

Seattle City Council to Vote on Expanding Social Security and Medicare

By Robby Stern

On **Monday, June 13, at 2 p.m.**, the Seattle City Council will vote on a resolution to expand Social Security and Medicare. This resolution, which is being introduced by Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez, is the beginning of a statewide campaign to gain support from local and regional government bodies for the expansion of Social Security and Medicare. We ask PSARA members to come to the Seattle City Council Chambers and demonstrate your support for the resolution.

The resolution recognizes the vast retirement savings deficit in our country. It also acknowledges the lack of workplace retirement plans for more than 50 percent of U.S. workers and the failure of 401K plans to close the gap for workers without a retirement pension plan.

With the average Social Security benefit at \$1,300 per month and the growing dependence of seniors on Social Security for most if not all of their

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At right, PSARA members join 2,500 other activists in Anacortes to demand that we “Break Free From Fossil Fuels!”

Demonstrators blocked railroad tracks leading to the Tesoro refinery and also engaged local people in a week-long People’s Climate Conference featuring workshops, discussions, and music.

Read the full story by Bobby Righi on Page 8.

Don’t Miss the June 16 Membership Meeting!

Initiative 732, the CarbonWA initiative, will be on the November ballot. It is a very controversial initiative, and the June 16 membership meeting will be an opportunity for PSARA members to learn more about the initiative and why it is controversial.

Yoram Bauman, the founder of CarbonWA, which sponsored I – 732 and organized the gathering of signatures, will speak for the initiative. Jeff Johnson, the President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL- CIO, and one of the leaders of the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, will speak against.

In this issue of the newsletter, we have reprinted the position paper, *Environmental Justice and Full Employment*, which was adopted by the PSARA membership two years ago. We ask that you read the position paper and evaluate the arguments presented by Jeff and Yoram in light of the position our organization has previously adopted.

After listening to their presentations and having some time for questions and discussion, we will ask our membership to make a recommendation to the Executive Board as to what position PSARA should take on the initiative.

As always, PSARA members will bring their favorite foods and provide each other a delicious potluck lunch. We will learn about new programs and opportunities to support our campaign to expand Social Security and Medicare as well as the other activities which offer an opportunity for involvement.

The PSARA general membership meeting is Thursday, June 16, at Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85th St, Seattle, from 12:00 – 3 p.m. (See the flyer on Page 7 for more details on the potluck, directions, public transit, etc.)

Please join us for our summer meeting and RSVP to adminvp@psara.org or call the office, (206) 448-9646. Let us know if you will bring a salad, fruit, main dish, desert or drinks to share. Please also bring a financial donation or food for the King County Labor Agency Food Bank.



The Retiree ADVOCATE

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For up-to-date information about PSARA visit our website: www.psara.org or visit PSARA on Facebook

Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney Joins Executive Board

Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney has volunteered to serve on PSARA's Executive Board and to bring her multiple talents to the work of PSARA.

Phyllis is a child of migrant workers. Her parents came to America in 1919 from Mexico, and from the age of five, Kenney worked in the fields with her seven brothers and sisters to help support her family. She went on to help found the Washington Migrant Council and the Farm Workers Health Clinics.

In 1976, Phyllis and her family moved to the 46th district of North Seattle. She worked at the Washington Employment Security Department as Assistant Commissioner and developed a program that gave ex-offenders scholarships for secondary education. In 1985, Phyllis was appointed to the Seattle Community College District Board of Trustees. She served until 1998.

Phyllis was appointed to the Washington State House of Representatives from the 46th district in 1997 and was first elected in 1998. She was elected for eight terms, serving as chair of the Community Development and Housing Committee and sitting on the Labor and Workforce Development and Ways and Means Committees.

We welcome Phyllis to the PSARA Executive Board!



May Day 2016

Photos by Garet Munger



May Day 2016. Thousands of marchers took to the streets to support workers' and immigrants' rights. PSARA, as usual, was well represented.

PSARA: Environmental Justice *and* Full Employment

We are reprinting this position paper so that our members can use it as a tool in evaluating the pros and cons of I-732, the CarbonWA initiative, as it is discussed at our general membership meeting on June 16.

“CLIMATE CHANGE is a wake up call spoken in the language of fires, floods, storms and droughts – telling us that we need an entirely new economic model—one based on equity, sustainability and good jobs.”¹



➤ According to the World Health Organization, climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century. Between 1970 and 2004, there were over 140,000 deaths annually attributable to the use of fossil fuels.²

➤ Today the polar ice is melting; seas are rising. We are experiencing more extreme weather like Hurricane Sandy and the hurricane that slammed into the Philippines in November, 2013.

➤ Scientists studying tropical diseases maintain that diseases like malaria and dengue fever will become more widespread as mosquitoes and other pests move north.

➤ Food production is expected to decrease by 2% every decade.³

➤ The oceans are becoming more acidified. Plankton, the microscopic organisms at the base of the food chain, is rapidly moving toward the poles and decreasing in number.⁴ *These organisms make half of the oxygen we breathe.*

These facts are met with business as usual by the fossil fuel industry and many government leaders. Meanwhile poor and working people are suffering from the damage caused by climate change.

While the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere passed 400 parts per million in May 2013, fossil fuel corporations are planning to dig and transport *more* coal, and destroy more land and water by fracking *more* oil and gas. They tell us we stand in the way of progress when we object.

The fossil fuel corporations work hard to keep us divided with the promise of jobs for construction, mining and refining.

We do need jobs that pay living wages and allow families to live with dignity. We need to create and expand work that promotes healthy communities and a healthy planet. Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) will fight to ensure there is a just transition for those workers whose jobs are replaced by a new energy economy.

The refusal of Congress to tax billionaires while cutting social services and other programs critical to survival of the planet has to end. Income inequality today is worse than at any time in history. PSARA demands robust programs to respond to the threat of climate disaster and the destruction of lives and hope created by extreme income inequality.

We need nothing less than a large marshalling of the country's resources to put people to work repairing our crumbling infrastructure. We need to be building the new systems and services necessary to survive the disastrous effects that have already been set in motion by the loading of too much CO₂ in the earth's atmosphere.

PSARA calls for significant government spending to help save the planet.

We need smart electrical grids carrying renewable energy. We need jobs to build mass transit and we need energy-efficient affordable housing along those transit lines. We also need major investments in the old infrastructure to cope with the coming storms.

This is no time for austerity – it is time for massive government investment.

¹Naomi Klein speech at [the founding convention of UNIFOR](#), created by the Canadian Autoworkers and the Canadian Energy and Paper Workers Union.

²World Health Organization “Climate Change and Health Fact sheet N°266 Reviewed November 2013”

³Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2013 report

⁴*The ICES Journal of Marine Science (International Council for Exploration of the Sea)*



Justice for Janitors Day

By Sergio Salinas

They work at night after you've gone home from work. They are invisible to many. They are the 3,000 SEIU6 janitors who clean commercial buildings throughout Seattle/King County, as well as in Pierce County, Bellingham, and Spokane. In addition to office buildings, they clean hospitals, schools, and some of Washington's most prestigious buildings.

Janitors are hardworking people – many are immigrants and refugees who came to Washington to build a better life for their families. Janitors pride themselves in their work; some have worked in the same building for decades. They are so tired when they get off work, but many even have second jobs just to support their families here or thousands of miles away. They are our friends, neighbors – and PSARA members.

Janitors' wages have not kept pace with other jobs in the region. During the recession janitors made concessions in their contract, recognizing that commercial buildings had high vacancies. The Puget Sound area is booming now, but the prosperity has not been shared with the janitors. In fact, they are working harder for less money.

Janitors are in the top 10 of Labor & Industries claims paid out due to workplace injuries. Many janitors point to recent work speedups as the cause, having to clean more areas during their

eight-hour shifts. Janitors are also increasingly exposed to toxins, bodily fluids, and hypodermic needles in office trash.

Unfair working conditions are not new. Retiree Visi Cariaso remembers the time she was told to clean three floors in five hours. "I thought I was going to die; I was aching all over my body. We had to go to court on that one," she said, adding that the union supported her all the way.

In her 80's, Visi can still be seen at labor struggles with her fellow retiree, Catherine Pottinger. "We need to support the workers and their struggles. It's just been a part of my life forever. They need a tolerable workload." In her 80's as well, Catherine takes the bus to SEIU6 to phone bank for their actions. A few years ago, she was the first person arrested at an Our Walmart rally!

Show your solidarity. Join Catherine and Visi on June 17 at 1:30 p.m. in Westlake Park to stand with the janitors as they fight for a fair contract. SEIU6 janitors' contract expires June 30.

For a schedule of solidarity events around Justice for Janitors, go to: www.seiu6.org



Local 6 retirees Visi Cariaso (left) and Catherine Pottinger (right) at the SEIU6 Justice for Janitors rally May 13.

Sergio Salinas is President of SEIU6 and a PSARA member. SEIU6 was formed 95 years ago by Seattle flat janitors and now represents over 5,000 janitors, security officers, and airport and stadium workers.

PSARA President Robby Stern makes a presentation about Social Security to a well-attended Lunch and Learn in West Seattle on April 28.

(Photo: Garet Munger)



Father, Son Duel with McCarthy, McCarran

By Bob Shimabukuro

Zenwa Uncle, after receiving his citizenship papers in 1955, convinced my dad he could get his, too, if he would attend citizenship school. Both of them were serious students of history and could have passed the test without taking the class. But Zenwa Uncle thought it was important to take the class so that Dad would know the answers to the test that he would have to take.

Dad did not particularly enjoy the class and often expressed his frustration over the teacher. I generally viewed this with a lot of amusement, since he was always advising me to listen to my teachers and show them a lot of respect.

About the third or fourth class, my dad came home looking pretty smug, just waiting for me to ask what happened. Being a dutiful son, but not knowing what to ask, I offered, "So... how was class?"

"Why was the Civil War fought, Bob?"

"To free the slaves," I answered.

"Hah! Just what teacher said."

"So what did you say?"

"Because the North felt 'no way could compete with the South when South get free labor.'"

I immediately thought, "Oh, no! Here comes another unasked for history lesson from Dad."

Instead, he laughed loudly, saying, "Should've seen her face. Just sat there, her mouth open."

Realizing that my dad had the gift of exaggeration, I wasn't sure what had transpired in class. But having given off-beat answers in class to stunned teachers myself, I assumed he was not stretching the truth very much.

Next week, Dad came home, walked into the house with a very boastful demeanor and said, "Guess what, Bob?"

"What?"

"The teacher come talk to me befo' class. Said she wen research, and you know, get plenny truth what I said." And

then he laughed long and hard, relishing his moment of triumph.

Dad did pass the citizenship test, probably knowing what the "correct" answers were and refraining from marking off-beat answers.

He died in 1962, a few years before he was eligible to become a citizen, prevented from becoming a citizen by the same law that made it possible to become a citizen: the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which allowed Japanese immigrants to become citizens, but barred subversives. Subversives could get off the list if they were subversive-free for 10 years.

Dad was a board member of the "Hawaii Star," a newspaper which was on the Subversive Activities Control Board subversive list. SACB was created by the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950. The same (Pat) McCarran who sponsored the McCarran-Walter Act. Nasty dude.

We hear about Joe McCarthy all the time, but he had others who thought like him. Lots of them. Just like today. They had enough votes to override President Truman's veto of both laws.

Because of the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924, 17-year-old Dad came to America on the last boat that allowed immigrants from Japan/Okinawa. He said that he wanted to learn to read the Bible in English. (My Zenwa Uncle, scoffed at that notion, claiming that Dad's street preaching Baptist stage was just nothing more than Zenshu's teenage rebellion directed at their mom.)

* * *

Just a year-and-a half after Dad died, I left home to attend Reed College in Portland, Oregon. My brother Tom, 10 years older than I, gave me some cash and advice before I left for Reed. "Buy some nice jackets and slacks. I bought mine at Robert Hall, and they barely lasted four months."



Bob Shimabukuro

Well, after seeing Reed students in jeans, sweatshirts, and maybe khakis, I decided to ignore my brother's advice and didn't buy any jackets and shirts and ties. But I did have my Punahou graduation baccalaureate suit.

September, October maybe, the word comes down: The U.S. Senate Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB, Joe McCarthy's baby) is coming to town to hold hearings in Portland. Reed student organizers tell us that we want to have enough folks to circle the courthouse block. "And don't look like slobs. Dress nicely. We want to make a good impression."

I could see why. A little earlier in the school year, some students were seen in downtown Portland with seemingly official Reed sweatshirts, with the school motto (which was in Latin) replaced with the words, "atheism, communism, and free love." Imagine what would have happened if any of those sweatshirts ended up on the picket line.

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Who Should Handle Your Retirement Savings: the Mob or Goldman Sachs?

By Mike Andrew

The Teamsters pension fund performed far better when it invested in Mafia-owned Las Vegas casinos than when it was managed by Goldman Sachs and Northern Trust.

That's the astonishing conclusion reached by investigative reporter Elliot Blair Smith in a two-part series on the Market Watch website.

Of course PSARA would never recommend that you invest your retirement savings with the mob, but Smith's findings beg the question: If Goldman Sachs can't manage the Teamsters' money, how well are they – or other investment houses – doing with your 401Ks?

Let's take a look at what happened.

After years of legal wrangling, the federal government wrested control of the Teamsters' Central States Pension Fund from allegedly mob-connected trustees, and turned it over to "honest" brokers at Goldman Sachs and Northern Trust. Under the terms of the federal consent decree, the investment brokers had complete discretion over how to manage the pension fund.

Once they had the Teamsters' \$16.1 billion in their hands, the professional money managers placed big bets on stocks and non-traditional investments between 2005 and 2008, with catastrophic consequences.

In just 15 months, between the start of the 2008 recession and the end of 2009, Central States' assets experienced an astonishing 42% drop and a loss of about \$11.1 billion in seed capital.

When their experiment in aggressive investing blew up, the "honest" money managers did not revisit their investment choices to find out what was going wrong and try to correct it. No, they lobbied Congress to pass legislation giving them authority to cut Teamster retirement benefits by up to 50%.

Had the U.S. Treasury Department accepted their plan, more than 400,000 workers, retirees, dependents, and survivors who paid into the system over



Frank "The Prime Minister" Costello or Hank "The Treasury Secretary" Paulson...Which one should manage your money?

decades of hard work and who depended on their pensions to live in at least modest comfort in their old age would have been out of luck.

Since Goldman Sachs resigned as a manager of Central States in 2010, the pension fund has tried to claw its way back to solvency. But unrecovered losses meant that the fund started over with a much smaller base and could never close the huge gap in its unfunded liabilities.

In other words, only pensioners are being held accountable for reckless investments made in their names with their money.

What went wrong?

The record shows that Goldman Sachs and Northern Trust realized that over time the amount they were paying out in benefits would overtake the amount of contributions they were taking in. Instead of trying to figure out how to balance the pension fund long term, the money managers gambled on risky investments, hoping that big short-term gains would make up for projected long-term deficits.

For that reason, they invested in a number of firms that ultimately went belly-up. Their 2008 portfolio reads like a Who's Who of failed companies:

- 39 Bear Stearns bonds—32 of them already carried at a loss—and 46,500

shares of Bear Stearns stock that also were under water;

- 47 Countrywide Financial bonds, all but three of which had dipped into loss territory, and 496,225 Countrywide shares written down 60% in value;
- 25 Lehman Brothers bonds, 19 of them valued below cost, and 312,525 shares of Lehman stock held at a slight gain nine months before its bankruptcy;
- 33 Washington Mutual bonds, 27 of them valued at less than cost, and 654,225 shares of Washington Mutual stock carried at a 56% loss nine months before it became the largest bank failure in U.S. history.
- A \$19.5 million investment in the Olympus Real Estate Fund L.P. marked down by 97%, on its way to being valued as worthless, and a \$4.6 million stake in the Starwood Opportunity Fund IV L.P., written down by 78%.

In 2009, Goldman Sachs reported that the Teamsters fund lost 42% on its real estate holdings in just the fourth quarter of 2008, and Northern Trust recorded a 34.28% loss on real estate. Both Goldman Sachs and Northern Trust underperformed their benchmark returns in at least three of four

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***PSARA SUMMER MEMBERSHIP
MEETING and POTLUCK***

Thursday, June 16 – Noon to 3 p.m.

***Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85th
St, Seattle***

***Bus 5 to Greenwood Ave. N. and N 85th St., Bus 45 directly to Greenwood Senior Center,
or Bus E to Aurora Ave. and N. 85th St. ****

Please Join Us for Our Summer Potluck and Meeting:

12:30 p.m. - Potluck Lunch and socializing

1:00 p.m. - Forum on I-732, the Carbon Tax Initiative

***Speakers: Yoram Bauman, Founder of CarbonWA and
Jeff Johnson, President, Washington State
Labor Council, AFL-CIO.***

1:45 p.m. - Q & A and other business.

***Yoram Bauman, founder and proponent of CarbonWA, and Jeff Johnson, President of the
WA State Labor Council, speaking in opposition to I – 732, will give us their views on how
the initiative conforms with the PSARA position paper entitled Environmental Justice and
Full Employment, which is published on Page 3 of this newsletter.***

***RSVP needed. Please bring a main dish, fruit, salad, dessert, or soft
drink to share. Let us know the food item you can bring by leaving a
message on the office phone: 206-448-9646 or email Bobby Righi at
adminvp@psara.org***

***Please also bring a food or financial donation for the King County
Labor Agency Food Bank.***

****Call the office or e-mail adminvp@psara.org if you need a ride or can offer a ride.***

“Break Free from Fossil Fuels”

By Bobby Righi

The month of May has seen actions around the world focusing on the need to move as quickly as possible to renewable energy. In the U.S., there were six main events including the one in Anacortes. Anacortes is home to the Shell Oil and Tesoro Oil refineries, which provide 47 percent of the transportation fuel used in the Northwest. Over the weekend of May 13 – 14, more than 2,500 people came to Anacortes from across the northwestern states to demand that we “Break Free from Fossil Fuels.”

Many who came had pledged to take part in non-violent civil disobedience. From Friday afternoon until Sunday morning there was a community of people blocking the railroad tracks to the refineries. The only trains using these tracks are oil trains delivering crude to the refineries.

Despite the alarming press coverage leading up to the weekend, which brought law enforcement from around the state, many local people took part in “The People’s Climate Conference,” the week-long series of workshops, music, and discussions about climate change, and how communities dependent on fossil fuels can transition to a sustainable economy. In a speech

at one of the workshops, KC Golden pointed out that we all are now dependent on the use of fossil fuels, but we will all need to work on the transition to clean energy, and that these demonstrations were not about closing the refineries tomorrow, but reducing the use of fossil fuels here and around the world. PSARA took part in leading a workshop on Just Transition on Sunday afternoon.

PSARA endorsed and took part in the Saturday “It’s In Our Hands” three mile “Procession for Future Generations” walk along March Point to an indigenous gathering and ceremony. There was drumming, a blessing of the water, and speeches by tribal leaders. The Lummi were celebrating their legal victory against the Cherry Point coal terminal, and a group arrived in a large canoe with a dozen paddlers.

After the march there was a salmon dinner at the Transit Shed meeting hub



The encampment on the tracks began Friday afternoon and lasted until early Sunday morning.

in downtown Anacortes with speeches and music about the need for climate justice and a just transition. The evening ended with a march through downtown with luminaries.

On Friday night there was a flotilla of kayaks paddling across Fidalgo Bay holding large illuminated letters saying “ENERGY WITHOUT INJURY.” This sums up what we all have to work toward.

Bobby Righi is Administrative Vice President of PSARA and a member of PSARA’s Environmental Committee.



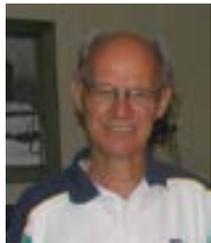
The “Raging Grannies” camped on the tracks in their rocking chairs.



Lummi paddlers arrive at the March Point celebration.

Seniors' Vulnerability to the Impacts of Climate Change

By Rich Voget



Seniors are an extremely vulnerable population and will be greatly impacted by the recurring extreme weather events brought on by climate change.

Seniors are already disproportionately at risk for diseases, illnesses, poor nutrition, and limited resources.

In 2012, during Hurricane Sandy, close to half the people who died were age 65 and older. Seniors who were most impacted by Sandy were those on the social margins of society. Seniors most at risk of heat strokes were those living alone, those who had reduced social contacts, and individuals without access to air conditioners. Loss of power for an extended period meant that seniors dwelling in apartment buildings lost their ability to cook meals and were unable to use the elevators.

As with other challenges for seniors, the more money they have, the less vulnerable they are. More money means access to air conditioning and people monitoring their health. Climate change also stresses our health care infrastructure and delivery systems just when seniors are most in need of care.

Climate change brings recurring episodes of extreme weather-related

events. There are multiple health impacts associated with extreme weather events -- extreme heat, snowstorms, flooding -- which can threaten human life and especially that of vulnerable populations. Since many seniors are already at greater risk for chronic diseases, illnesses, and poor nutrition, and have limited resources, extreme weather events create a greater risk for heart attacks, respiratory illnesses, heat strokes, and malnutrition.

Seniors with pre-existing health conditions face extra challenges during heat waves. The heart has to work harder in the heat, increasing the risk for heart attacks in people with cardiovascular problems. For people with diabetes, kidney diseases, and other conditions, regulating temperature and fluid levels can be particularly difficult, leading to dehydration, kidney failure, liver problems, and worse. The elderly are often at high risk in a heat wave because they might not notice the effects of dehydration, and certain medications — like ones to treat Parkinson's disease — that can exacerbate the effects of extreme heat.

Heavy rains or storm surges can contaminate drinking and recreational water with sewage, agricultural waste, chemical pollutants, or animal wastes, leading to waterborne gastrointestinal illnesses. Flooded homes and buildings can be a breeding-ground for mold,

which can cause debilitating respiratory and neurological problems.

If possible, following a heart-healthy diet, staying hydrated, keeping active, and maintaining a friendship network are steps seniors can take to protect their health before and during extreme weather events.

Increasing climate temperatures will also bring the following problems to everyone:

- Increased pollen and air pollution
- Tropical diseases (via their hosts as they move northward) such as West Nile Virus, Dengue Fever, Malaria, Rift Valley Fever, Hantavirus, Chagas Disease, and now Zika.
- Decreased food supply due to droughts, heat waves, and increased insect infestation
- Decreased nutritional content of the food grown in hotter conditions
- Fights over water as snow packs melt
- Civil unrest as local governments are overwhelmed by climate refugees

Climate change is an issue we must address to fight for the future of our children, grandchildren, and the generations to follow. It is also a fight for the future of seniors to live with dignity and respect.

Rich Voget is a member of PSARA's Environmental Committee.



One thing vulnerable seniors definitely don't need is health care providers who refuse to accept Medicare and Medicaid. That's why PSARA has joined with Washington CAN!, unions, and community allies to take on ZoomCare, a for-profit outfit that wants to make money by cherry-picking only young and healthy clients and leaving everyone else out. At left, we picket the Ballard ZoomCare.

(Photo: Garet Munger)

Who Should Handle Your Retirement Savings: the Mob or Goldman Sachs?

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years from 2006 through 2009. Before resigning in July 2010, Goldman Sachs had underperformed in eight out of the last 14 quarters for which information is publicly available.

So, to pay both the pension benefits and their own salaries, the money managers had to sell off more of the pension fund's assets each year, accelerating the decline and deepening the inevitable cuts. In 2008, it liquidated investments at a net loss of \$2.4 billion, according to filings with the Labor Department.

But even while they were wrecking the Teamsters' pension fund, Goldman Sachs and Northern Trust each charged more and more for their management work, peaking in 2008, the year the recession hit.

Goldman Sachs admits that its management fees peaked at \$6.5 million in the pension fund's worst year.

Goldman Sachs received \$12.9 billion in federal bailout money, some of it no doubt coming from the taxes of Teamster retirees whose benefits they squandered away. CEO Hank Paulson, who oversaw some of the company's shenanigans, became Treasury Secretary in 2006.

The retirees themselves got nothing from the federal government. The Treasury Department rejected the plan to cut benefits, but on May 19 pension fund managers said they wouldn't even try to come up with another plan to save the fund.

Unless Congress votes to bail out the fund, it will go bankrupt by the end of 2025.

"A banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining, but wants it back the minute it begins to rain."

Mark Twain

Beware of I-1515: An Injury to One is an Injury to All

By Marsha Botzer

Once again the forces that oppose health care, labor, and equality are dehumanizing a minority group. This time they are using an old trick, attacking all of us by attacking one vulnerable part of us: transgender and gender non-conforming people.

For 10 years Washington has had statewide anti-discrimination laws that protect us all, and these laws have always included transgender people. Nothing bad has happened in those 10 years. And in fact what has happened is that transgender people have been helped, along with everyone else, as we fight together against job and daily-life discriminations.

Now opposition organizations like the Family Policy Institute are trying to get rid of these laws and rules that have worked so well. And they are using transgender people as the wedge to attack, because we are currently the least-known group. This is a historical way for right-wing and some religious organizations to try and reverse the gains made in equality and social justice.

Right now the opposition is working hard to get an initiative going to repeal the 10 years of protection. If they get the signatures, we will be faced with fighting a campaign, spending energy and resources to once again fight off a vicious attack. We will need everyone to help, and here is why: This attack is truly against every one of our values, even though it is written to sound like it attacks only transgender people. The number for the anti-us initiative is I-1515 -- watch out for this when being asked to sign petitions.

What our opposition really wants is to damage work rules, employment, public accommodations laws and more, under the guise of "providing protections." You have heard this before, and I know you won't be fooled. Remember when the same opposition claimed they were protecting workers by opposing minimum wages? Or when they told us they were protecting older people by fighting against Medicaid and Medicare? It is the same trick!

First, this attack would throw workplaces, schools, and public spaces into turmoil and cost our state vast amounts of money. It is also aimed, without saying so, at destroying all the fair policies that help lesbian and gay people survive in our culture. And also without saying so, such attacks always link the people they don't like to the idea of being somehow dangerous. We have clearly seen them do this with their attacks on immigrants, and it is the same old trick again.

Transgender people don't deserve to be dehumanized and made into scapegoats that the opposition uses to divide us all. Transgender is nothing to fear. It is about being someone, not doing something. It is about human diversity and human identity; that is what the best current science says. Transgender is not about sex, it is about identity. And transgender has absolutely nothing to do with lies about "making bathrooms safe."

Please join in the united struggle against any attempt to destroy the existing laws and rules that protect us all. If an initiative appears that says it is protecting someone against transgender people remember that this is just another attempt to hurt us all. We need to fight against it! Call on Pride at Work, Equal Rights Washington, and Ingersoll Center for help! Support any campaign that we create to fight such an initiative.

One of my heroes is Robert Ingersoll, and he used to say: "The Time to be Happy is Now, the Place to be Happy is Here, and the Way to be Happy is to Make Others So." That is good advice, and by stopping these terrible attacks on equality we are fulfilling that advice.

Marsha Botzer is the founder and co-chair of Ingersoll Gender Center, a Trustee of the Martin Luther King County Labor Council, and a PSARA member.

Father, Son Duel with McCarthy, McCarran

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All I had that wasn't "Reed College dress," was my baccalaureate suit. So that's what I put on the morning of the demonstration. As we waited for the transportation to arrive to take us to downtown Portland, it became obvious that nobody else was wearing any jacket or tie. All I remember were the looks I was getting from everyone. I was so embarrassed.

So I just blurted, "What's the matter? Not good enough for impress everybody?"

Everybody laughed and cheered.

* * *

Two observations:

(1) The early months in Portland I felt like an immigrant, because I really was from a different country as far as everyone else (including the Reed students) was concerned, and I felt the anti-immigrant, anti-black, anti-indigenous attitudes of Portland.

(2) AJAs (Americans of Japanese Ancestry) often said (derisively) about the Okinawans in Hawaii, "The difference between a Japanese and an Okinawan is that the Okinawans aren't afraid to make an ass of themselves." Given my initial impressions at Reed, I decided I could take that as a compliment and survive very well. As a Reed student. As an Okinawan.

And I did.

That was over 50 years ago.

What would Dad think today? Faced with politicians, Supreme Court Justices, and a citizenry okay with the suspension of constitutional guarantees in difficult times, just as nasty as McCarthy and McCarran, I just don't know... Well, I do know. He always said, "Don't get mad." And then got "real mad." I can't do that right now. Bad for my health. So...

"Let's catch a breath, then keep moving."

Bob is Associate Editor of *The Retiree Advocate*.

Seattle City Council to Vote on Expanding Social Security and Medicare

Continued from Page 1

income, the resolution identifies growing senior poverty as rapidly becoming the reality of a growing number of senior households. As the baby boomers age, senior poverty will place a greater and greater drain on public resources.

Particularly hard hit are women and people of color. People of color make up approximately 30 percent of Seattle's population. Social Security statistics show that people of color are more likely to rely on Social Security as their primary source or sole source of income.

Women comprise 57.9 percent of Seattle's population over the age of 65 and the average Social Security benefit for women is \$12,400 per year. In addition, more than one quarter of LGBTQ seniors live below the poverty level, surviving on \$2,000 or less each month.

The City Council resolution calls for Scrapping the Cap, expanding Social Security benefits, raising the Medicare payroll tax and expanding Medicare by opening the program to younger people and covering hearing, vision, and dental services. It also directs the Council to communicate the resolution to the Congressional delegation and include expansion and protection of the two programs in the Seattle federal legislative agenda, which means Seattle lobbyists will be supporting this effort in Washington, D.C.

Please come to the Seattle City Council meeting on Monday, June 13, at 2 p.m. There will be signs we can hold and opportunities to offer public comment. Come 15 minutes early and sign up to make your public comments of support.

New Credit Card Options!

PSARA members can now renew membership, donate to PSARA or the PSARA Education Fund, or sign up new members online with your credit card.

Just go to the PSARA website, www.psara.org, and click on the tab at the top of the home page.

You can choose to sign up and make your credit card payment to either PSARA or the PSARA Education Fund (if you want to make a tax deductible donation).

You can also refer prospective new members to the website where they will be able to become PSARA members or contributors to the PSARA Education Fund.

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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

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Address: _____

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Meetings and Events

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 1, 3016 E. Republican St., Seattle, 98112. A number of organizations have expressed interest in hosting the workshop, "Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone." There are many ways PSARA members can help as we prepare for multiple presentations and forums. All are welcome to the committee meeting.

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, June 2, Seattle WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. Sum up of Anacortes "Breaking Free" event and planning for future activity. All welcome to this active and exciting committee.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, June 2, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we develop PSARA position papers on mass transit, affordable housing, and homelessness.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, June 9, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch. Topic: Palliative Care – Understanding what it means on the Health Care Continuum. All are welcome. For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

Seattle City Council Vote on Retirement Security Resolution: 2 p.m., Monday, June 13, Seattle City Hall Council Chambers, 600 4th Ave., 2nd floor. Please

show up and take this opportunity to show support for expanding Social Security and Medicare. Help build a state and national movement to get local jurisdictions on record supporting expansion of these two vital social insurance programs.

PSARA Summer General Membership Meeting & Potluck: 12:30 – 3 p.m., Thursday, June 16, Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85th St., Seattle. Excellent potluck along with our membership meeting, which will include a very interesting forum on I – 732, the CarbonWA initiative. Yoram Bauman will speak in favor of I – 732, and Jeff Johnson will speak in opposition. See the flyer on Page 7 for more details about transportation and how to RSVP.

