

# The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

Vol XXXIII, No 5

May 2017

Trump's "Skinny"  
**Budget**  
Page 5

## A Victory and an Opportunity

By Jeff Johnson

The recent defeat of the seven-year Republican Party effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act was an important victory. While we now know that Trump and the Republicans are going to try to amend their version of the American Health Care Act and pass it through Congress, there are lessons to be learned about the success of our effort before the May recess.

First, a big thank you to all of the organizations in the Health Care is a Human Right Coalition and many individuals, but in particular Teresa Mosqueda, Julie Popper, David Loud (PSARA's representative), and Janet Varon for their extraordinary work.

For three months the HCHR Coalition has engaged in an all-out effort to educate the public and the Republican members of our congressional delegation that we need to protect and improve our tri-partite health care system — the ACA, Medicaid, and Medicare.

Through sign-on letters, rallies and demonstrations, congressional meetings, phone banking, and town hall meetings, we made our case.

And when the Republican plan finally emerged in the form of the American Health Care Act, it turned out that it was less of a plan than a series of ideas that the American public hated and that fractured the Republican Party.

The AHCA was a bill that created massive tax cuts for the wealthy, increased health care costs for older



## Give Big Days Are Here

By Robby Stern

All costs associated with publishing and mailing *The Retiree Advocate* and all the costs associated with PSARA's educational work are paid for by the PSARA Education Fund. Our educational work is expanding across the state, and the costs are growing. Give Big Days are an opportunity for our members to support our educational work and to restore and grow our financial resources for our future work by donating to the PSARA Education Fund, a 501c3.

On April 27, the opportunity to donate through the Seattle Foundation's Give Big Day began. **The opportunity to participate ends on May 10.** To donate to the PSARA Education Fund, go to <https://www.givebigseattle.org/psara-education-fund>. The Seattle Foundation is holding a drawing in which they intend to give \$1,000 to 250 participating organizations. By donating to the Education Fund, you also put us in the running for the drawing!

The PSARA Executive Board has issued a challenge to the broader PSARA membership. Thirty-two members of the PSARA Executive Board have pledged \$7,700. The Board is challenging our members to match the total donations of the Board. Our Board is not composed of well-to-do people. It is composed of committed progressive political activists who are making a financial sacrifice because they value the work of the Education Fund and want to challenge our members to match their donations.

Our goal is to raise \$14,000+. Every donation, no matter how big or small (there is a \$10 minimum), will help us meet the Executive Board challenge, and our hope is that many of you will donate and help us exceed the challenge from the Executive Board.

The PSARA Education Fund is committed to doing the kind of educational work that will aid in resisting the right-wing corporate attacks on progressive values and goals. Our fight to preserve and expand Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for present and future generations has never been more necessary as we resist the right-wing corporate takeover of our federal government. The PSARA Education Fund is also committed to helping to build a society and world where everyone and the earth we inhabit is treated with respect and dignity. Please help us by donating at <https://www.givebigseattle.org/psara-education-fund> during the Give Big Days!

Remember, your opportunity to donate for Give Big Days ends at midnight on May 10.



Your donation will help PSARA produce educational events like this forum at Seattle's Central Area Senior Center.  
(Photo: Garet Munger)

Continued on Page 11

## The Retiree ADVOCATE

Published monthly by the PSARA Education Fund, 2800 First Ave., #262, Seattle, Washington, 98121. Phone (206) 448-9646.

### Officers of PSARA Education Fund:

President: **Robby Stern**, [president@psara.org](mailto:president@psara.org)

Vice President: **Sally Davis**

Secretary-Treasurer: **Garet Munger**

Advocate Editor: **Mike Andrew**, [organizer@psara.org](mailto:organizer@psara.org)

Associate Editor: **Bob Shimabukuro**

Photographer: **Garet Munger**

Printing: **Trade Printery**

### PSARA Directory:

President: **Robby Stern**

Administrative Vice President:

**Bobby Righi**, [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org)

Membership Vice President: **Jessica Bonebright**, [membershipvp@psara.org](mailto:membershipvp@psara.org)

Outreach Vice Presidents:

**Vivian O. Lee & Susan Levy**,

[outreachvp@psara.org](mailto:outreachvp@psara.org)

Secretary: **Frieda K. Takamura**, [secretary@psara.org](mailto:secretary@psara.org)

Treasurer: **Tom Lux**, [treasurer@psara.org](mailto:treasurer@psara.org)

Diversity Committee Co-chairs: **Frank Irigon & Mildred Ollee**, [diversitycommittee@psara.org](mailto:diversitycommittee@psara.org)

Education Committee Co-chairs: **Steve Bauck & Bob Swanson**,

[educationcommittee@psara.org](mailto:educationcommittee@psara.org)

Environmental Committee Co-chairs:

**Kristen Beifus & Tom Lux**,

[envirocommittee@psara.org](mailto:envirocommittee@psara.org)

Government Relations Committee Co-chairs:

**Tim Burns & Chuck Richards**,

[govrelations@psara.org](mailto:govrelations@psara.org)

Our web page: [www.psara.org](http://www.psara.org)

Board Members: Mauricio Ayon, Steve Bauck, Kristen Beifus, Maureen Bo, Tim Burns, Jim Grayson, Frank Irigon, Diane Jones, Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney, Steve Kofahl, Tom Lux, Mark McDermott, Mac McIntosh, Xochitl Maykovsky, Bonny Oborn, Mildred Ollee, Garry Owens, Chuck Richards, Karen Richter, Bob Shimabukuro, Ronnie Shure, Sarajane Siegfriedt, Bob Swanson, Aganita Varkentine, Michael Warren, Imogene Williams, and Katie Wilson.

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

## Save the Date – June 15 is the PSARA Summer Membership Meeting

At the UFCW Hall: 5030 1st Avenue South #200

Come at noon with your potluck dish, eat, and chat with friends.

Program begins at 1pm with reports about the campaigns that PSARA is working on:

- Health Care is a Human Right. Teresa Mosqueda will speak on behalf of the campaign.
- The fight to preserve and expand Social Security and Medicare.
- The campaign for a progressive income tax in Seattle. Katie Wilson will talk about the work to make the Washington tax system fairer.

There will be singing led by our own Lou Truskoff!

We hope to hear Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson speak at 2 p.m. He has agreed to come, but he has some scheduling conflicts, and we are waiting for final confirmation. Final plans will be in the June *Advocate*.

As always, this is a potluck. Please bring a dish to share and let Bobby Righi, the Admin VP, know what you are planning to bring so that we can be sure to have a balanced diet.

Bus 132 for Burien goes down 4th Ave. from downtown and stops at 4th Ave. S and S Dawson. You have to walk about 4 blocks from there. You can also call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646, or email [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org) to see about car pools.

### New PSARA Committee

By Amy Davis

PSARA has formed a new committee to focus on fund-raising. Our work to protect and expand Social Security and Medicare has never been more critical, but to be successful we need additional staff, beginning with hiring Mike Andrew as our full-time organizer. To hire staff we need to raise additional funds. The committee plans to do just that.

The fund-raising committee is open to all PSARA members; we welcome and seek your ideas and input. All are invited to join us at the next meeting on Friday, May 12, at noon at the Moonlight Café, 1919 S. Jackson St, Seattle. We will meet over lunch to discuss fund-raising strategies and continue brainstorming. If you can't make the meeting but have ideas to contribute or can volunteer to help with future fund-raising events, please contact committee chair Karen Richter at [kerichter100@gmail.com](mailto:kerichter100@gmail.com) or 206-679-3295. Please also contact Karen by Wednesday, May 10, if you plan to attend, so she can reserve a table at the restaurant.

*PSARA Executive Board members Vivian Lee and Bob Shimabukuro join in lively discussion at a PSARA workshop at Bryn Mawr United Methodist Church.*

*(Photo: Garet Munger)*



# Dangerous Conniving Men

By Robby Stern

On this particular morning that I am writing, the daily newspaper headline announced Trump signing the Executive Order overturning President Obama's plan for transitioning to renewable energy. Almost every day there is a new horror. Trump and his cronies will do everything they can to make their friends wealthier, and the rest of the world's people be damned. Our activism around climate change and climate justice will be needed more than ever with these insane, anti-science, uncaring men holding the reins of power in D.C. They appear to care little about undermining the future of our children and grandchildren and the generations to follow. These same guys who attack the future of our planet are also shameless in their active and aggressive militarism, attacks on women, immigrants, people of color, workers, the poor, the disabled, in other words all others who they view as "others" in our community, country, and world. We will RESIST!

## Why Medicaid?

We can anticipate that the attack on health care by Trump and the Republican congressional leadership is far from over. Ryan and his minions dream of dismantling Medicaid and Medicare. They do NOT want government solutions to our health care needs. Trump has no interest in policy and has no moral center. He is all about personal victory, material wealth, and how he can look good on TV. His enormous ego cannot handle defeat. We have to be prepared. One thing that will help is to better understand the role of Medicaid.

Most of us know that the Medicaid program is critical for providing health care coverage for children. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 39 percent of all children in the U.S. and 41 percent of Washington's children receive health care coverage through Medicaid. In addition, 19 million low-income adults and 16 million elderly and disabled people also receive health care coverage through Medicaid. What may not be as well known is that 21 percent of Medicare recipients

receive assistance from Medicaid, while 1.5 million institutional residents and 2.9 million community-based residents are covered by Medicaid.

Social Security Works, a D.C.-based national coalition, has written a briefing paper on the importance of Medicaid to seniors. They point out that while the majority of Medicaid recipients are children and working-age adults, Medicaid spends more on long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities than anything else. Medicaid has become "the default insurer for long-term care for seniors at all income levels." This occurs as seniors "spend down" to Medicaid's income and asset level requirements to get the long-term care services they need.

Medicaid, in addition to paying for long-term care support and services, also finances critical acute care for low-income seniors who cannot afford Medicare's out-of-pocket costs. For seniors living at or near poverty, (and that number grows as a result of the decline in defined benefit pensions and the inability of a majority of Americans to save for retirement because of income inequality), Medicaid helps to pay for Medicare's significant out-of-pocket costs. For seniors at or below the federal poverty level, Medicaid provides assistance to pay for Medicare premiums and cost-sharing. For seniors just above the poverty level (typically 100 to 120 percent of the federal poverty level), Medicaid assists in paying Medicare premiums.

Medicaid also covers health care services not covered by Medicare. These services include prescription drugs, eyeglasses, and hearing aids. These services need to be covered by an expanded Medicare, but for now, Medicaid helps with these health care needs for millions of seniors.

According to the briefing paper, "The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has estimated that at least seventy percent of Americans 65 and older will one day need long-term care services and supports which include nursing facilities, home-health aides, personal care, and family caregiving." Medicare's coverage for long-term care



services is very limited, and many families simply cannot afford those needed services or run out of the finances to pay for the services even though the need may continue. Medicaid coverage frequently steps in to provide assistance.

Nursing home care for those who need it is another critical element of Medicaid coverage. I know and I suspect most of you know family members or friends for whom Medicaid financed needed nursing home care.

Speaker Paul Ryan and the conservatives in the House and Senate are going to try and shift the cost of Medicaid to the states. Their scheme, as reflected in the American Health Care Act, which is still alive and kicking, would lead to very significant cuts to Medicaid over time. Block granting Medicaid is just another scheme for cutting it.

We are all clear on the need to fight cuts to Medicare and Social Security. Medicaid should be viewed in a similar light. These right-wing elected officials will try to drive a wedge between advocates for Medicare and Social Security on one side and Medicaid on the other. PSARA will oppose this effort. Health care is a human right and everyone should have access to comprehensive, affordable, high-quality health care. Until we win single-payer comprehensive health care coverage, PSARA will fight to preserve and expand health care coverage. That includes the health care services provided by Medicaid.

# Book Review: *Makers and Takers*

By Michael Righi

Who is a maker and who is a taker? Well, in the view of Mitt Romney (and Paul Ryan and Trump), a “taker” is someone who is too poor to pay income tax or relies on government benefits (that would be me, a Social Security recipient). “Makers” are so-called “job-creators,” bankers, businessmen, entrepreneurs, and corporate executives — the wealthy.

Rana Foroohar, an economic reporter, in her book *Makers and Takers*, flips the script. She wants us to know that the financial industry is clearly a taker, despite what they tell us.

She takes on the “financialization of America” — where finance and its way of thinking have come to reign supreme — and how this is perpetuating Wall Street’s rule over Main Street, widening the gap between rich and poor, and threatening the future of the U.S. economy.

“Financialization” is an awful clunky word to browbeat your friends with, but what Foroohar does for us is to demystify what is going on in clear language and specific examples. We all know that it was the banks that brought down the world economy in 2008, but there is more to it than that. The problems are deeper.

For example, you thought Apple makes computers, GE makes turbines, and GM makes cars, right? Well, maybe as a sideline. But as she shows, they have all become financial organizations, trading in stocks and bonds and derivatives and other arcane assets. I recently read another article that showed that Harvard is also a finance giant, with a small education part.

How this affects Main Street is that U.S. firms spend their earnings “investing” in these financial assets, or buying back their own stock (thus raising incomes for the 1%). Unbelievably, despite huge cash stockpiles stashed around the world to avoid taxes, firms borrow to do this — the finance industry wins coming and going. What they do NOT do very much of any more is

research and development, or building new factories (at least in the U.S.). Does this sound like “creating jobs”?

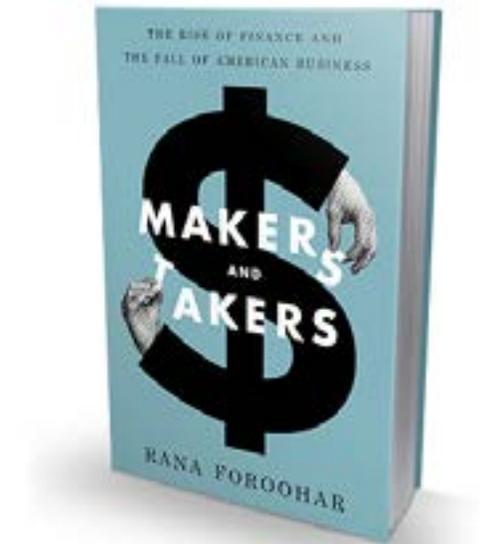
Sections of *Makers and Takers* show how financialization causes firms to outsource production, and how private equity firms are scooping up homes lost in the financial crisis and abetting gentrification. And how floods of money into commodity markets have driven up the price of basic foodstuffs, creating bubbles and volatility and hunger worldwide. Even Coke gets upset when Goldman Sachs gets a grip on the aluminum market.

## Retirees Beware!

This is not a financial advice column. However, Foroohar has one chapter, “The End of Retirement,” we all need to pay attention to. As she says, “our retirement system has been hijacked by finance.” Defined-benefit pensions have drastically shrunk (bolstering corporate profit), 401(k)’s are being fleeced by fund managers, and Social Security is being threatened with privatization by the right wing.

In particular, 401(k) fund managers siphon off fees so large that retirees’ standard of living could be 20-25 percent higher if they just let their savings sit in a stock-market index fund. Fund managers “actively manage” money, trading and charging fees, but on average they underperform the stock market. They are not required by law to work in your interest — the Obama administration was working on a (weak) “fiduciary” rule that would have required managers to act in clients’ interests, but of course Trump and his finance allies are busy dismantling that initiative.

Many of us do not have 401(k)’s to be fleeced out of. States (California is farthest along) and cities (including Seattle) are considering automatic savings plans for workers in small business or who are mobile between jobs. Workers would contribute a small percent



of pay that would be stashed in stock index funds. Wall Street is also pushing federal and state legislation that would outlaw these plans — that should be their money to “manage,” right? Keep an eye on these laws; they will probably be pushed through behind all the Twitter noise Trump creates.

So far, so great, but you can probably stop reading after the “Retirement” chapter (that’s 250 pages in). You know about the revolving door between finance and both Republican and Democratic administrations. Trump himself appointed a bunch of deplorables from Goldman.

Foroohar has given us a lot of great stories and data and studies, but for solutions she seems to want to return to the days of a sleepy, simpler capitalism. Where the GM “car guys” are in charge, not the accountants, and where we “rethink” the idea of shareholder value. For how to really rein in the too-big-to-fail banks, jail the bankers, and design a bank and credit system that funds social needs and investment, we are going to have to think more radically and creatively.

*Michael Righi is a PSARA member, and a retired economics professor.*

# Skinny Budget Indeed!

By Steve Kofahl

President Trump's preliminary budget proposal (a.k.a. "skinny budget") for Fiscal Year 2018, which begins October 1, 2017, was released on March 16. Some say we shouldn't pay much attention to it, because the White House will prepare a much more detailed proposal later that may look different as a result of public reaction to this one, and because Congress traditionally prepares budget proposals that can be quite different from those proposed by Presidents, even when they are of the same political party. However, we have never had a president like Trump, an unqualified narcissist who shows no empathy for others, and this Congress has shown little ability to get anything done at all, certainly nothing that benefits the poor or those of modest means.

The proposal increases military spending by \$54 billion and adds new money for a border wall and for school voucher programs. To cover these dubious (at best) expenditures, it slashes funding for the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Department,

that supports vital local programs.

Focusing on three programs that are particularly important to seniors, we see that senior center programs that provide food and social interaction, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, and Meals on Wheels, would be gutted. Budget Director Mick Mulvaney claims that the second of these programs doesn't return enough seniors to "unsubsidized" employment, and that the third has not been shown to be effective. What an ignorant jerk!

The Social Security Administration is required to conduct far more medical and eligibility reviews of disabled individuals than ever before. The administration to reduce the numbers who receive income and medical support, using staff and other resources for this purpose. These staff members could have been used to address severe service delivery deterioration, and to finally reduce record high disability claims and appeals backlogs and processing times.

Since late last year, we have seen an



Steve Kofahl

---

***The Trump budget increases military spending by \$54 billion and adds new money for a border wall and for school voucher programs. To cover these dubious (at best) expenditures, it slashes funding for the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Department, Agriculture, the Labor Department, Health and Human Services, and more.***

---

Agriculture, the Labor Department, Health and Human Services, and more. Programs that protect our air and water, improve foreign relations, make sure that food is safe to eat, ensure that workers can get job training and are safe and paid fairly, and provide a safety net to cover essential needs, are pilaged. The proposal entirely de-funds 19 Federal agencies, including the Legal Services Corporation that helps those who can't otherwise afford to exercise their legal rights, and the Corporation for National and Community Service

increase in disgusting demonization of disabled individuals by elected officials, who imply that they are almost all engaged in fraud and are cheating others who rely upon safety net and education programs, especially the elderly. The budget proposal even cuts education funds for children with disabilities. We must push back against those who set already disadvantaged populations against one another, in order to further diminish their power and silence their voices.

Current fiscal year funding runs out on April 28 unless Congress passes another continuing resolution or appropriations bills. Later this year the debt ceiling will have to be raised and the FY 2018 spending bills passed. There will be multiple opportunities for our adversaries to shut down the government and to adopt damaging policy and spending changes. We must make sure that our friends stand firm, and that our enemies are vigorously challenged. Budgets are really moral documents that tell us what kind of country we will have, what kind of people we are, and who will win and lose. Keep your eyes and ears open, and get ready to rumble!

*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.*

# Santiago de Cuba

By Robby Stern

Santiago de Cuba is the second largest city in Cuba. Sitting on the southeastern Caribbean coast, it is very old and quite beautiful. It has a rich history of struggle and played a key role in the fight for independence from Spain and the success of the subsequent revolution. With a long history of militant progressive movement, it was a leading hot spot in the anti-Batista struggle.

Santiago's Moncada barracks housed a significant force of Batista's soldiers. The attack on the Moncada by the revolutionary forces in 1953 initiated the armed struggle against the Batista regime. The attack was unsuccessful and many of the young revolutionaries were tortured and killed. Fidel was captured and imprisoned. While visiting the Moncada museum, we heard a fascinating story of how one of Batista's officers captured Fidel after the unsuccessful attack, but spared his life against the wishes of Batista. Once it was known that Fidel was alive, Batista did not dare to have him killed. The soldier who spared Fidel's life became a good friend of Fidel's after the success-



1953: Fidel (at left in civilian clothes) interrogated by military police after his capture.

ful revolution. Fidel was lucky that he lived to fight another day!

The young revolutionaries who died during and after the attack are beloved martyrs. The museum at the Moncada barracks tells their stories and honors their memories.

The revolutionary leadership learned from their defeat at Moncada. The young men and women who attacked the Moncada were incredibly brave. Although their attack failed and many of the young fighters were killed either in battle or in subsequent assassinations as they lay wounded, the attack on the Moncada was a sentinel event.

The next stage in the armed struggle found hope in the fighters who attacked the Moncada. The mass movement in Santiago, inspired by the attack on the Moncada garrison, played a very significant role in providing material support to the revolutionary guerillas. With the assistance of the overwhelming majority of the rural population in the southeastern part of the country, material support was transported from Santiago to the fighters in the Sierra Maestra mountain range.

The imprisonment of Fidel after the Moncada attack led to a movement to free him, which ultimately forced Batista to release him in an amnesty that freed other revolutionaries as well. Fidel and other fighters



The Moncada barracks today.

escaped to Mexico where the armed guerillas gathered for the invasion of Cuba on the boat, *Granma*. They landed in the southeastern part of the country and headed on a long difficult hike into the Sierra Maestra mountain range where they established their command headquarters. Che Guevarra was one of the guerrilla fighters who landed on the Granma. After a very strenuous hike, made more complicated by his chronic asthma, he set up a medical/dental clinic at the guerilla headquarters.

The Moncada barracks, an important symbol of the struggle, is a very large complex. Besides the museum, it has also become one of the largest and most successful public schools in Cuba. Our Cuban guide was very proud that it had been converted into a meaningful institution that provided both a history lesson and on-going quality education for Cuba's children.

On our first day in Santiago, we also visited the Santa Ifgenia Cemetery where we entered a world of history

*Continued on Page 10*

# The Koch Brothers and the Keystone Pipeline

By Marc Krasnowsky

The oil-drenched Koch brothers are heavily invested – both literally and figuratively – in rolling back two things PSARA members care deeply about: affordable health care and protection from climate devastation through an equitable, job-creating switch to clean energy.

On March 24, the awful Obamacare overthrow bill fashioned by President Donald Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan was pulled because it wasn't awful enough. Through their Freedom Partners front group, the Kochs openly bribed members of the ultra-right Congressional Freedom Caucus with promises of seven-figure campaign donations for opposing so-called "Trumpcare."

Earlier that day, Trump gave the official go-ahead to the Keystone XL pipeline. So even before their health care victory, the Kochs were enjoying one hell of a day.

The pipeline represents a \$21 billion gift to the three billionaire brothers, research by *Guardian/Rolling Stone* investigative reporter Greg Palast and others has shown. This certainly hasn't gotten much mainstream media coverage, so here's the skinny.

"XL" is the fourth piece of the Keystone pipeline ... the part where super-heavy oil from the Alberta tar sands reaches Nebraska and passes the Ogallala aquifer from which 2 million people draw their drinking water. There the crude oozes into an existing pipeline running all the way to the Texas Gulf Coast, ending at – you guessed it – the Koch Industries Flint Hill refinery.

Flint Hill was built to refine only the heaviest, dirtiest oil, historically imported from Venezuela. But Canada's heavy crude goes for \$12 to \$30 less per barrel than Venezuela's. Palast, the investigative reporter, calculates a minimum \$1.27 billion a year savings (i.e., additional profits) for the Kochs once Keystone XL is operational.

And it doesn't end there. William Koch owns Oxbow Carbon. The pipeline-bound tar sands crude is actually too heavy to flow, so Oxbow Carbon removes some of the worst tar and turns it into a burnable fuel, petroleum coke. You'll hear it called "petcoke," which sounds all huggy and kissable, but it's actually too toxic to burn legally in the U.S. (By the way, "Koch" rhymes with "coke" – not that other appropriate-sounding word.)

Billy Koch does quite well selling petcoke to China and Mexico. His more well-known brothers, David and Charles, do the same through their pipeline-dependent petroleum coke business, Koch Carbon, which is responsible for towering coke piles currently attacking Detroit residents already besieged by environmental pollution.

Over the life of the pipeline, Palast calculates, increased refinery profits and those from the related Koch operations will net the brothers the aforementioned \$21 billion at a minimum.

Playing out the tar sands in that time span, and burning the harvested fuels, will by itself raise the global temperature nearly three-fourths of a degree Fahrenheit. That might not sound like much, but it's significant given the international target of limiting warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius – a compromise number that's likely far too high to avoid catastrophe yet well on-track to being exceeded. And, as Palast says, that's from just one oil field.

The Koch brothers and their ilk promote scorched-Earth policies and projects by promising good jobs and by proclaiming their compassion for low-income energy consumers – notably retirees and other older Americans through the Kochs' 60 Plus front group



Marc Krasnowsky (center) confers with PSARA members Bob Barnes (left) and Vinod Goswami (right). (Photo: Garet Munger)

– who could avoid higher bills by sticking with coal and oil.

In fact, more jobs will be created by clean energy development, though we must fight to make them union jobs and to keep families and communities of existing fossil industries whole. And in no way is clean energy more expensive to society than polluting energy, not when you consider just the health effects of burning fossil fuels.

While the Kochs burn and facilitate the burning of more fossil fuels, climate change and increasing "normal" pollution make more and more people sick. Maybe it's ironic that the Kochs' bookend victory on March 24 involved demanding more drastic cuts to affordable and available health care, just as pollution victims are cramming medical clinics and hospital emergency rooms.

No, the word isn't "ironic." The word is "consistent."

*Marc Krasnowsky is a member of PSARA's Environmental Committee.*

# PSARA Joins Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network

By Dina Burstein, one of two PSARA representatives to the Immigrant Solidarity Network

PSARA has joined the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN), a coalition of organizations and individuals across Washington State unifying to fight for immigrant justice. This, the first of two articles about immigration, is a summary of changes to immigration policy under the Trump Administration. Next month's article will look at local immigration issues, and resistance by Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network and its members.

## New bad immigration policy

After Trump rescinded his first Executive Order (EO) on immigration and travel following a successful legal challenge by Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, he issued a revised EO on March 6. This EO seeks to suspend refugee resettlement to the US for 120 days, ban individuals from the Muslim majority countries Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, and Yemen from coming to the US for 90 days and from Syria for 120 days (other than visa holders and legal permanent residents), and lower the number of refugees accepted annually to the US from 110,000 to 50,000. The EO "flies in the face of core American welcoming values. It is unconscionable and unconstitutional to reject for national origin or religious background...and it has no basis in national security..." said Yasmine Taeb, Friends Committee on National Legislation. The newer EO was placed on hold by a US District Court judge in Hawaii in March and will be heard by a US Court of Appeals in May.

The Trump administration has ramped up large-scale immigration raids, detentions, and deportations by broadening the definition of who can be targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), eliminating previous policies on prosecutorial discretion and parole, and reinstating programs to create cooperation be-

tween ICE and local law enforcement. New policies provide that if someone is caught at the border trying to join family in the US, both the new arrival and family in the US are subject to deportation, and the guardian can be prosecuted as a trafficker. These policies "will leave even more parents to make the heart-wrenching choice between family separation and return to a country where their and their children's lives are at risk." (Women's Refugee Commission March 2017) The EO expands the definition of deportable offenses to include all immigrants living in the US illegally. Immigrants who attend check-ins with an immigration judge periodically, previously considered routine, now may face immediate deportation.

The Trump administration has not made clear whether it plans to honor the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals [DACA] program, established under President Obama in 2012, granting youth brought to the US the ability to study and work without fear of deportation. About 742,000 dreamers live in the US. (*LA Times* 2-17) These federal policy changes have resulted in tremendous fear in immigrant communities, and in the communities in which immigrants live, and threaten to erode trust in local law enforcement.

The EO calls for large, rapid increases to the number of immigration enforcement agents, risking rushed vetting and training, which in the past has led to hiring agents with criminal/drug cartel backgrounds. "Immigration remains the major focus of federal criminal enforcement efforts, with criminal prosecutions for illegal entry, illegal re-entry, and similar immigration violations making up 52 percent of all federal prosecutions in FY 2016." (American Immigration Lawyers Association) In the first weeks of President Trump's tenure, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) made 32.6 percent more arrests than a year earlier, and 25 percent of those immigrants had no criminal record. (*Washington Post* 4-17)



ICE agents make an arrest.  
(US government photo)

The Trump administration has called for an increase in ICE detention beds to 45,700 beds, 11,700 beds over the current level, at an annual cost of an additional \$1.5 billion over the current annual cost of over \$2 billion. (American Immigration Lawyers Association) "Under the plan under consideration, DHS would break from the current policy keeping families together. Instead, it would separate women and children after they've been detained – leaving mothers to choose between returning to their country of origin with their children, or being separated from their children while staying in detention to pursue their asylum claim... The majority of detention facilities are overseen by the private prison company Corrections Corporation of America, and conditions in the facilities have been criticized by immigration lawyers as inhumane. It appears Wall Street investors anticipated a massive expansion of privately managed immigrant detention when, upon Trump's election victory, they sent the stock price of several private

Continued on Page 10

# PSARA Position Paper for Public Transit Issues



## *Guiding Principles*

1. **Benefits of Public Transit:** Public transit is a public good. It provides mobility, reduces carbon emissions and pollution, eases traffic congestion, and connects the region's residents to jobs, education, essential services, recreation, and many other opportunities that help people to live healthier, better lives. In addition, public transit provides a range of good paying jobs as well as apprenticeship programs for local residents
2. **Expand Mass Transit:** We support mass transit systems such as light rail and Bus Rapid Transit. By moving large numbers of people rapidly and efficiently, these systems provide a practical alternative to single-occupancy driving and are an essential part of a just transition to a clean energy economy.
3. **Geographic Coverage:** Light rail and Bus Rapid Transit should work with communities to insure local bus serves our neighborhoods. It is especially important for seniors and people with limited mobility to have bus stops within a few blocks of their homes and all the places they need to go, and for local bus service to be frequent and reliable.
4. **Extended Service:** We support frequent, reliable transit service around the clock.
5. **Affordability:** Everyone has a right to ride public transit, regardless of income. We support reduced fare categories and free transit for those who cannot pay. Transit fares should be kept low for all riders to encourage transit use.
6. **Progressive Funding:** Our transit system relies too heavily on the regressive sales tax, flat car tab fees, and property taxes. We support more progressive local funding options and increased direct state funding for public transit. We believe businesses should contribute more to the public transit system to get their workers to work and to relieve congestion through such means as an Employee Hours Tax.
7. **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Multi-Modal Access:** Transit agencies should prioritize equitable TOD around transit stations and transit hubs, including new low-income housing. Transit agencies should work to facilitate and improve station access for all transportation modes, including walking, biking, local transit, and driving.
8. **Support Transit Workers:** We support the rights of transit workers, including drivers and mechanics. All transit workers deserve to organize for good wages and benefits and a safe, healthy, dignified working environment.

PSARA position papers -- there are now three -- serve as guiding principles to inform PSARA's work on local, state, and national policy issues.

## PSARA Joins Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network

*Continued from Page 8*

prison companies, including CCA, surging.” (Chris Hayes and Brian Montopoli MSNBC 3-17) To make it easier to house immigrant detainees in local jails, Homeland Security has eliminated rules made in the last few years to protect immigration prisoners. (*NY Times* 4-17)

### Welcoming/Sanctuary Cities vs Jeff Sessions

In March, Attorney General Jeff Sessions threatened to withhold or terminate federal grants from “sanctuary jurisdictions which willfully violate Federal law in an attempt to shield aliens from removal from the United States,” according to the EO. Seattle and King County are two of 23 municipalities in Washington State that do not honor ICE detainers. “ICE detainers are voluntary requests issued by ICE administrators and are not warrants issued by a judge. There are court cases stating that jails and corrections facilities must have a judicial warrant in order to lawfully hold people beyond their jail sentence.” (ACLU-WA)

The policy of non-cooperation with ICE detainers is one of nine sanctuary policies that some municipalities have adopted with the goal of preserving a working relationship between the police and the communities they serve. The new federal policy’s “assertion that resisting detainers puts communities at risk by allowing violent criminals to go free is highly dubious.” (LA Times, Michael Hiltzik, 3-17) The NW Immigrants Rights Project and Washington Defenders Association wrote in response to the threats to sanctuary jurisdictions: “If we (sanctuary jurisdictions) did what the federal government is now trying to require them to do (under threat to lose federal money) then they WOULD be violating the law.” (Annie Benson, Washington Defense Association, 3-17)

*Dina Burstein is one of the Advocate’s dedicated proofreaders and a member of PSARA’s Environmental Committee.*

## Santiago de Cuba

*Continued from Page 6*

and legends. It is a huge cemetery with many different memorials from different periods in Cuban history. It is the final resting place of Fidel’s ashes. Fidel’s memorial is right next to the memorial to Jose Marti, considered the patriarch of the Cuban revolutionary movement. Close by is the memorial to Cubans who after the revolution fought in solidarity with other revolutionary insurgencies in various countries around the world.

There were also memorials to the many men and women who fought for Cuban independence and for the many who fought the subsequent domination by the U.S. through installation of governments friendly to U.S. corporate interests (like Batista). In many cases, the families of these heroes are buried alongside their honored family member.

There is a moving memorial erected to the father of the independence movement, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, a landowner who came from the landed class and became a traitor to that class by liberating his slaves and lighting the emancipation flame on October 10, 1868. It was really inspiring to have been to all these sacred sites and we thanked our tour guide, Adrianna, for bringing us there. Adrianna, in turn, thanked us for going to the Cemetery and honoring their national heroes and martyrs.

When we stopped in front of Fidel’s grave site and the beautifully simple memorial, Dina quietly thanked Fidel for being an inspiration, for being so smart and brave, and for what he has done for the Cuban people and the world. I was standing next to her as she said it. Her words seemed wonderfully appropriate.



*Memorial to Fidel in Santiago de Cuba.*

*Some of the PSARA members who participated in the March for Science on April 22. (Photo: Karen Richter)*



## A Victory and an Opportunity

Continued from Page 1

Americans aged 50-65, cut tens of millions of people off of health care, shifted hundreds of billions of Medicaid expenses to the states (presuming that states could even pick up these costs), significantly increased the cost of health care for middle-income families, and lowered the quality of health care plans for the majority.

President Trump's admission about health care encompassed not only his own lack of understanding but that of congressional Republicans as well when he said, "Who knew health care was so complicated?"

A second point I want to make is our efforts to defeat the AHCA and all of its reincarnations create an opportunity for us to fully advocate for a comprehensive, affordable national health care, as opposed to a health insurance system. A health care system premised on the value that Health Care is a Human Right and not an insurance product.

Recognizing both the good and the bad that is embodied in the Affordable Care Act, we need to begin advocating for knitting together a health care system that leaves no one out (including undocumented immigrants), that creates a national risk pool to dramatically lower costs, that incentivizes medical homes and primary care across the country, that reduces the cost of prescription drugs through national purchasing power, that adds hearing and dental coverage to Medicare, that includes long-term care, that enhances mental health coverage, etc., etc., etc.

Just a suggestion, but how about we start seriously looking at expanding Medicare for all. I think that this is no time for suggesting small things. I think that we begin advocating for a real affordable, universal health care system through the midterm elections and until we move the political and civic dial.

*Jeff Johnson is President of the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and a PSARA member. An earlier version of this article appeared in The Stand, WSLC's online newspaper.*

## Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone PSARA Takes Our Show on the Road

PSARA is pushing ahead with our interactive workshop "Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone," with three more coming up in May.

If you haven't yet attended, this is your chance. Pick one near you.

If you have been to a workshop, stop by again to talk about the issues with your neighbors and friends.

### In Seattle:

Tuesday, May 16, 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Southeast Seattle Senior Center, 4655 S Holly St., Seattle, 98118. A forum on the need to expand Social Security and Medicare. Welcome by Councilmember Larry Gosset; presentation by Bob Swanson, Co-chair, PSARA Education Committee. Lunch \$4 for first 100 registered. Swedish Meatballs, Parsley Butter, Penne, Broccoli, Fruit Salad, Roll & Butter. RSVP: SE Seattle Senior Center, 206-722-0317, alexa@soundgenerations.org or PSARA, 206-448-9646, organizer@psara.org.

### In Burlington:

Wednesday, May 17, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Burlington Public Library, 820 E Washington Ave., Burlington, 98233. Co-sponsored by Indivisible Skagit and PSARA. Welcome by Kelly Knight, introductions by Ken Winkes, and presentation by Jessica Bonebright and Mark McDermott. A forum on the need to expand Social Security and Medicare. All are welcome! RSVP: organizer@psara.org or 206-448-9646.

### In Burien:

Wednesday, May 24, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Burien Community Center, 14700 6th Ave. SW, Burien, 98166. Coffee, cookies, and conversation. Presentation by PSARA's Bob Swanson. RSVP Burien Community Center, 206-988-3700, meagans@burienwa.gov; PSARA, 206-448-9646, organizer@psara.org.

## 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 Education Committee:** 1 p.m.–3 p.m., Tuesday, May 2, PSARA office, 2800 First Ave., Rm. 234, Seattle. All welcome as we work to expand outreach for the PSARA workshop.

**West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes:** Noon–1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 3, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, 98126 (35th & Henderson). Topic: Memories of Cuba with John Repp, Cindy Cole, Susan Levy, and Edward Rodriguez. Brown bag lunch.

**PSARA Environmental Committee:** 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 4, WA State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Government Relations Committee:** 1 p.m.–2:30 p.m., Thursday, May 4, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave. All welcome.

**Green Lake Discussion Group:** Noon–1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 11, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E Green Lake Dr. N, Seattle. 98115. Brown bag lunch. Topic: Reading and discussion with award-winning author Bharti Kirchner. For further information contact Susan at [sjlevy.01@gmail.com](mailto:sjlevy.01@gmail.com)

**NEW PSARA Fundraising Committee:** Noon. Friday, May 12. See article on Page 2.

**PSARA Diversity Committee:** 11 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Thursday, May 18, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

**PSARA Executive Board Meeting:** 12:30 p.m.–3 p.m., Thursday, May 18, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16 Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

## Elizabeth Warren on the Wells Fargo Scandal

*“In too many [big banks] there are rewards for cheating and punishments for calling out the cheaters. As long as that’s the case, the biggest financial institutions will continue to put their customers and the economy at risk.*

*“Yes, the [Wells Fargo] board should be removed, but that’s not enough. There still needs to be a criminal investigation. The expertise is in the regulatory agencies, but the power to prosecute lies mostly with the Justice Department, and if they don’t have either the energy or the talent — or the backbone — to go after the big banks, then there will never be any real accountability.”*

Senator Elizabeth Warren, April 19, 2017

