

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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May 2020

**PSARA Speaks Out
About
COVID-19 Relief
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Give BIG -- It's NOW

By Robby Stern

Give BIG Day is May 6. Please make your donation to the PSARA Education Fund any time between now and midnight on May 6. Help match the \$15,000 challenge from the 36 members of the Executive Board.

We understand times are tough for so many and there are multiple requests for financial assistance. The Education Fund revenue has also been impacted by the consequences of the pandemic and the resulting recession/depression. Our expenses are basic. We are working to make sure the Education Fund survives this difficult time. At the same time we are very involved in supporting passage of a recovery package that provides financial assistance to those hardest hit by the pandemic and subsequent economic crisis.

Your donations will finance the monthly publication and distribution of the *Retiree Advocate*. Additionally, we made significant progress in 2019 and the first part of 2020 to move the dial with our Congressional delegation on support for expanding Social Security and Medicare. Your donations will help us continue this momentum. Your donations will also assist our educational work on the necessity for passage of a progressive Green New Deal.

In the past several years we played a major role in educating on the long-term care crisis and the need to pass the Long-Term Care Trust Act. One of our leaders was appointed by Governor Inslee to help oversee implementation of the legislation. Our accomplishments are significant and will have positive impact on the lives of many people – quite astonishing for a small, low-budget non-profit.

Donations can be made at <https://www.givebigwa.org/psara-education-fund> or by going to <https://www.givebigwa.org/> and entering the PSARA Education Fund.

As a reminder, you can also send a check to the PSARA Education Fund any time between now and May 6. Please write in the memo line, GiveBIG. *This option saves the PSARA Ed Fund a small processing fee charged for online donations.* Mail your check to PSARA Education Fund, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle, 98144.

Please donate what you can during the GiveBIG campaign. Help us achieve our goal of \$30,000.

Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund.



Your Give BIG donation will help us bring you educational programs like this retirement security workshop in Gig Harbor.

PSARA Enters the 21st Century With Our New Webinar "The Climate Crisis and What PSARA Is Doing About It" Friday, May 22, 1:00 p.m.

Here at PSARA we prefer old-fashioned face-to-face meetings. Nevertheless, we're adapting to new technologies, especially as we struggle to keep our members active and involved in the important work we have to do in this time of pandemic and crisis.

Please join us as we enter the 21st Century with our first ever webinar -- "The Climate Crisis and What PSARA Is Doing About It."

The webinar begins at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22. Don't miss it!

We'll be sending out the link to all the members in our email program.

If you don't already receive regular emails from PSARA, guess what? We don't have your email address. Send it to us so you can join this exciting webinar: organizer@psara.org

The first 100 members who log in through the link will be able to participate. We think you'll want to be part of this, and we hope to see you in person as soon as it's safe.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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or visit PSARA on Facebook

With Gratitude to Bob Shimabukuro

Our beloved and greatly respected Bob Shimabukuro has decided to move on to new challenges in his life. He will be greatly missed! His columns in the *Retiree Advocate* were favorites among many PSARA members. We can say without a doubt that his strong principled leadership and thoughtful presentations helped shape the present direction and success of the PSARA Education Fund and PSARA. Bob co-chaired the Race and Gender Equity Committee (RAGE), which is helping to deepen the understanding of our Executive Board and members on issues of race, gender, and class.

Bob will be greatly missed, and we wish him good fortune as he embarks on a new course.



Rhonda Gossett Joins PSARA Executive Board

Rhonda Gossett, a long-time health care advocate, has joined the PSARA Executive Board. Rhonda is a certified AIDs Caregiver and medical advocate. She has spent years encouraging people in the African American community and the broader community to engage in healthful activities and practices. Her years of fighting for a better world will be a welcome addition to PSARA's Executive Board.



Thank You Jessica Bonebright and Hugh Tobin

Did you wonder how our April *Advocate* got to you despite the social distancing precautions that kept our mailing team at home?

The *Advocate* thanks PSARA Admin VP Jessica Bonebright and her partner Hugh Tobin who graciously volunteered to take the printed *Advocates* to their house, put on the mailing labels all by themselves, and then transport them to the Post Office.

Once again, proof that PSARA has the best members in the world! Thank you Jessica and Hugh.

Pandemic Lays It Bare

By Jeff Johnson

Extrême income and wealth inequality, climate change/disaster, and now the global COVID-19 pandemic have laid bare, for all to see, the economic, environmental, racial, and social injustices caused by capitalism.

Our existing economic paradigm has brought us to the brink of an existential crisis through attacks on workers' rights, democracy, racial justice, a sustainable environment and planet, and a functioning social safety net. Our economy as currently configured and its proposed solutions to this existential crisis is incompatible with solving the problems of climate change, racism, and inequality. This economy is unequipped to serve the needs of workers and our communities.

The current global health pandemic gives us a great opportunity to bring workers, communities of color, indigenous people, environmentalists, public health folks, the young, and the elderly together to rethink how we organize our economy and society. The global pandemic gives us the opportunity but also requires us to be bold about creating a transformative vision of a new economy – a “Just and Sustainable” economy that addresses climate change, inequality, racism, and the common good.

While the global health pandemic exposes the structural fault lines of our economy, addressing climate change remains our biggest existential crisis.

But since climate change impacts everything – income, jobs, life, health, migration – our vision needs to center on the transition to clean, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and phasing out fossil fuels.

At the same time, our vision must be greater than that. To really address climate change/disaster we need to have

a labor-community vision and strategy for restructuring our economy over the short, medium, and long term.

Recently passed COVID-19 congressional responses in the form of massive corporate bailouts, pandemic unemployment compensation (paying people to stay home), and consideration of a “Hero’s Fund” to reward, retain, and recruit essential workers to see us through this pandemic, creates the opening for us to expand the dialogue to talk about what structural changes we need in our economy in the moment, but as well during the medium and long term.

Jeff Johnson is a retired President of the Washington State Labor Council and a member of PSARA's Executive Board.



Jeff Johnson

John Prine 1946-2020

Then the coal company came with
the world's largest shovel
And they tortured the timber and
stripped all the land
Well, they dug for their coal till the land
was forsaken
Then they wrote it all down as the
progress of man

And daddy won't you take me back
to Muhlenberg County
Down by the Green River where
Paradise lay
Well, I'm sorry my son, but you're too
late in asking
Mister Peabody's coal train has hauled
it away



John Prine, “Paradise,” 1971

John Prine

We Don't Need Billionaires! Tax the Wealthy!

By Michael Righi

Our plutocrats are engaging in conspicuous donations lately. Bezos gives \$100 million to food banks, Gates pledges billions to find a vaccine, the Waltons donate \$25 million. Meanwhile, Walmart workers are dying and Amazon is firing workers who protest unsafe warehouses. Amazon warehouses in France have been closed down.

First, let's be clear how small potatoes these donations are. Bezos' wealth is over \$100 billion, and his \$100 million donation is about 11 days of income for him. Gates personally is worth about \$90 billion, and he controls another \$50 billion in the foundation's assets. The foundation gets tax breaks for its activities, which include promoting charter schools, genetically-modified seeds in Africa, and stronger patent protection for big pharmaceutical corporations.

Amazon stock is up 20% this year. In a recent week, as deaths from the virus soared, 10 billionaires saw their stock market wealth rise \$51 billion. That is, of course, because the stock market has rebounded, a sign that investors are betting Trump and the Federal Reserve and Congress will continue to let banks and corporations and hedge funds loot the Treasury.

Even more important is the issue of who decides where resources go. Just because you can build a predatory, greedy, tax-dodging monopoly, does that mean you get to decide how to allocate social resources? Does it mean you should be able to accumulate political power?

The Rich Have Indeed Gotten Richer

In the late 1970's the richest 1% owned 22% of society's wealth; now they have 37% of it. (The rest of us, 90% of the population, went from owning 40% to 27%). The Forbes 400 wealthiest individuals (that is 0.001% of the population) own as much as two-thirds of the population.

How does this happen? The billionaire class has come to control our

politics. They and their apologists have influenced our ideas of what is fair – great wealth supposedly allows them to solve social problems, raise the standard of living of all of our little boats. The *Wall Street Journal* opposes a tax on all this wealth because then it's "unlikely Gates would have the capacity to act this boldly." Billionaires earned it. They deserve it. Look, they are certainly smarter than our racist TV president.

The wealthy have, throughout our history, opposed taxes, particularly on wealth. Southern slaveholders were vociferous promoters of the idea that "Americans" hate taxes, and of anti-government sentiment. However, by 1913, distrust of bankers and robber barons was strong enough to pass the 16th amendment, for progressive taxation. Then, for the period from 1944 to 1981 the top rate on the income tax was above 80%.

Since then it has been a different story. Starting with Reagan, corporate taxes have been lowered, tax rates on upper incomes cut, estate taxes eviscerated. The wealthy have taken advantage of one tax-dodging scheme after another, moved money overseas, and benefited from lax regulation. Certainly "very smart, genius" tax dodgers don't pay taxes.

Tax Justice

By 2020, the overall tax rate (all taxes, from sales to payroll to income) on the Forbes 400 had dropped to 24% (it was 56% in 1960). For the low-income half of us it was 20% in 1960, now it is 25%, higher than our poor overtaxed elite. Since 1970, the income of lower-income families has flatlined, even fallen, so spare me the lie that lower taxes on the wealthy lifts all boats.

Surely by now many more people are realizing that only a strong, capable, democratic government that commands the resources of the society can cope with crisis. Inequality is an under-



Michael Righi

lying condition that makes responding more difficult, kind of a co-morbidity.

We have a devastating feedback loop going on with this coronavirus crisis, as the poor and people of color are twice as likely to die, while the wealthy are moving to the Hamptons and flying into Jackson Hole. We are definitely not "all in this together."

We need a tax on wealth, a progressive tax, of, say, 10% on wealth above \$1 billion. If we had had such a tax in place, Bill Gates would still be fabulously wealthy, at \$4 billion, but not at the \$100 billion he has now.

Our 1% want to make the decisions, not have elected representatives make decisions in the public interest. For Gates and Bezos, etc., this is about the immense power they have amassed, not the money.

It's not about the money for us, either. Sure, we can use the revenue. But mainly we recognize that the concentration of wealth threatens democracy. A wealth tax would minimize runaway inequality, end the new aristocracy, and show that the billionaire class cannot escape the reach of an organized movement for democracy.

Michael Righi is a retired economics professor and a member of the Retiree Advocate's editorial board.

PSARA Endorses a People's Bailout

The COVID-19 pandemic demands swift and unprecedented action from the federal government. The depth of the crisis and the scope of the response mean that choices being made right now will shape our society for years, if not decades to come. As policymakers take steps to ensure immediate relief and long-term recovery, it is imperative that they consider the interrelated crises of wealth inequality, racism, and ecological decline, which were in place long before COVID-19, and now risk being intensified. This is a time to be decisive in saving lives, and bold in charting a path to a genuinely healthier and more equitable future through a just recovery.

Almost 1,000 organizations have joined to call for COVID-19 relief and stimulus packages to contribute to a just recovery by upholding these five principles:

1. Health is the top priority, for all people, with no exceptions.

We support the calls of community leaders, public health organizations, unions, and others for free and accessible testing, treatment, and protective equipment; expanded hospital capacity, including in rural areas, territories, and tribal lands; paid sick leave and paid family medical leave for all workers without exception; expanded federal funding for Medicaid; and full funding for Indian Health Service and urban Indian health centers. Critically, the government must ensure such health protections cover all people, including low-wage workers, health workers, independent contractors, family farmers, Black and Latinx communities, undocumented immigrants, Indigenous peoples, people who are incarcerated, people who are homeless or housing insecure, and others likely to be hit first and worst by COVID-19 and the economic downturn.

2. Provide economic relief directly to the people.

We support the urgent calls to expand the social safety net by broadening unemployment insurance, vastly increasing food aid programs, extending housing assistance, expanding childcare for working families, relieving student debt, and halting evictions, foreclosures, and shut offs of water and electricity. As with expanded public health measures, these economic measures must be implemented to ensure coverage of workers and communities likely to be hit first and worst by COVID-19 and the economic downturn. In addition, to counteract the economic downturn, the federal government should immediately direct sizable cash payments to every person. Larger payments should be made to lower-income workers and the poor, who are disproportionately exposed to both COVID-19 health risks and heightened job insecurity. These payments should be made swiftly and regularly throughout the duration of the economic recession.

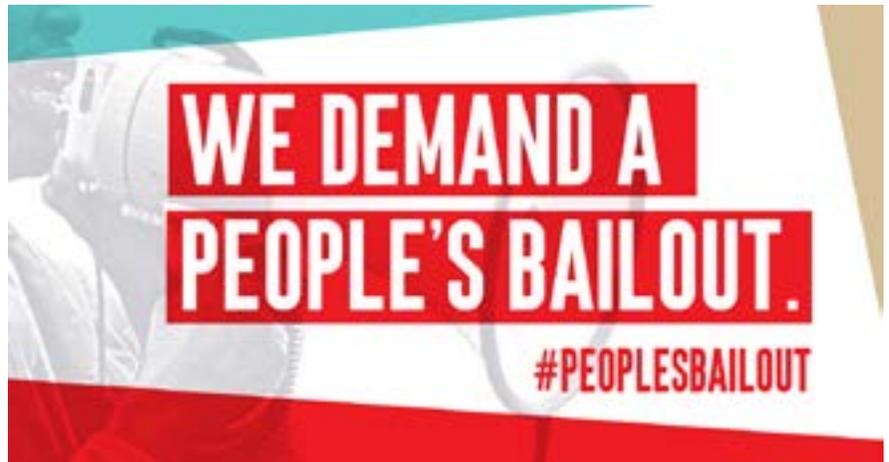
3. Rescue workers and communities, not corporate executives.

Any financial assistance directed at specific industries must be channeled to workers, not shareholders or corporate executives. Specifically, any federal

loans must be used to maintain payroll and benefits, not executive bonuses or stock buybacks. In addition, such funds should come with pro-worker conditions, such as requiring worker representation on the company's board of directors, company-wide enactment of a \$15/hour or higher minimum wage, and compliance with high-road labor standards such as payment of prevailing wages, use of project-labor agreements, adoption of a neutrality policy with regard to union collective bargaining, and adoption of a "ban the box" hiring policy to ensure fair employment opportunities for all.

4. Make a down payment on a regenerative economy, while preventing future crises.

While we urgently need a large, short-term stimulus to protect the health and economic security of those on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, it is imperative that policymakers also plan for a large, medium-term stimulus to counteract the economic downturn and ensure a just recovery. This stimulus should create millions of good, family-sustaining jobs with high-road labor standards; counter systemic inequities by directing investments to the work-



Continued on Page 11

This Pandemic Didn't Have to Be This Bad, Part I

By Mark M. McDermott

In March, Trump said this about the pandemic:

"This is something that you can never really think is going to happen."

That answer is profoundly unacceptable. A capable responsible leader hopes for the best and plans for the worst. He/she listens to experts who know more than they do. The plans should be based on the best science available, communicated clearly and honestly, and implemented quickly and effectively.

I have assembled this concise timeline to help you communicate more effectively about the Trump administration's extreme mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic. Effective communication about this mismanagement is essential in separating the truth from the lies. I can provide footnotes so you can check my sources, and for your own information. You can contact me at markmcdermott1@msn.com

Paving the Road to Disaster With Needless Deaths and Suffering

Since the start of his administration, Trump and his team systematically ignored the advice of multiple experts about the threats of a pandemic. These experts include his Director of National Intelligence, a leading Republican Congressman, many public health experts, and health care industry leaders. At the same time, Trump and his team were dismantling key parts of our national early warning system and analytic and organizational capacity to respond quickly to a pandemic.

Here is the proof.

On May 11, 2017, Dan Coats, Trump's Director of National Intelligence, told the US Senate:

"A novel or reemerging microbe that is easily transmissible between humans and is highly pathogenic remains a

major threat because such an organism has the potential to spread rapidly and kill millions."

In May 2017, Republican Congressman Tom Cole of Oklahoma told Mick Mulvaney, Trump's budget director, at a House budget hearing:

"Sometime in the president's term, you will have a pandemic... You will have a Zika, you will have an Ebola."

In May 2018, the Trump administration abolished the National Security Council's Directorate for Global Health and Security and Bio-Defense. This Obama-era office was created to address the Ebola pandemic and other pandemics. Beth Cameron, its first director said "the directorate was set up to be the "smoke alarm... all with the goal of avoiding a six-alarm fire."

On January 29, 2019, Coats issued another public warning:

"We assess that the United States and the world will remain vulnerable to the next flu pandemic or largescale outbreak of a contagious disease that could lead to massive rates of death and disability."

In July 2019, the Trump administration eliminated a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) medical epidemiologist position based in Beijing. This expert was working with China's national disease control agency to identify any pandemics in China that might affect the United States. In March 2020, the CDC said that the termination "had absolutely nothing to do with CDC not learning of cases in China earlier."

In November 2019, the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Commission on Strengthening America's Health Security issued its final report. Its co-chairs were Kelly Ayotte, former Republican US Senator from Vermont, and Julie Gerberding, Executive VP of Merck, a large pharmaceutical company. The Commission recommended the following:



Mark McDermott

"The US government should re-establish a directorate for global health security and biodefense on the National Security Council (NSC)... and name a senior-level leader in charge of coordinating US efforts to anticipate, prevent, and respond to biological crises. These actions will ensure that the necessary leadership, authority, and accountability is in place to protect the United States from a deadly and costly health security emergency."

For three years, the Trump administration had been repeatedly warned about the threat of a pandemic and to ensure our capacity to respond quickly and effectively. Instead of responding favorably, Trump and his allies continued to weaken our national capacity and failed to act decisively and wisely when the coronavirus pandemic arrived.

By January 2020, our nation was woefully unprepared for the pandemic. This was not an accident. It was a failure of leadership.

Mark McDermott is a member of PSARA's Executive Board. Part II of this article will appear in the June Retiree Advocate.

Pandemic: Mirror of a Sick System, Part II

Frontline Workers Keep Us Healthy, Fed, and Connected...Why Are They Treated Like They're Expendable?

By Mike Andrew

On April 6, 8,000 Swedish-Providence healthcare workers ratified their newly won contract, after months of fighting hospital management.

One of their key wins – immediate increases in staffing for nursing units and environmental services and guarantees that workers will have a voice in how scheduling happens, including a staffing escalation process to raise staffing concerns in real time.

Of course, short-staffing by hospital management is not a new problem, or one confined to Swedish-Providence. Ironically, hospital managers who just a few months ago were slashing payroll budgets by reducing the number of workers per shift are now begging retired healthcare workers to come back on staff to cope with the influx of COVID-19 patients.

This gives new meaning to the old saying “penny wise, pound foolish.” Instead of making sure that hospitals are fully staffed – and not just hospitals, but also other frontline occupations such as grocery stores, bus lines, post offices, farm workers – management across many industries tries to keep labor costs to a bare minimum.

Meanwhile their own salaries increase out of all proportion to the wages of the people actually doing the work.

In last month's *Advocate* I wrote in Part I of this article that the COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the need for Medicare For All – healthcare managed as a public good and not bought and sold like a commodity.

The pandemic also illustrates other shortcomings in our for-profit healthcare system – not least that healthcare has become what we could call “industrialized.”

As an example, ask yourself this... Why is it that hospital workers are expected to care for COVID-19 patients

without adequate PPEs (personal protective equipment)?

The usual answer is that no one anticipated a pandemic, so no one was prepared. But we've already experienced MERS, SARS, H1N1, all of them coronaviruses, as well as regular bouts of the flu. Global trade and global travel make it almost inevitable that new viruses will spread among populations that haven't yet built any immunity to them.

In fact, it would be rational for medical facilities to stockpile PPEs so they'd be ready for just such an emergency. But hospital managers have adopted the same “just in time” inventory system that's used in other industries.

They don't want to have storerooms full of PPEs. They want just enough to use – and bill out to patients – for the immediate future. Building up a reserve costs money that doesn't get converted to billable services right away. Never mind that a stockpile might save the lives of both patients and healthcare workers in an emergency.

Just in time production might work fine when demand for goods is predictable. But almost by definition a sudden pandemic is not predictable. We know we'll have to deal with them, but we never know when. So we need to be prepared at all times.

The same will be true for antiviral medications and vaccines, if and when they are developed.

According to the *Washington Post*, the federal government did have a stockpile of N95 masks, but they're no longer usable because they've exceeded their expiration date. Since the masks are good for five years, that means they were acquired sometime before 2015, during the Obama administration.

It was prudent to buy them – perhaps for the H1N1 outbreak of 2009?



Swedish-Providence workers march through downtown Seattle

– but not at all rational to continue to hold on to them as they neared their expiration date.

It's even less rational, though not out of character, for the Trump administration to acquire PPEs and then distribute them not directly to hospitals but to for-profit medical supply companies who then forced beleaguered state governments to compete for them. You couldn't find a better indictment of for-profit medicine if you tried.

Healthcare workers are not the only ones who have to provide us with essential goods and services. Grocery workers, bus drivers, postal workers, farm workers, all keep society going during the crisis, often with only make-shift protections, or none at all.

All of us are at risk when employers fail to provide adequate protections for workers to be able to do their jobs safely. And yet many employers treat even the most essential frontline workers as if they were expendable. And that ultimately means for them, the whole population is expendable.

Millennials and Social Security

By Xochitl Maykovich

Most millennials do not have pensions, meaning that we will have to rely on what we save or invest in addition to Social Security benefits. The COVID-19 crisis is the second time in my adult life I have been reminded about the insecurity of relying on 401Ks for retirement. Both after the Great Recession and right now during the COVID-19 crisis, the stock market has tanked while millions of people have been pushed into joblessness, causing many folks to see their retirements evaporate. My own 401K has taken a hit, and I know that it will likely happen again - which is why I do not want to rely on private investments for financial security in my old age.

With increasing student debt and stagnating wages, it is difficult for most millennials to save money. I myself still have roughly \$15,000 in student debt to pay off - all federal loans with 6.5% interest. This debt weighs me down financially and makes it difficult to set aside much towards retirement. Combine that student debt with the incredibly high cost of housing - it is difficult to plan for much beyond the next month's bills let alone retirement. Luckily, I have been paying into Social Security for years, and by strengthening the program, it will be there in my senior years. I may also need Social Security sooner than I think - a millennial today has a 1 in 3 chance of dying or becoming disabled before the current retirement age of 67.

Although Social Security is a central income source for many people throughout the country, many millennials are anxious about the program. I know many young people who assume Social Security will not exist when we retire, which is not surprising considering many of us grew up hearing conservative talking points that the Social Security system will be insolvent. But this is not true.



Xochitl Maykovich

While many young people worry that Social Security will not exist when we get older, there are several policies that would ensure Social Security will exist for generations to come. The majority

of millennials - roughly 7 in 10 - agree that it is critical to protect Social Security, even if that means contributing more money to the program. The most equitable way to protect and expand this program would be scrapping the cap of wages that are taxed for Social Security, which is currently \$137,700. As we hunker down under stay-at-home orders, many millennials are being reminded yet again how precarious finances can be - and this should be a wake-up call to young people across the country to fight against austerity and to protect earned benefit programs, especially Social Security.

Xochitl Maykovich is a member of PSARA's Executive Board.

The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye





As the medical and economic crises resulting from COVID-19 deepens, PSARA joined with other labor, faith, and community organizations to demand that any federal, state, or local measures include all the residents of this country – leaving no one out. Here are selections from three important letters PSARA has signed.

To US Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell

PSARA joined with Social Security Works Washington to say that we support “the proposal by Senators Warren and Wyden to send an additional \$200 per month to all Social Security beneficiaries, as well as individuals receiving SSI and veterans pensions. Supporting this proposal is a necessary response to the economic impact of the pandemic on seniors and people with disabilities.

“Seniors and people with disabilities are the most vulnerable. Two-thirds of seniors rely on Social Security for a majority of their income and fully one-third rely on it for almost all of their income.

“So many people in our country are hurting and seniors and people with disabilities comprise a significant percentage of those who are struggling. The proposal to add \$200 to the monthly Social Security benefit should be a part of the economic package that is now under development.”

To Congressional Leaders

PSARA signed on to a letter saying: “If we are serious about addressing the full scale of this public health emergency, we can no longer afford to leave out millions of our community members from the response and must ensure that everyone has access to the health care, nutrition, and income sup-

port they need. Thus, the undersigned organizations call on Members of Congress to support rapid passage of a COVID-19 relief package and ensure that it includes the following provisions:

- Halt implementation of the Department of Homeland Security and State Department public charge regulations.

- Ensure that access to health care is available regardless of a person’s immigration status, income, or categorical eligibility. Testing and treatment of COVID-19 symptoms and related health conditions, and vaccines (when available) should be covered through emergency Medicaid and other Medicaid options.

- Ensure access to the stimulus rebates for everyone who files tax returns, whether they use a Social Security Number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number.

- Ensure access to nutrition assistance through programs like the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) and extend the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program through the summer of 2020.

- Ensure that health services, and information about COVID-19 and about how to access benefit programs are available in multiple languages and through trusted community providers and that providers have the resources they need to access interpretation services.

- Ensure adequate funding for Community Health Centers, which are essential providers in many immigrant and low-income communities.”

To Governor Jay Inslee and State Legislative Leaders

PSARA signed on to a letter demanding healthcare protections for the

state’s immigrant communities:

“We are writing to ask you to take urgently needed action to ensure the health and stability of Washington’s immigrant community. While the coronavirus pandemic has impacted us all, undocumented immigrants are uniquely at risk. Undocumented immigrants and their families are completely excluded from the \$2 trillion relief package Congress passed last month, despite broad consensus that providing economic stability to all workers is essential to ending this public health crisis.

“We call on you to take immediate action to address the needs of these state residents in the next two weeks by:

1. Creating a “Washington Worker Relief Fund” through the Governor’s office with at least \$100 million initially allocated to it. The Fund will be administered by community-based organizations to provide emergency economic assistance to undocumented Washingtonians, so that everyone has access to the relief they need during the pandemic; and,

2. Working with caucus leadership to create a permanent system that will provide wage-replacement protection to workers who lose their jobs and are excluded from the current unemployment insurance system, including undocumented immigrants.

“Failing to provide a safety net for these workers and their families undermines public health and will hamper the Washington economy’s ability to recover from the pandemic. Without state government intervention, hundreds of thousands of Washington residents are at risk of being exposed to coronavirus and becoming destitute.”

Protect AAPI Frontline Workers!

By Eunice How

In light of the outbreak of COVID-19 cases emerging in the United States, Asian American workers are speaking up on how xenophobia and racism interact with America's inadequate healthcare system and outdated labor laws to endanger workers and hinder disease prevention. Over 2 million Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) work in healthcare, transportation, and service industries. These workers are facing xenophobic and racial discrimination in the workplace in addition to increased exposure to communicable diseases. Without federal policies guaranteeing paid sick leave and adequate health insurance coverage for all workers, many working people are effectively prevented from following the CDC's guidance to stay home when they are sick.

Employers must include a protocol against racial discrimination in their responses to COVID-19. APALA (Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance) issued guidance to protect AAPI workers that can be found at www.apalanet.org/covid19.

While the corona virus does not see color, gender or country of origin, our Asian Pacific Islander American community has been impacted in ways that others are not. The Racist Chinese-baiting (as if coronavirus were an ethnic disease) is linked to the long history of stigmatizing Asians as disease-ridden, for example "Yellow Peril." Donald Trump has repeatedly called COVID-19 the "Chinese virus." Our community members across the country are subject to racist attacks both verbally and physically.

In the Seattle area, many AAPIs work in the health care and service industries. For example, SEIU1199NW has many Filipina and Pacific Islander women members who clean hospital rooms in the Environmental Services classification. UNITE HERE 8 counts many Pacific Islanders and South Asian members in the SeaTac airline cater-

“ Patient and worker safety is the most important thing to me as a healthcare worker and union member. This has become more urgent with the outbreak of the coronavirus. I want to assert that the voices of the frontline caregivers is extremely important, especially AAPI workers as we are under scrutiny right now. We want to and need to provide care for our community but we are putting our own lives at risk.

Public health outcomes significantly improve when labor rights are respected and workers' voices are heard.”

-Melanie Arciaga, RN,
Seattle APALA Chapter member

**PROTECT
AAPI WORKERS**
apalanet.org/COVID19

ing kitchens, plus many Chinese and Filipina hotel workers in Seattle.

Healthcare workers are the ones who care for us when we are sick, but as workers on the frontlines they face an increased exposure to illness. Their workforce is extremely stressed, and they are in desperate need of Protective Personal Equipment like face masks. Please take action at <https://1199nwcoronavirusresponse.org/actions/> to sign petitions and learn how to donate Personal Protective Equipment.

As frontline workers in the hospital, food service, and transportation industries, nearly 300,000 UNITE HERE members and the families they support will be among those most affected by the coronavirus. Five thousand members of Local 8 live and work in Washington and Oregon. Already, large numbers of workers are facing unprecedented layoffs in the face of decreased

travel, cancelled meetings and hotel bookings, university closures, and suspended sporting events. While the affected industries and corporations will rebound, this will be catastrophic for workers facing a totally unexpected loss of their livelihoods. More than 90% of the members of our union are currently laid off and are expected to be out of work for an extended amount of time. Donate today to support UNITE HERE Local 8 members at www.unitehere8.org/donate. Contributions to this fund will directly aid hospitality workers by providing hardship assistance intended to help workers pay for food, rent, medical bills and utilities.

Please, take care, check on your loved ones, and stay safe. We are in this together.

Eunice How is a member of PSARA and President of the Seattle chapter of APALA, AFL-CIO. She writes on behalf of the APALA leadership team.

People's Bailout

Continued from Page 5

ing families, communities of color, and Indigenous communities who face the most economic insecurity; and tackle the climate crisis that is compounding threats to our economy and health. All three goals can be achieved simultaneously with public investments to rebuild our infrastructure, replace lead pipes, expand wind and solar power, build clean and affordable public transit, weatherize our buildings, build and repair public housing, manufacture more clean energy goods, restore our wetlands and forests, expand public services that support climate resilience, and support regenerative agriculture led by family farmers. Critically, stimulus packages should include conditions for industries to implement high-road labor standards, workforce development, and reductions in climate emissions and toxic pollution. The response to one existential crisis must not fuel another.

5. Protect our democratic process while protecting each other.

People must not be forced to choose between exercising their rights as citizens and protecting public health. The federal government must support states, by providing funding and technical support wherever needed, to ensure that every American can vote safely in primary and general elections. Specific life-saving and democracy-defending measures include expanding vote by mail, online or automatic voter registration, among others. The 2020 Census must be fully supported and resourced to achieve an accurate and safe count under the new and evolving conditions. US Congress, state capitals, and city halls should not shut down until they have amended rules to ensure continuity of governance in the case that in-person sessions are suspended.

Manolis Glezos 1922-2020

Manolis Glezos, iconic figure of the Greek left, died on March 30. He was 98.

In 1941, Glezos and one of his college friends, Apostolos Santas, scaled the Acropolis and tore down the swastika flag that German occupation forces had planted there. He was sentenced to death, but managed to escape twice.

In 1948, he was arrested by the right-wing Greek government that -- with US and British help -- replaced the Germans. Again he was sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to life in prison in 1950, and he was released in 1954.

In 1958 he was arrested again, and remained in custody until 1962. The military dictatorship -- the Colonels -- arrested him in 1967 and held him until 1971.

Even age couldn't slow Glezos down. In 2010, while protesting EU-imposed austerity measures, he was hit in the face by a police teargas grenade and had to be carried away. Two years later, in another protest, police hit him with pepper spray at point blank range, and again he had to be carried to safety.

Glezos explained his persistence in a 2014 interview:

"Why do I go on? Why I am doing this when I am 92 years and two months old? I could, after all, be sitting on a sofa in slippers with my feet up. So why do I do this? You think the man sitting opposite you is Manolis but you are wrong. I am not him. And I am not him because I have not forgotten that every time someone was about to be executed [during World War II and the subsequent Greek Civil War], they said: 'Don't forget me. When you say good morning, think of me. When you raise a glass, say my name.' And that is what I am doing talking to you or doing any of this. The man you see before you is all those people. And all this is about not forgetting them."



Manolis Glezos

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund

321 16th Avenue S, Seattle WA 98144

- 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): _____

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Meetings and Events

Out of concern for the health and safety of all our members and their families, in-person meetings and events have been cancelled because of COVID-19 precautions. Many meetings will be held online.

The *Climate and Environmental Committee* has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, May 7, at 10:00 a.m.

The *Fundraising Committee* has scheduled a meeting for Monday, May 11, at 11:00 a.m.

The *Education, Government Relations, and Race and Gender Equity (RAGE) Committees* may also meet online in May.

Don't miss PSARA's webinar, "*The Climate Crisis and What PSARA Is Doing About It*," Friday, May 22, at 1:00 p.m. See details on Page 1.

If you want to participate online, email organizer@psara.org for the meeting link. We hope to see you face-to-face again very soon.

And Then She Said...



"Everyone acts like work is the same. Let me assure you that some kinds of work are very hard and some kinds of work are not very hard. Usually, the not very hard work is the most remunerative."

Fran Lebowitz