

# The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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June 2017

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## AG Ferguson to Speak at Summer Membership Meeting June 15

*By Bobby Righi, PSARA Administrative Vice President*

Our summer membership meeting is just around the corner. When we last met, in December 2016, we were all reeling in the aftershock of the vote and anxious to gather together to give each other support and discuss our fears of a Trump presidency.

We are now living with that horrible administration of reactionary white men in suits and the daily outrages they dream up. But we have met this disgusting program with fierce resistance. Since our last meeting, we have marched in the millions-strong Women's March, the March for Science, and in the beautiful and diverse May Day march and celebrations. We went, more than 40 strong, to advocate for PSARA's legislative agenda in Olympia on Senior Lobby Day. We have picketed for striking workers and taken part in protests and events in support of immigrants.

Our members have been working for a more progressive tax in Seattle. We have demonstrated and testified for clean energy and a just transition. We worked in a broad coalition to help defeat the first round of the Republicans' attempt to eliminate the ACA and replace it with their version, AKA: "Let the people get sick and die while we give big tax cuts to the rich." And, of course, through all of this, we have rallied people around the region and the state to help protect and expand Social Security and Medicare and combat cuts to these crucial programs. Whew!! And I am sure that I have left several things out.

Our membership meeting in June will be full of news and celebration and plans for continued "retirement

action." The highlight will be a speech by our own nationally lauded Attorney General, The Honorable Bob Ferguson, who led the nation in defeating Trump's January 28 executive order banning travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries and has continued to lead legal resistance to attacks by this administration.

Plan to attend and bring a dish to share. The meeting will be at the UFCW 21 Joe Crump Hall at 5030 First Avenue South and will start at 11:30 a.m. with a silent auction organized by the new PSARA Fundraising Committee. Come and browse art works, services, and other items and bid. Your bids will support the work of PSARA.

If you have items to donate to the auction, please contact PSARA's Membership VP, Jessica Bonebright, 206-901-0672 or [membershipvp@psara.org](mailto:membershipvp@psara.org)

We will begin our potluck at noon and have time to talk with each other while we enjoy lunch. The program starts at 1:00 p.m. with Lou Truskoff leading us in a song or two to remind us that "We will not give up the fight; we have only started."

The program is packed with interesting and timely presentations: Teresa Mosqueda will speak about the fight against the repeal of the ACA and the campaign for health care as a human right for all; Pam Crone will fill us in on the legislative session and the ongoing budget battle; and Robby Stern will give a report on the struggle to expand Social Security and Medicare in the face of the Republicans' plans to cut into these programs.

Then around 1:45 p.m., Bob Ferguson will speak about his vision for



*Attorney General Bob Ferguson*

Washington, cases his office and other state AG's are pursuing, what his office is working on that will impact seniors, and what we can do to help. If you have a question that you would like to ask the Attorney General, call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646, and leave a message or email it to [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org). We are gathering questions early to group them together so as many areas as possible can be covered during the Q and A.

Please call the office at (206) 448-9646 or email me at [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org) to let us know you are coming and what dish you are bringing.

Bus 121 stops at E. Marginal Way and S. Hudson St. Walk about three blocks east. Bus 132 stops at 4th Ave. S. and S. Dawson St. Walk about four blocks west. If you need a ride, call the office or email [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org)

## The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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## PSARA Members Honored

Frank Irigon and Janet Stecher



**F**rank Irigon (right), PSARA Executive Board member and Diversity Committee Co-chair, receives King County's Martin Luther King Medal of Distinguished Service from County Councilmember Rod Dembowski (left).

"There are few more deserving of this honor than Frank, known to many as Uncle Frank," said Dembowski. "He is a tireless advocate, a humble agitator, who is quick to raise his voice to call out injustice. While Frank is well known in the Asian Pacific Islander American community for his work, many King County residents have been positively impacted by his constant diligence in protecting our civil rights. I am honored to recognize him today with the MLK Medal of Distinguished Service." (Photo courtesy of Frank Irigon)



**J**anet Stecher, PSARA member and director of the Seattle Labor Chorus, is this year's recipient of the Joe Hill Award, granted by the Labor Heritage Foundation of Washington, D.C. The Award, named after labor organizer and songwriter Joe Hill, is a lifetime achievement award for persons who have contributed to the successful integration of arts and culture in the labor movement. It is granted to persons based on their dedication, participation, and promotion of labor, labor arts, culture, organizing, and/or history. The Award has been given annually since 1989. Previous recipients include artists Pete Seeger, Utah Phillips, Anne Feeney, and Guy Carawan, and labor organizer Cesar Chavez. (Photo courtesy of Rebel Voices)

# Santiago – A Visit with Children and the Federation of Cuban Women

By Robby Stern

This is Part IV of my chronicle of a trip to Cuba taken in December, 2016.

Our second day in Santiago de Cuba we visited a primary school which serves the community where it is located. All the school kids in Cuba wear uniforms designating their level in school. The concept is to avoid competition in clothing and to foster a feeling of equality.

School is now compulsory to the sixth grade and the government plans to push that up to the ninth grade. The Cuban schools feed the kids breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. School runs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The kids in the primary schools take two and a half hours for lunch, resting, and play.

The school director, an elderly gentleman who had been at the school for 42 years, met our bus on the street and we were escorted through a line of beautiful children. The kids applauded us and chanted welcome. We applauded them in appreciation of their warm welcome. Then our seven tour guides took over. The seven girls and boys were 9 to 11 years old, and elected leaders to the school council.

They started our tour by taking us to their room of history. Each one spoke eloquently and with confidence about the displays which were in the form of panels. They explained to us why each panel was there, what the panel reflected in Cuban history, and who the individuals depicted in the panels were. They also showed us with pride their awards as a community school. We then entered their festival room, where they showed us the elaborate outfits they wear when celebrating national festivals.

Next the young tour guides took us to their animal area, which they clearly loved. There was a combination of reptiles (iguanas, a crocodile, and snakes), birds, a monkey, geese, chickens, and other farm animals. Near the animal area was a huge, lush garden where the kids grew a lot of the food they ate at the school. The garden was also a big source of pride for the kids.

At the animal area we had time to ask the kids some questions. We asked what their favorite courses were and what they wanted to be when they grew up. They

had different choices but most of them wanted to be medical people. A couple were interested in working in the high tech sector. I cannot emphasize enough the confidence and apparent pride these children exhibited at the same time that they were giggling, fun kids.

We were then escorted to an assembly room that was paid for by German supporters of the school. The school has 1,200 students, 116 professors (their word), and many more staff members who help run the school. The Director spoke to us, and among the things we learned was that this was not a show school. The kids all came from the surrounding neighborhood with one exception. In isolated rural communities where there are not enough students for a school, the government brings the kids from those communities to various schools, including this one, where they live in dorms Monday through Friday. About 30 kids were in that category, and when we visited their dorms we were surprised at how nice they were. I don't doubt the kids had to do some straightening up before our visit.

We were then escorted to a cultural presentation of dancing, singing, and poetry. It was moving beyond words and there were many teary eyes in our delegation as we watched these talented children perform. There was a dance to honor Fidel, one of our tour guides sang a beautiful song, two young girls recited poetry, and then there was a wonderfully choreographed Latin dance with about a dozen kids.

We were then escorted to the Hummingbird Room (guess what was painted all over the walls) for a snack and final sad goodbyes. It was an emotional two hours.

Next on our itinerary was the Santiago headquarters of the Federation of Cuban Women. It is an old building and not in good shape, which has a lot to do with the poverty of the country. But the wealth of spirit and determination shines through. The Federation has four million members who choose to join. They



*Meeting with the Federation of Cuban Women*

advocate for women and women's issues but also see themselves as defenders of the revolution. Our conversations began with the leader of the 400,000-member Santiago division speaking about what is happening in the work force. She noted that women appear to be advancing into educated professions like doctors and lawyers more rapidly than men. We learned that they have some paid parental leave in Cuba and abortion is legal.

Also present were members of a Cuban lesbian's group known as the Isabellas. They spoke about the struggle of lesbians, gay and transgender Cubans to be treated with equality and respect in Cuban society. There is a sad history of how gay people in Cuba were initially treated after the revolution. It is a history for which Fidel issued a public apology. The representatives of the Isabellas said that the fight against homophobia is gaining ground. The big fight now is to change the law to make gay marriage and adoption legal. Several members of the Isabellas spoke about their commitment to the struggle. One of the women had been to Seattle for a meeting and had a diary from her trip that included a picture of PSARA Executive Board member, Aganita Varkentine. It was a treat for me to see a picture of Aganita in Cuba in a diary of a leader from the Isabellas.

*Continued on Page 11*

# The Theft of the 2020 Presidential Election is Underway, Part II

By Mark M. McDermott

**E**ditor's note: In Part I of this article, published in May, we saw how the potential theft of the 2020 election is rooted in our country's racist past. In this part, we'll learn how the Civil Rights movement changed our democracy, but also led to a right-wing backlash.

**D**r. King's eloquent words in his 1957 "Give Us the Ballot" speech expressed profound desires for greater justice in our nation:

"So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind — it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact — I can only submit to the edict of others."

In 1965, the civil rights movement triumphed with the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), which strengthened our nation's commitment to making the right to vote real for millions of citizens of color who had been denied their constitutional right to vote for many decades. President Lyndon Johnson said: "The vote is the most important instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice." I agree with him. But what did the right to vote mean?

Four years later, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren clarified this key question: "The Voting Rights Act was aimed at the subtle, as well as the obvious, state regulations which have the effect of denying citizens their right to vote because of their race. The right to vote can be affected by the dilution of voting power, as well as by absolute prohibition on casting a ballot."

His reasoning is critical to understand. A citizen has the right to cast a ballot but also to participate in elections in which his/her voting power is not diminished by illegal manipulation of the elections by government officials.

We the people had won a history-changing, democracy-expanding victory, but the resistance would grow. For decades, racist opponents of black voting rights used crude direct racism to win their fights. By the 1960's this overt bigotry would not work.

Lee Atwater, Republican National Committee Chair and Chair of George



Mark McDermott

H.W. Bush's 1988 campaign, eloquently expressed this shift in strategy:

"You start out in 1954 by saying, 'Ni--er, ni--er, ni--er.' By 1968 you can't say 'ni--er'—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, and states' rights...all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites."

Extremely disgusting but brilliant. The bottom line was: Quit being an overt racist and become a secret bigot. Never show your overt racism. Talk in code and you can roll back the victories of people of color without showing who you really are. Ian Haney Lopez in his outstanding book, *Dog Whistle Politics*, documents how this evolving strategy has been used to great success over the decades.

For the past 50+ years, powerful right-wing and racist politicians and their corporate allies have fought a relentless war to undercut the right to vote and promoted elections that would diminish people of color's voting power. In 1971, Lewis Powell wrote his famous memo "Attack on the American Free Enterprise System," in which he outlined a grand decades-long strategy for Corporate America to reassert domination of our nation. Part of the emerging strategy was rolling back the democratic gains of the previous decades.

Paul Weyrich, co-founder of the Koch Brothers-funded Heritage Foundation, summed up their attitude and long-term goals: "I don't want everybody to

vote...our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down."

Mr. Weyrich's goal of "causing voting populace to go down" can be achieved in three fundamental ways:

1. Convince people that voting doesn't matter — "You know they are all crooks and liars and can't be trusted to serve our interests;"
2. Make it more difficult or impossible to vote; and
3. Change the voting rules so that particular groups of people are less able to elect people who are likely to care about their issues.

I want to focus on the last two. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) was passed in response to decades of local racist voting laws and practices, sanctioned by the U.S. Supreme Court, that were openly and deliberately intended to prevent blacks from voting. Congress added Section 5 which required that states and localities that had long histories of systemic racial bias in voting laws had to receive prior approval (called "preclearance") before they could implement legal and practice changes. Without this requirement, governments could keep passing new laws that violated the U.S. Constitution and the VRA and it would take years in court to strike them down. Section 5 put the burden of proof on the governments seeking changes to prove that their changes would not have a negative impact on voting rights of people of color. Let's look at the results of the preclearance process.

In 2006, the Republican-controlled Congress reauthorized the Voting Rights Act by votes of 98 to 0 in the Senate and 390 to 33 in the House. Congress found the following that helped drive the overwhelming votes:

"DOJ (Department of Justice) objections blocked over 700 voting changes based on a determination that the changes were discriminatory. Congress found that the majority of DOJ objections [included] findings of discriminatory intent...and that the changes blocked by preclearance were 'calculated decisions to keep minority voters from fully participat-

*Continued on Page 11*

# Jackson Street Workers Mural is Up!

By Lynne Dodson

Working people in Washington built this state. They logged the forests; fished the water; built the cities, the dams, the bridges, and railroads. They fed the hungry, housed the homeless, cared for the children, grew and harvested the food. They built the industries, the infrastructure, the public education system, and the social safety net.

Regular working people, from the indigenous communities to those who migrated here throughout our history, have fought for social justice and their beloved community. They've united to change oppressive and exploitive systems. That is our story – one of unity that builds the power of working people.

We don't hear those stories very often. When the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO moved into IBEW 77's hall at the corner of 16th and Jackson, right at the historic intersection of the International and Central Districts in Seattle, we knew we wanted to tell the stories of working people as a gift to our new community.

Unfortunately, the history of marginalized neighborhoods and marginalized workers is frequently missing from the public discourse. We wanted to give back to our beautiful community by celebrating the contributions of workers, especially workers from Asia, the Pacific Islands, African Americans, Latinos, and other communities of color who built our strong and vibrant state.

On April 30, after years of planning, design, and painting, the Jackson Street Workers Mural was unveiled. Building Bridges artists (and painters' union members) Katherine Chilcote and Devon Midori Hale researched labor history through articles, interviews, and community forums, to paint 72 panels that span three sides of the building.

The Jackson Street Workers Mural tells the real story of working people in Washington. We can see the triumphs in our history – the free speech fights in Spokane, the civil rights movement and



*A panel from the Jackson Street Workers Mural*

desegregation of the trades, the origin of food co-ops during Seattle's general strike, the WPA, the increasing militancy of women in the workforce, farmworkers, the Alaskan Cannery workers, the WTO protests, our May Day marches -- the courage and strength of workers throughout. But the mural doesn't shirk from the tragedies in our history. We can see the scapegoating of the Chinese during the expulsion, the incarceration of the Japanese during WWII, and the Everett and Centralia Massacres.

The last section of the mural is devoted to our hopes and vision for the future. A future with global solidarity, music, food, clean air and water, where every worker has a living wage, health care, time for family and community. The future we work for every day in the Labor Movement.

The front of our building is adorned with paintings of logos from the union and community groups that sponsored the mural. They are depicted in a beautiful quilt that wraps around our front door.

The mural was made possible from the generous contributions of our affiliates, community organizations (including PSARA), and grants from the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and Martin Luther King County 4 Culture (with special assistance from Councilmember Larry Gossett).

But we aren't done yet! The next phase of the mural project is the creation of a website that will include a deeper explanation of the history depicted in the mural: [www.JacksonStreetWorkersMural.org](http://www.JacksonStreetWorkersMural.org). We would like to put QSR codes on the building that can be used to access the website, so visitors can take a walking tour, learn about our history, and ponder our future. We are currently raising money for this endeavor, and contributions are most welcome!

The mural is particularly important now. As the neighborhood gentrifies, we want to show that we recognize and celebrate the history here. We want people who pass by to recognize themselves in the mural and see that we will continue to fight for social, economic, and racial justice. In these times when racism, misogyny, and hatred toward immigrants are institutionalized in the highest offices in the nation, our mural represents our history of resistance, of solidarity. The Labor Movement was born of struggle, and the gains we've made will not be diminished. We hope our mural gives inspiration, hope, and an enduring sense of the power of working people to change the world.

*Lynne Dodson is a PSARA member and Secretary/Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.*

# The Road to Health Care for All

By David Loud, PSARA's representative to the Health Care Is a Human Right coalition

As this goes to press, the principal battle for health care is being waged to defeat the Republicans' legislative assaults on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid, and Medicare. This attempted take-away of health care from tens of millions would also give almost \$600 BILLION to a wealthy minority and health-related corporations in the form of tax breaks. Indeed, reversing the progressive taxes that fund the ACA is a primary Republican objective.

The Health Care Is a Human Right coalition (HCHR), in which PSARA is an active member, is playing a leading role in this fight in Washington State. The immediate goal is to prevent anyone from losing the health benefits they now have. This includes protecting the majority of the population who are still covered through employer-sponsored insurance and whose benefits are also in jeopardy under the Republicans' proposals. We need every member of PSARA to participate in our defensive campaign. Watch for action alerts to add your names and presence, whether at rallies and marches or by phone, email, or letters to our elected representatives.

At the same time, HCHR is engaged in the effort to chart a course to achieve universal health care in our state and nation. In this moment of crisis for existing health care programs, it is becoming ever more clear to millions of Americans that the ACA represents a huge step forward but will not be enough to achieve universal coverage or to make health care affordable. Even if we succeed in protecting the



David Loud

ACA, Medicaid, and Medicare, millions will still be left out; millions will not be able to afford their share of the cost of premiums, deductibles, and copays; millions will not be able to access the care they need; and employers will continue to shift more and more of the cost to employees. There is growing recognition that the private insurance industry is at the heart of what's wrong.

Senator Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign succeeded in bringing "Medicare for All" into the limelight and has inspired a renewed interest and enthusiasm for this cause. A national poll by *The Economist* in early April found that 60% of Americans now favor expanding Medicare to cover all Americans, including 75% of Democrats, 46% of Republicans, and 40% of Trump voters. For the first time, a majority of the Democrats in the House of Representatives have signed

onto HR 676, "Expanded and Improved Medicare for All" – 110 out of 193 and counting. (In our state, only Reps. Jayapal and Smith have signed on so far, but we expect others will do so when they hear from more of their constituents.) Sen. Sanders will soon be introducing a Senate version of Medicare for All.

As long as Republicans control Congress and the White House, we cannot expect Medicare for All to be achieved. But we can certainly build popular and Democratic support for this idea as we work to shift power in Congress in 2018 and retake the Presidency in 2020. Indeed, championing the cause of a national public plan for all will be a key ingredient in these political campaigns.

In the meantime, the HCHR coalition and its allies and its counterparts in other states are working to take concrete steps towards universal coverage at the state level. This involves different strategies specific to conditions and politics in each state -- everything from a push for state-based single-payer plans to expanding coverage for the uninsured, including undocumented immigrants, and addressing the high cost of coverage/care for people in private plans under the ACA. Stay tuned to learn more about this effort in Washington State leading up to the 2018 legislative session.

It's been over 100 years since President Teddy Roosevelt first called for universal health care in America. Now, at a moment when all the gains we have made are in danger of being wiped out, we may be closer than ever to achieving our goal. Such is the dialectic of history!



**P**PSARA members joined a wet but determined demonstration at the Henry M Jackson Federal Building in downtown Seattle on the day Congress voted on repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

From left: David McLanahan, Robby Stern, and Xochitl Maykovich. (Photo: Garet Munger)

# Join us for PSARA's Summer Potluck and Membership Meeting

**Thursday, June 15  
11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
UFCW 21 Joe Crump Hall  
5030 1st Ave. S.**

**Special Guest Speaker:  
Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson**

And reports by...

Teresa Mosqueda: Health Care is a Human Right

Pam Crone: PSARA's Lobbyist in Olympia

Robby Stern: Expand Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid

Songs led by Lou Truskoff, member of PSARA and the Seattle Labor Chorus

## ***Silent Auction***

***All proceeds benefit PSARA.***

***If you have items to donate, contact PSARA's Membership VP,  
Jessica Bonebright, [membershipvp@psara.org](mailto:membershipvp@psara.org), 206-901-0672.***

**All are welcome! Please bring a potluck dish to share.**

RSVP to PSARA office, 206-448-9646, or [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org)  
and tell us what you will be contributing to the potluck.

11:30 a.m.: Silent Auction begins.

Noon: Potluck Lunch.

1:00 p.m.: Program begins.

1:45 p.m.: Special Guest Speaker Attorney General Bob Ferguson

***Bus 121 stops at E. Marginal Way and S. Hudson St. Walk about three blocks east. Bus 132 stops at 4th Ave. S. and S. Dawson St. Walk about 4 blocks west. If you need a ride, call 206-448-9646 or email [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org)***

# Immigrant Solidarity Network - Local Responses

By Dina Burstein

In the face of restrictive federal immigration policy under President Obama now worsening under Trump, a robust immigration justice movement in Washington State provides resistance and some victories. Greater Seattle is among the 20 metropolitan areas with the largest population of undocumented/unauthorized immigrants, with an estimated 150,000 people without legal status, and 20,000 undocumented people within the city of Seattle, or 3.9% of the total Seattle population. (Pew Research Report 2/17) A 2014 Pew study estimated 250,000 undocumented/unauthorized residents live in Washington State.

## DACA in WA

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the 2003 Washington state law, allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at state colleges and universities. Federal DACA passed in 2012, allows people who came to the U.S. as children and who meet certain guidelines to request deferred action. They are eligible for work authorization for a period of two years, subject to renewal. Since 2014, DACA recipients in Washington State have been eligible for state financial aid for college. As of December 2016, 16,987 people were approved for DACA in Washington State. (*Seattle Times* 12/16) But the protections of DACA may erode under the new federal instructions to ICE. Daniel Ramirez Medina, a dreamer living in Des Moines, Washington, was stripped of his DACA protections, placed in deportation proceedings, detained for six weeks at the NW Detention Center in Tacoma, and was released on bond on March 29.

## NW Detention Center

The NW Detention Center is one of the largest in the U.S., holding 1,600 detainees. Established in 2004 on a Tacoma super-fund site, it is run by Geo Group, the nation's second largest for-profit private prison corporation. By its own estimate, it makes \$57 million annually. This profit is partly assured by a guarantee from the federal government that they will supply a certain number of detainees, paid for on a per-head basis.

This creates an incentive for ICE to fill the beds that are already paid for, even if it means detaining people at traffic stops or following very minor crimes. (*Crosscut* 9-16, 4-17) In fact, many detainees have no criminal history. Asylum seekers can be detained there while waiting for a decision on their asylum applications, sometimes for years. Immigration arrests have increased in number by 38% in the first three months of 2017. More than half of the increase in arrests was of immigrants who had committed no crime other than being in the US without permission. (*NY Times* 5/17) A hunger strike by prisoners has been ongoing since April 10. Issues include the poor quality of the food, \$1 a day pay, lack of medical care, slow court proceedings, and abusive transfers between detention facilities. Retaliatory punishment of hunger strikers has led to the hunger strike spreading to NORCOR, a jail in The Dalles, Oregon that contracts with ICE to hold immigrants. (email from Maru Mora Villalpando of NW Detention Center Resistance, 5/17)

## Sanctuary Cities

Seattle and King County have made commitments to be "sanctuary" jurisdictions, which do not assist federal immigration enforcement officials by holding people in custody beyond their release date. Twenty-one other municipalities in Washington State have passed resolutions as welcoming cities. (ACLU website) A recent study found that "when local law enforcement focuses on keeping communities safe, rather than becoming entangled in federal immigration enforcement efforts, communities are safer and community members stay more engaged in the local economy. This in turn brings benefits to individual households, communities, counties, and the economy as a whole." (Center for American Progress 1/17)

Considerable pressure was applied by the Obama administration to cause local police to comply with federal immigration law. Trump's Executive Order (EO) in January is the latest effort to force municipalities with sanctuary policies to comply. This EO withdrew a broad array of federal funding from localities that

decline to cooperate with enforcement of immigration laws. Federal District Court judge William Orrick issued a preliminary injunction in April barring federal officials from carrying it out. Similar suits are pending in Seattle and Boston. (*Politico*, Josh Gerstein 4/17) There is concern that Trump's moves to increase the presence of law enforcement will increase the exposure and frequency of arrests of all vulnerable people, not just immigrants. (Mijente, a new Latinx organization 1/17, found on King County Executive Equity and Social Justice website)

## Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, of which PSARA is a member, provides coordination and infrastructure for the many organizations that fight for immigrant rights in Washington. Members are creating a rapid response network including a text alert system, a rapid response phone app, and individuals trained to coordinate, verify and mobilize response in the event of a raid, detention, etc. A phone hotline, like a community-based immigration 911 system, opened recently and is open seven days a week, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., at 844 RAID REP. The network creates and publicize Know Your Rights trainings. They support and coordinate efforts to influence municipal, school district, and college policy to protect the rights of vulnerable students and residents, including DACA youth. A labor sub-group coordinates efforts to influence policy at Central Labor Councils, train union staff to respond to workplace raids, and provide support for vulnerable workers.

## Sanctuary Congregations

Religious institutions will play a key role in the State's network of immigrant protection, in a re-launch of the sanctuary movement of the 1980's. In the Seattle area, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, St Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church, and St Vincent de Paul Society publicly announced on May 1 their commitment to provide sanctuary, while many

*Continued on Page 10*

# "It's not enough at all." Why We Have to Increase Social Security Benefits

An Interview With PSARA Member Ariana Davis

By Mike Andrew

Although she's only 27, Ariana Davis already knows the ins and outs of the Social Security system.

Ariana – one of PSARA's newest and youngest members – is the sole care provider for her grandmother, who turned 75 on May 3.

Like many women of her generation, Ariana's grandma worked a number of jobs, including a stint at the iconic Sears store at 1st and Lander, now the Starbucks corporate headquarters. And, like all too many women, she never made much money at her jobs. As a result, she relies almost solely on her modest Social Security check to get by.

"She gets \$1,000-plus in Social Security," a bit less than the average monthly payment for women, Ariana explains. "And I spend maybe \$200-\$300 to help her. She makes too much to get food stamps, and she was too honest to lie about her income. They gave her like \$20.

"It's not enough at all. If she wants to go out, well, she can't do those things. Sometimes she has to skip bills to buy food."

Fortunately, Grandma is in good health, so Ariana doesn't need to take time away from her demanding job as an organizer for UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers) 21 to give her round-the-clock care. Nevertheless, Ariana has to devote several hours each week to helping her grandmother do all her day-to-day tasks.

"She walks a lot," Ariana says. "She never learned to drive. Sometimes she'll walk to the store, but if she needs a lot of things I have to drive her.

"We go to the grocery store once or twice a week. I take her to get money orders to pay the rent and her bills, and I take her to her appointments.

"Oh, and she has two cats, so I get her cat food and litter."

Although she has a good union job, Ariana is not rich by any means,

but she's happy to help out with her grandma's bills.

"She lived right across the street from us when we were kids," Ariana remembers, "and she'd watch us after school. She helped raise me and my sister. We never had to be in daycare. I owed it to help her."

Ariana's father had to retire early because of poor health, but unlike Grandma, he had a pension from the Teamsters union. Ariana and her sisters were able to count on that income while they grew up, and, although their father died relatively young, they got survivor benefits from the pension fund.

"He worked for 20-plus years," Ariana says, "and because he worked at a union shop, we had that for me and my sisters. And that's amazing.

"Of course, I'd love to still have my dad. But the money was a big help to us."

Things are much different for her grandma, who never had a union, good pay, or benefits of any kind apart from Social Security and Medicare. Even for union members, defined benefits pensions are quickly becoming a thing of the past.

That's one of the reasons Ariana joined PSARA.

What would it mean to her family if Social Security benefits could be increased by even \$65 every month, I asked.

"Oh, it would mean a lot," she replied. "It would be a burden off my grandma and a burden off the family.

"She's so full of pride, she doesn't want to ask her grandchildren for help, but she just doesn't have the means. She cries sometimes when she's out of money. Having even a little bit more would make her feel so much better."

Increased monthly benefits could become a reality simply by Scrapping the Cap. In other words, by eliminating the "cap" on income subject to the Social Security payroll tax.



Ariana Davis

Adopting that simple fix would mean that the wealthiest people would pay the same percentage of their income into the Social Security system as lower-income people like Ariana's grandma. It would also enable the system to pay about \$65 per month more in benefits, while remaining solvent until 2080.

Ariana says she hopes younger people will also join PSARA because it's never too early to think about retirement security.

"I want more young people to think about their future," she says. "About what happens when they're old. When they can't work. When they need to go to the doctor.

"For me, I'm already vested in my union pension. But a lot of young people aren't union members. They won't get pensions. They could end up in the same place as my grandma.

"Look to the future. Think about what we need to know. Social Security -- retirement security -- that's very, very important."

## Fo' Real

By Bob Shimabukuro



### I. Quotation Marks

The "leader" of the "free world" cannot "read" or "write." He cannot "compose" and/or "comprehend" a thought that his gullible "lackeys" can communicate to his "subjects." It would be hysterical were it not for the fact that he holds the key to the largest nuclear arsenal in the world.

It's like reading "The Emperor Has No Clothes" to your grandchild and watching "The Mouse That Roared" simultaneously.

### II. What's an apology?

On the one hand, he [Matt Calkins] admits he is a bad reporter.

But on the other hand, he doesn't apologize for being a bad reporter.

Third strike: he engages some of the other guys (especially the sports section editor) to make sure he's not alone in this complicity.

Who's the immature one anyway?

*Seattle Times*, bring back Jerry Brewer!

### III. What's on my mind?

Rob from da poor  
Fo' give to da rich  
Fo' (kill &) lock up the rest  
What a sick bunch of Yahoo!'s we've got running the country...world, really.

*Bob Shimabukuro is a member of PSARA's Executive Board and Associate Editor of the Retiree Advocate.*

## A Trojan Horse Tax Cut from Trump?

By Steve Kofahl

In April, Social Security experts warned us that the Narcissist-In-Chief may be planning to cut or eliminate the Social Security payroll tax and call it a tax cut for the middle class. Nancy Altman of Social Security Works calls the proposal a Trojan Horse, and that's just what it is. A worker earning \$60,000 and her employer would each gain \$3,720, but future benefits would likely be reduced, and the program itself would be jeopardized.

If general revenues have to be relied on to fund benefits, Congress would have to appropriate money each year, and benefit cuts would likely occur in some of those years. If a Value Added Tax (VAT) becomes the funding source, as some have suggested, goods and services would become more expensive for workers, offsetting the economic value of the tax cut. They would be more expensive for Social Security beneficiaries as well, and they would have no tax cut, so would be harmed the most.

Unfortunately, President Obama set the precedent for this bad idea when he reduced the employee portion of the payroll tax from 6.2% to 4.2% for 2011 and 2012 in order to stimulate the economy that had been crippled by the Great Recession. We objected then, concerned that this temporary measure could become permanent, and skeptical that general revenues would fully replace the income lost to the Trust

Funds. I met with Social Security Chief Actuary Stephen Goss at that time, and was assured that the reimbursements were in fact being paid by the U.S. Treasury, with interest. However, nobody is saying that Trump's scheme, if enacted, would be temporary.

FDR understood that a social insurance system supported by employer and employee contributions could best withstand attacks from the powerful business interests that have always opposed Social Security. They would not be able to call it a welfare program, and we know what happens to general revenue-funded programs from the Bill Clinton/Newt Gingrich collaboration "to end welfare as we know it."

Social Security has survived for more than eight decades because nearly everyone pays in, and almost every family is covered in the event that a worker's earnings end due to retirement, disability, or death.

Take no comfort in President Trump's legal troubles with regard to this subject, as a President Pence with a Republican Congress would have the capacity to actually make this happen, and he is a known enemy of Social Security.

*Steve Kofahl is a member of PSARA's Executive Board and the retired president of the American Federation of Government Employees regional union, which represents workers at the Social Security Administration.*

## Immigrant Solidarity Network

*Continued from Page 8*

other congregations across Washington State are in the process of planning and decision-making. These congregations plan "long-term, publicly communicated hospitality for people at risk of separation from loved ones, especially children..." They will provide short-term refuge as needed in the case of local immigration raids or sweeps and will accompany vulnerable immigrants to access community services. (Church Council of Greater Seattle 5/17) Other congregations and com-

munity groups will play a role of support for the "hub" sanctuary congregations.

There are several ways PSARA might become more actively involved in the immigration issue. Look for an announcement soon of a committee to consider what role we might play.

*Dina Burstein represents PSARA with the Immigrant Solidarity Network, is a member of the PSARA Environmental Committee, and a proofreader for the Retiree Advocate.*

# The Theft of the 2020 Presidential Election is Underway

Continued from Page 4

ing in the political process."

Congress also found that the number of state and local laws that were being blocked by the DOJ were increasing over time. Resistance to protecting voting rights was growing.

The crushing Republican electoral victories in 2010 opened the flood gates for new attacks on voting rights. In the following five years, 395 new voting restrictions were proposed in 49 states. As the 2016 election neared, 20 states had new restrictions in place since the 2010 elections.

*(Editor's note: In 2013, the Supreme Court "gutted" the Voting Rights Act, striking down Section 5.)*

The Trump regime and its allies are pushing the "Big Lie" of massive voter fraud. Let's look at the evidence. The Brennan Center for Justice published its seminal report "The Truth About Voter Fraud" which stated: "It is more likely that an American will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls." The *Washington Post* reported in 2015 "found 31 credible cases of impersonation fraud from 2000 to 2014 out of 1 billion votes." The Brennan Center website lists many other credible studies that debunk charges of widespread voter fraud. So with no credible evidence of widespread voter fraud, what are the

## Santiago

Continued from Page 3

One of the leaders in the fight for equal treatment of Cuban lesbian, gay, and transgender people is Mariela Castro, a member of Parliament and Director of Cuba's National Center for Sex Education. She is the daughter of Raúl Castro and the niece of Fidel. She has traveled the country on bus tours with gay Cubans and has challenged the old ways of thinking. She speaks with Cubans in the cities and rural areas about the need to accept and treat with respect all Cubans regardless of their sexual orientation. Her willingness to engage in this fight for full equality along with the determination of the Cuban gay community has played a large role in the significant advances that have been made.

Next, Habana.

right-wing, anti-democratic elected officials doing with election laws?

This is part of their emerging strategy:

1. ten states had stricter ID laws.
2. seven states made it hard to register to vote.
3. six states cut back on early voting days.
4. three states made it harder for felons to regain voting rights.

What public purpose is served by making it harder to register to vote or cutting back on the number of early voting days which allow voters to vote before Election Day? There is no valid public purpose.

Here are two quick examples of the many ways fair elections are being undermined:

1. On March 20, 2017, federal judges in Texas ruled that the 2010 Republican-controlled congressional redistricting "intentionally diluted minority voting strength to gain partisan advantage'... The court found that Texas Republicans unnecessarily concentrated minority voters in certain districts to reduce their influence statewide while diluting minority representation in other districts."

2. New research on strict voter ID laws shows the following: "Strict ID laws doubled the turnout gaps between whites and Latinos in the general elections, and almost doubled the white-black turnout gap in primary elections."

Decades ago, the anti-democratic and racist politicians were blatant about

denying the right to vote to blacks and other people of color. They have gotten smarter. Talk in code, don't be blatantly racist as that hurts their efforts, but systematically work to undercut the democratic voting rights of people of color and others. Still vicious, still undemocratic and still racist, but subtle and clever.

Where are we headed with Republicans and their corporate allies attempting to steal the next presidential election? Trump lost the national presidential popular vote by 2.8 million. He claims he lost due to massive voter fraud by millions of undocumented immigrants. These claims are specifically designed to stir up hatred toward people of color and immigrants. He has no evidence, and now his administration wants an investigation of the national voting system. The next step will be to call for an overhaul of our nation's voting system.

Why? They want to deny voting rights to millions of our citizens who are disproportionately people of color, immigrants, lower-income voters, students, and the young who are more supportive of the Democrats. In short, they want to "legally steal" the election. Pay close attention to this issue, and support efforts to protect and expand our right to vote and fair elections. Our nation's future depends on it.

*Mark McDermott is a member of PSARA's Executive Board and serves on PSARA's Education Committee.*

## 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, June 1, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Government Relations Committee:** 1 p.m.-2:30 p.m., Thursday, June 1, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 1st Ave. All welcome.

**PSARA Education Committee:** 1 p.m.-3 p.m., Tuesday, June 6, PSARA office, 2800 1st Ave., Room 234, Seattle. All welcome as we work to expand outreach for the PSARA workshop.

**PSARA Summer Membership Meeting and Potluck:** 11:30 a.m.- 3p.m., Thursday, June 15, UFCW 21 Joe Crump Hall, 5030 1st Ave. S., Seattle. Special guest speaker Attorney General Bob Fergu-

son, plus reports on the fight to ensure health care for all; PSARA's campaign to expand Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; PSARA's legislative report; and a delicious potluck lunch. RSVP to 206-448-9646 or adminvp@psara.org. All are welcome! See the article on Page 1 and the flyer on Page 7.

**Pride March:** 11 a.m., Sunday, June 25, 4th Ave., Downtown Seattle. Stay tuned -- rendezvous time and place TBA. Celebrate LGBT Pride and stand with our Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender brothers and sisters. As usual, PSARA will have (limited) space in a truck for people who can't walk the route.

**Save the Date:** August 13. House concert featuring PSARA member Lou Truskoff. Details in July *Advocate*.

## Thanks, But No Thanks

**E**ighth grade students from South Orange Middle School in South Orange, New Jersey, were on a school trip to Washington, D.C., on May 26 when they were given a very special opportunity: a photo-op with Speaker Paul Ryan.

Some 100 eighth graders refused to take a photo with the Speaker and instead sat in a parking lot across the street. Speaker Ryan then took a photo with the remaining class and posted it to his Instagram.

"I can't take a picture with someone who supports a budget that would destroy public education and would leave 23 million people without healthcare," Matthew Malespina, a student at the school, told his local newspaper, *The Village Green*.

