. When it's hard and when it's inconvenient and at times when it's scary because you are vulnerable and your heart is breaking. "Take your Knee" until we all have the safety, the health, the nourishment, and the freedom we yearn for as humans.

Thank you!

*Kristen Beifus is Co-Chair of PSARA's Environmental Committee and an organizer for UFCW 21.*

## Interview with Rep. Pramila Jayapal

Continued from Page 1

Polling predicts a flip in control of Congress. I asked the Congresswoman if – should Democrats take control – they could remain united around a progressive agenda, or whether they'd turn out to be as factionalized as the Republicans.

"It's harder to keep unity when you're in the majority, when you have power and you actually have to pass things," she answered. "We're in the minority, so we haven't been able to pass our legislation. But we've built a case for what our vision is.

"I'm First Vice Chair of the House Progressive Caucus, and we're working hard to build agreement among Democrats on our progressive agenda.

"I have to say," she added, "I don't think something like \$15 an hour minimum wage is 'progressive.' Or Medicare for all. It's just the results people need to be able to live their lives."

Some political pundits have criticized Democrats for dwelling on how bad Trump is rather than putting forward their own proposals.

"I disagree," Jayapal replied. "I talk about how bad Trump is in terms of what he's done. His tax package that benefits the same old people, the super-wealthy. His racist views. His criminalization of immigrants.

"That said, it's not enough to be an opposition party, we have to be a proposition party. We have to fight for our own agenda. College for all. Medicare for all. Control of pharmaceutical prices. That's all part of the agenda."

I also asked about the prospects for a deal on DACA that would allow Dreamers legal status and a pathway to citizenship.

"If it was left up to the [House] chamber, we'd be able to work it out," Jayapal answered. "Everyone is aware that 85 percent of the public believes in the DREAM Act. Even the Republican members know that. The problem is the President."

Finally, I asked what PSARA members could do to help.

"People need to know that passing the tax bill had repercussions. It transfers trillions of dollars to people who are already incredibly wealthy. It drives up the deficit. But it also gives Republicans an opportunity to say 'OK, now we need to cut.' Actually, an automatic cut of \$25 billion to Medicare was triggered by prior legislation.

"The biggest thing is call your reps. Now, people in the Seventh District, I always enjoy hearing from you, but it's more productive to call your friends or family in different districts represented by Republicans. If you have a cousin in Paul Ryan's district, call them up and ask them to put the pressure on."

### To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund  
2800 1st Avenue, Room 262, Seattle WA 98121  
Donations are tax deductible

- Basic contribution: \$20
- Limited income/living lightly: \$15 or whatever you can afford
- Supporting: \$50  New contributor
- Sponsoring: \$100 or more  Renewing contributor

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Meetings and Events

**PSARA Environmental Committee:** 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, February 1, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Government Relations Committee:** 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, February 1, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S. All are welcome.

**PSARA Fundraising Committee:** 10:30 a.m. - Noon, Tuesday, February 6, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S. All welcome.

**West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes:** Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 7, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *Cooking Without Waste: Share Your Tips and Tricks*. Led by Jane Gibson. Brown bag lunch.

**Green Lake Discussion Group:** Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 8, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E Green Lake Dr. N, Seattle. Brown bag lunch.

**PSARA Southend Committee:** 12:30 p.m., Thursday, February 8, Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd St., Burien. Join us for lunch before the meeting at Elliott Bay Brewhouse & Pub, 255 SW 152nd St., Burien. Please arrive for lunch by 11:15 a.m. All welcome as we plan PSARA events in South King County.

**PSARA Education Committee:** 2 p.m., Tuesday, February 13, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Race/Gender Equity Committee:** 11 a.m. – Noon, Thursday, February 15, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Executive Board Meeting:** 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, February 15, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Presents “Herstory”:** 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., Friday, February 16, Port Townsend Community Center, 620 Tyler St, Port Townsend. See the article on Page 2. For information email organizer@psara.org or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

**House Concert with Rebel Voices:** 2 p.m., Saturday, February 17, Dina and Robby’s house. Space is limited. Please RSVP by February 14 to organizer@psara.org or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

**Senior Lobby Day in Olympia:** Thursday, February 22. See the article on Page 1 and the flyer on Page 7. Register now: email govrelations@psara.org or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

