

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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October 2018

Trump's
Social Security
Commissioner in
Waiting
Pages 6-7

Don't Miss "Meet the Writers"

Sunday, October 14, 2:30 p.m., in Seattle

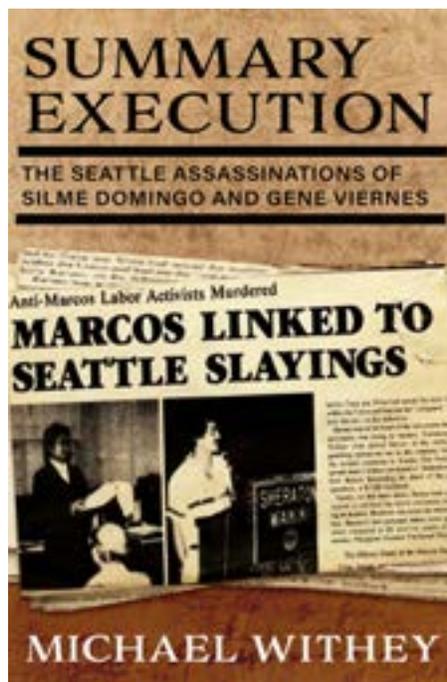
By Karen Richter

In a Democracy, dissent is an act of faith.

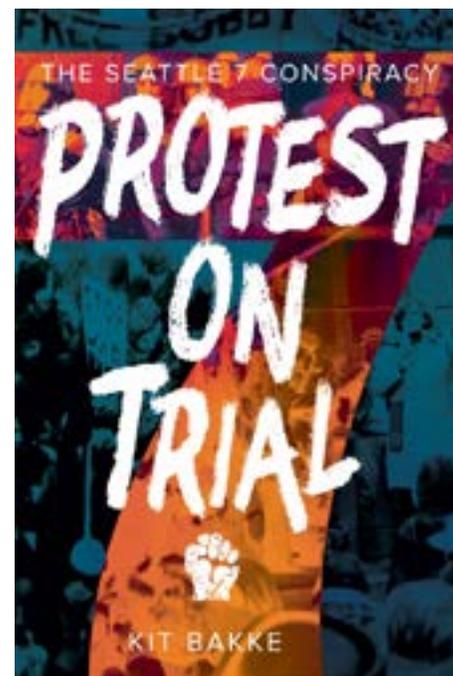
- Senator J. William Fulbright, 1966

PSARA is excited to host two local writers, Michael Withey and Kit Bakke, to talk about their work and how it applies to current times. Michael Withey's book, *Summary Execution*, is a true story about the 1981 assassinations in Seattle of Filipino labor and community leaders Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes and about the trial which revealed the role of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship and the role of the US government in the crime. It reads like a crime thriller complete with assassins, FBI informants and murdered witnesses. Michael Withey was a personal friend of the murdered men and the lead attorney in the case.

Kit Bakke is the author of *Protest on Trial*, the story of the Seattle Seven who were members of the Seattle Liberation Front and the conspiracy charges brought against them by the US government in 1970. The government was determined to destroy the defendants' ability to protest. The Seattle Seven (eight) story mirrors the story of the Chicago Eight - both groups were antiwar activists who were indicted and brought to trial by the federal government for conspiracy to incite a riot. Anyone interested in the Sixties rebellion should be interested in this book. It reminds us that dissent is fundamental to democracy. True then, true now. Kit Bakke is a longtime activist. She was active in Students for a Democratic Society and the Weathermen. She then became a pediatric oncology nurse.



The authors will talk about their work and what they have learned since the book was published. For more information you can read the July edition of the *Advocate*, which has an informative review of both books by Robby Stern, President of the PSARA Education Fund. Just go to our website PSARA.org, click on Newsletter then click on July. The article is on Pages 9 and 10.



We hope you can join us at the Washington State Labor Council offices, 321 16th Avenue S, Seattle, for what promises to be a lively discussion.

The event is a fund raiser for PSARA and we will provide you with delicious snacks and beverages. For reservations email organizer@psara.org or call the PSARA office, 206-254-4910.

Karen Richter is PSARA's Membership Co-VP and Fundraising Chair.

**For other exciting PSARA events in October
see Page 9.**

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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Thank You!

Thank you to US Senator Patty Murray and Congress members Suzan DelBene (D-1), Rick Larsen (D-2), Derek Kilmer (D-6), Pramila Jayapal (D-7 and also a PSARA member), Adam Smith (D-9), and Denny Heck (D-10) for joining the Congressional Expand Social Security Caucus.

The caucus is co-chaired by Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, and House members Debbie Dingell, Connor Lamb, and John Larson.

It was organized with assistance from Social Security Works, a national organization seeking to unite lawmakers behind expanding Social Security, according to the organization's communications director, Linda Benesch.

"The goals of the caucus ... [are] not to promote any one specific piece of legislation," Benesch said, adding that there are multiple expansion bills Democrats have introduced in the House and Senate that could benefit from the caucus's support.

PSARA leads the Social Security Works - Washington coalition.

Leaves of Remembrance

By Mason Taylor

Over 30 people attended the dedication of five bronze maple leaves in my neighborhood at Lake City Mini Park in the afternoon of 29 August. The new leaves honor Norman Averill, Jr., Marco Stokes, Jesse Vestal, Christian Beaty, and Paul Bernard Dehesse.

Called "Leaves of Remembrance," these leaves commemorate five homeless people who died from exposure or violence on the streets of Seattle. People who knew the deceased shared their memories. Only one block east, in front of the Seattle Mennonite Church, I counted 33 more bronze leaves set into the sidewalk. Each one with a name.

New Leaves of Remembrance have also been placed at Ballard Commons Park, the Seattle Justice Center, and All Pilgrims Church on Broadway. And there are more to come.

One hundred and eight homeless people died on Seattle streets last year. Already this year, 77 more have died, and there are still 3 months yet to come.

Of the 900 deceased over the past 18 years, 265 are memorialized by bronze leaves in 14 different Seattle locations.

Leaves cost \$150 to create, install, and maintain.

For more info: wheelorg@yahoo.com or 206-956-0334.

Ever wonder how the Retiree Advocate gets into your mailbox month after month without fail?

Here's your answer -- our team of PSARA volunteers!

Thanks to them, our newsletter hits the post office while it's still hot off the press, and makes its way to you. They are the real heroes of this operation.



Let's Pass Initiative 1631!

By Bobby Righi

Photos of the September 8 climate justice march in Tacoma are courtesy of Karen Richter

PSARA is a partner in the Washington Wants Clean Air coalition, which was successful in getting Initiative 1631 on the state ballot in November. Now we have to make sure that it passes. As Washingtonians we all do our part to keep our state clean. But right now the largest polluters can pollute for free while the rest of us pay the costs. I-1631 would put a fee on the state's largest polluters, like the oil industry and utilities that have not switched to clean energy, and have failed to invest in protecting our air and water and building new clean-energy infrastructure across the state.

Despite widespread approval by Washington voters who know about it, the ballot will face an onslaught of negative attacks by the petroleum industry. Many of the statements by the "NO on 1631 campaign" are just outright lies, and some are sowing confusion – like the exemption for burning of wood for energy. The state exempts biomass because it is considered renewable, and how many people drive trucks and cars using biomass energy?



We cannot outspend them, but we can talk to people. Let them know about it, and tell them why we are in support of 1631. Join other PSARA members to canvass neighborhoods in King County or in making phone calls to voters around the state, and let folks know about 1631 and why they should vote YES. This is the only way we can win this.

There are dozens of canvassing and phoning events listed on the YES ON 1631 website. PSARA member Pam Tufts has listed one for Issaquah on Oct. 16. We need to help! Jim Grayson and Tim Burns have agreed to lead PSARA members in south King County in canvassing there. We will hold a PSARA phone bank at Bobby and Michael Righi's house on Saturday, November 3, from 1 to 4 p.m. to call Seattle voters and make sure they don't forget to vote.

There are only about 45 days until election day. Sign up to help!

Bobby Righi is PSARA's Membership Co-VP and a tireless volunteer for the I-1631 campaign.

If you want more information on canvassing or phonebanking for I-1631, email organizer@psara.org, call the PSARA office at 206-254-4910, or visit the campaign website, yeson1631.org



Tariffs, NAFTA, and What Comes Next

By Stan Sorscher

Tariffs have become the all-purpose trade policy for Donald Trump. Hitting back has characterized his behavior his whole adult life [don't say it].

Donald Trump's political success is built entirely on hitting. Millions of voters are quite pleased with Trump hitting back. Communities around the country have seen employers close factories and mills and move good jobs to low-wage countries with weak labor protections. Someone should get hit back.

Still, the rest of us will ask, What problem is Trump trying to solve with tariffs? Make China play by the rules? Balance trade?

China is not playing by our rules for a very simple reason. They are not free-market Capitalists. They have designed very effective national industrial strategies to become the manufacturing powerhouse for the world. They invest billions in infrastructure in Asia, Africa, and South America to extend their influence and transport goods around the world. They target investment, research, and production in 10 major industries of the future.

China makes these investments because it is in its national interest to do so. Tariffs will not make them abandon these long-term strategies.

China has no intention of playing by our rules. Their rules are much better for them than our rules. In fact, our rules aren't that good for us, when you think about it.

Tariffs will not balance trade. China's trade surplus is a consequence of their long-term strategy to become the manufacturing powerhouse to the world.

Similarly, what have Canada and Europe done to deserve tariffs on steel and aluminum, and what can they do to stop the tariffs? We're not really sure.

Trump's tariffs lack a coherent strategy and will tarnish our status as a world leader. As political theater, they are quite effective. In terms of solving real problems, they are a distraction, at best, and will become an obstacle, in all probability.

The new NAFTA is taking a different course, guided by US Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer. The new NAFTA raises the percentage of autos that must



be made in the three NAFTA countries - Mexico, Canada, and the US. That means fewer parts from China and other countries. That is an industrial policy that favors the three NAFTA countries.

The new NAFTA will require a significant fraction of the value of autos to be made by workers earning \$16 per hour or more. Those workers will be in the US, Canada, and possibly Europe. But it sets a floor on the amount of work that can go to Mexico or low-wage countries outside of NAFTA. That provision is an industrial policy, that favors production in the US and Canada.

The new NAFTA will dismantle much of the notorious dispute settlement system that subsidizes companies who move work from the US to risky countries with weak political and legal systems. Steps to remove this corporate-friendly legal system from NAFTA will shift power in favor of regulation in the public interest, which is critical for dealing with climate change and other important public policies.

Mexico is moving to improve its labor regulations, so workers can form their own unions. These legal changes in Mexico could reduce the influence of employer-dominated unions that keep wages low. Prior to this, Mexico's industrial strategy was to be "competitive" by driving wages for Mexican workers as low as possible. That was terrible for Mexican workers and bad for workers in the US.

These changes in Mexico are incremental, and lack a coherent framework. Donald Trump may not even be aware

of them. They reduce harm caused by NAFTA. They are not "good." They are "less bad." Still, these steps go beyond anything we saw during the Obama administration.

The secret for getting out of a hole is, first, stop digging. In 1993, NAFTA started digging the hole we find ourselves in today. We have stopped digging, but we aren't climbing out, yet.

The 2016 election is a political fact - voters resent what the failed NAFTA free trade model has done to them. Donald Trump captured that resentment. Hillary Clinton fielded no serious alternative.

The failure of President Obama's Transpacific Partnership (TPP) with 12 countries was another political fact - that we really need to rethink our approach to globalization.

As we rethink the way we manage globalization, we have several examples to consider. China, Japan, South Korea, Germany, and the Nordic countries all recognize their legitimate national interests. They have relatively strong social cohesion, and are comfortable with industrial strategies. That has been true of the US when we industrialized, and it was true during our post war period, when we invested heavily in infrastructure, research, workforce development, and industries of the future.

The pieces are there. We need to put them together.

Stan Sorscher is on staff at SPEEA, the union that represents Boeing machinists, and is a member of PSARA.

The Trump Slump: Financial Crisis, Ten Years Later

By Michael Righi

How about all the great economic news! Are you feeling it? The stock market is setting records. Economic growth (GDP) is strong. The unemployment rate is below 4%. Trump trumpets the news and mainstream media go along, sometimes worrying that the headline numbers will affect the mid-term elections coming up.

Let's get real. How should we measure how well we are doing? Hourly wages, what the average worker is paid for an hour of labor, adjusted for prices, would be a good start. That's going up about 1% a year lately, half the rate of growth prior to 1980. That difference matters a lot over the long term.

But that's not the whole story. Even that measly 1% is going mainly to "workers" in the upper 1% or 5% of the wage distribution. No, we do not want to romanticize the 1950's and 60's (unlike some others), but back then, wages were rising at 2% (thus doubling every 30 years), and they rose faster for lower-wage workers. Does it come as a shock, here in \$15 minimum Seattle, to realize that the minimum wage in 21 states is still \$7.25 an hour?

So, the distribution of wages matters, not just the average. Without getting too tied up in numbers, middle and lower wage workers are seeing no increase in their incomes unless they work more hours or more jobs. Let's call it the "Trump Slump."

OK, but what about jobs, that's all good, right? Well, that under-4% unemployment rate counts as employed anyone who has worked for an hour the previous week. And it does not count those who have given up looking. There are 7 million 25-54 year-old men neither working nor looking for work, and an additional 2 million still searching.

Who is winning. And who is not.

So, despite the myth, it's awful hard

to "get ahead" by working hard. In addition, the financial crisis 10 years ago destroyed a huge amount of middle-class wealth (the value of their homes). There were eight million foreclosures, with the typical middle-class family losing \$40,000 in net worth. Black and Hispanic families were the hardest hit.

The government and the Federal Reserve bailed out the bankers and shareholders by pumping trillions of dollars, yes, trillions, into the banking system globally. No such luck for homeowners or unemployed workers. This didn't just bail out the banks, it put a trampoline under stock markets, benefiting that slice of the population that own stock.

Of course, Trump's \$1.5 trillion corporate tax cut has largely been pumped back into stock buybacks as well, to shareholders' delight. It is hard to fathom, but some analysts report that corporations are even borrowing to buy their own stock, maybe even leading to a corporate debt bubble.

What it means to be secure used to be having a well-paid union job. Now it is owning wealth, investment portfolios, not wages or salaries. Over the last 15 years, the overall proportion of income coming from wages has dropped from 70% to 60%. So the wealthy have a private safety net backing them and their kids. Meanwhile, governments around the world plead poverty and the need to cut social programs like Social Security and Medicare.

(An aside. Some of us have been lucky. We had public sector jobs with matching retirement contributions. Or, we had union jobs with pensions. We bought a house at the beginning of a boom in housing prices (in Seattle, not Las Vegas). We were first-generation college or we could get VA funds, and we didn't graduate with overwhelming debt. Much of that is, of course, gone. We are left with responsibilities to others.)



Michael Righi

A focus on real jobs

Besides misleading us about how well the economy is doing, the media are into guessing where the next financial crisis will come from. Of course, Congress, both Democrat and Republican, are loosening restrictions on banks and financial markets, that's what their funders pay them to do. Thus hastening the next crisis. And the media are not wrong, there will, sometime, be another crisis.

Our financial system now is parasitic, feeding the wealthy and occasionally collapsing the real economy. So, yes, we need to control banks. But even more, we need state and community banking that would focus on real needs, not speculation.

Real needs at this moment in history would seem to mean a Green New Deal that would deal with our climate crisis. And provide secure, union, well-paid employment to rebuild a strong, working middle class.

Michael Righi is a retired economics professor and a member of PSARA.

Social Security Commissioner In Waiting

By Robby Stern

The President has nominated Andrew Saul to be the next Commissioner of Social Security, the most powerful position in the Social Security Administration. This position has significant influence not only on administration of the system but also on policy as it relates to Social Security. The President nominated Mr. Saul to finish out the existing term that has been filled by a temporary Commissioner and then an additional six-year term which would carry Mr. Saul well past the President's first (and hopefully only) term in office. I

want to share with you two documents related to this nomination:

1. A document provided to Senator Cantwell from the Social Security Works Washington coalition. Senator Cantwell is a member of the Senate Finance Committee, which will hold a hearing designed to assess Mr. Saul's qualifications for Commissioner. In addition, Mr. Saul will meet with each individual member of the Finance Committee in private conversation. Senator Cantwell's office invited the Social Security Works Washington coalition to

submit questions to Senator Cantwell that she might raise with Mr. Saul either in their one-on-one interview or in the hearing. The background material preceding the questions was developed by Aaron Keating, Managing Director of the Economic Opportunity Institute.

2. A letter from more than 350 organizations that comprise the national Strengthen Social Security Coalition. This letter has not been sent yet and will be sent once a hearing on the nomination is scheduled. It provides an insight into the nominee.

Questions for Andrew Saul, With Background Information

From 2010-2017, Congress cut SSA's administrative budget by 11 percent (adjusted for inflation). In the face of these cutbacks, the agency has struggled to provide adequate service to its customers, who experience long waits in crowded field offices, busy signals and interminable hold times on the 800 phone line, and an average wait of nearly two years for hearings on disability claims.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has been steering claimants toward its online services in order to reduce reliance on brick and mortar offices. But seniors and disabled Americans do not always have full internet access, nor is online claiming necessarily as effective for beneficiaries. And sending people to more-distant field offices creates additional transportation barriers and cost burdens.

The American people seem to agree. In a 2017 poll by Lake Research Partners, the majority of voters said they prefer to communicate with a live person at the Social Security Administration when applying for benefits, replacing a lost Social Security card, or inquiring about their earnings records.

In March, after seven successive years of cuts, Congress gave SSA a much-needed boost in administrative funding, but out of the \$480 million increase over 2017 levels, only about \$200 million was available for direct public service. Clearly this is not enough to enable SSA to stop curtailing service.

With 10,000 baby boomers reaching retirement age every day, it seems that now is the time to strengthen — not impede — Social Security's ability to provide services. It's certainly not the time to be closing field offices.

Given these facts:

- 1) What specific steps would you direct the SSA to take to restore access to services for the American people — in particular, for elderly, low-income and other populations that often lack internet access, don't have easy/regular access to personal transportation.
- 2) As part of Congress' budget-writing/budget approval process, would you direct the SSA to make additional (increased) funding requests to the Office of Management and Budget in order to improve access to its services?

Ensuring Social Security meets today's needs

Social Security is one of the nation's most successful, effective, and popular programs and provides a foundation of income on which workers can build to plan for their retirement, as well as valuable social insurance protection to workers who become disabled and to families whose breadwinner dies.

Social Security provides the majority of income to most elderly Americans. For about half of seniors, it provides at least 50 percent of their income, and for about one in five seniors, it provides at least 90 percent of income, across multiple surveys and the recent study that matches survey and administrative data.

Benefits are modest; the average Social Security retirement benefit in June, 2018, was about \$1,413 a month, or about \$17,000 a year. (The average disabled worker and aged widow received slightly less.)

Moreover, most retirees enroll in Medicare's Supplementary Medical Insurance (also known as Medicare Part

Continued on Page 11

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SECURITY

...don't cut it.

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chair, Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Senate Committee
on Finance

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden,

The Strengthen Social Security Coalition consists of over 350 national and state organizations, representing over 50 million Americans, including seniors, women, people with disabilities, workers, people of color, and veterans. The coalition is strongly opposed to President Trump's nominee, Mr. Andrew M. Saul, of New York, to be the next commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA). Given our strong objections, the coalition is particularly concerned that the Senate is considering confirming him not just for the remainder of the current term, but for a new six-year term, following that.

The commissioner of the Social Security Administration must have deep knowledge of Social Security, a program which is vitally important but extremely complicated. In addition, the commissioner must have a deep and clear understanding of the challenges facing SSA. Mr. Saul has no previous work experience related to Social Security or SSA. While the experience Mr. Saul gained from his time working on the federal thrift savings plan (TSP) was undoubtedly valuable, it has little value to helping him run the Social Security system, unless he seeks to privatize the program.

The Social Security Administration is facing numerous challenges including long waits at field offices, on the 1-800 number, and, most distressingly, for final determinations for those whose work has been ended as the result of serious and permanent disability. The head of this crucial agency should be someone who is up to speed, not someone who will require on-the-job training. New claims representatives are trained for over a year before they are ready to help the public; a commissioner should have much more experience, training, and expertise before taking control of such a large, vital agency.

Further, the person serving as SSA commissioner, a position of public trust, should be of the highest ethical standing. In November 2007, Mr. Saul was forced to drop out of the race for a New York Congressional seat after the New York Times uncovered questionable contributions to his campaign. At the time of his campaign, Mr. Saul served as a state officer, as the vice chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). He was also a presidential appointee, serving as the chairman of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. New York laws prohibit members of boards, like the MTA, from taking donations from companies or individuals seeking to do business with their agency. Mr. Saul's campaign received donations from heads of Vornado Realty Trust and Tishman Speyer Properties, development companies that submitted bids with the MTA soon after their leadership donations. In addition to a state level violation, Mr. Saul's receipt of donation is a direct violation of the federal Hatch Act, which forbids federal employees from soliciting campaign contributions.

Further, in 2012, Mr. Saul was riding his bike in his neighborhood in New York and directly disobeyed the instruction of a law enforcement officer who told him not to enter a restricted area. Instead of obeying the law, he lied about his identity to the police officer. An investigation of the incident by the Bedford Police Department, which included the testimony of two eyewitnesses, concluded that the police officer had acted reasonably, while Mr. Saul was classified as uncooperative.

The leader of the Social Security Administration has responsibility not just for Social Security, but also the Supplemental Security Income program, as well as some aspects of Medicare. These programs serve virtually every American. The American people should have leaders who are expert about the programs they are administering, as well as trustworthy and honest, recognizing that they serve the American people.

Especially concerning, President Trump has chosen to nominate Mr. Saul not only for the remainder of the current term, but also a new six-year term, on top of that. This is unprecedented and shows an overreach of power. Mr. Saul is unqualified for even the completion of the current term. He certainly should not be confirmed for an additional six years after that, a period which, by definition, will run beyond the current administration, even if the current president is elected for a second term.

The Senate Finance Committee should protect the American people and their Social Security by rejecting the nomination of Mr. Andrew Saul. We urge you to oppose this nomination; the coalition sees a vote for Mr. Saul as a vote against Social Security.

Our coalition would be happy to work with you and help suggest more appropriate, more qualified leaders for the Social Security Administration.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Altman
Chair, Strengthen Social Security Coalition

Reinvent Power With a Renewable Energy Revolution

By Beth Brunton

When talking with family and friends about switching from fossil fuels to clean energy, do you ever struggle to come up with strong, specific examples of possibilities? When canvassing or calling voters who ask for examples of success, do you wonder how you could give a more concise, compelling answer? When you are analyzing your own investments, work, or consumption choices are you curious about whether we could survive and thrive without oil, coal, etc.? Yes, that's happened to me, as well.

For many of us PSARA members, energy production is not our career or family background. Reading the latest news, magazines, and books, we've become experts in what we are against; we're resisting pipelines, refineries, fracking, LNG (Liquid Natural Gas), but we rarely hear stories about the clean energy revolution happening everywhere that could help inspire and inform us, our friends, and neighbors.

Have you heard about the renewable energy boom happening from deep in the heart of Texas, to Rhode Island, Michigan, North Carolina, Montana, and California? Me neither. Do you want to find out how laid-off autoworkers are becoming wind turbine techs and laid-off coalminers are becoming roof-top solar technicians, transforming their lives, their communities, and their environments?

The new film, "Reinventing Power: America's Renewable Energy Boom," produced by the Sierra Club, offers a series of short stories featuring new leaders, changing their minds and work to renewable energy. On the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, in the shadow of the West's largest, most polluting coal plant, Kaden Walks Nice is bringing wind turbines to replace the Coalstrip plant. Near Los Angeles, Isaiah Robinson is proud to show his family the electric buses he builds which provide new jobs and reduce the severe smog

pollution hovering over his community. In Texas, Danielle Murray works with Austin Energy to provide community solar to low-income and communities of color historically left out of the energy debate.

To find out more inspiring stories, go to: sierraclub.org/reinventingpower. On the website, you can watch the movie or trailer, or read and watch several examples at "Stories in Focus", or read fact sheets including:

"We Can Do This: 100% Renewable is Achievable" and "100% Renewal Makes Economic Sense: Clean Energy creates jobs, spurs growth, and saves money" and find out where to see it.

On November 6, 2018, we Washington voters have the opportunity to contribute to this "Green New Deal" by passing the Clean Energy, Clean Air Initiative, I-1631, and electing representatives who will join our fight. "We don't usually have much say in how economic policy is developed," observes Lynn Dodson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council. "This has communities of color, environmental groups, and labor making decisions about the economy of the future." (*The Nation*, August 13-20, 2018, p. 20)

We know the fossil fuel industry will flood all media sources with lies and myths threatening job loss and economic hardship if I-1631 passes. So we must be ready with our own messages, face-to-face, on our phones, on our own social media. The stories from Reinventing Power can help us reinvent our own power. To win, not just this initiative, but also in the next legisla-



Beth Brunton (left) campaigning for I-1631 (photo courtesy of Beth Brunton)

tive sessions and fights to stop future pipelines, we can share these stories of brave, imaginative people here and everywhere who are reinventing power and their lives.

According to Mt. Vernon former United Steelworker local leader and blue-green partner, Steve Garey, "This is going to be a classic 'organized people vs. organized money.' It's not just 'us and them' anymore-it's us and us and us and them' now, and it's made all the difference in the world." (*The Nation*, August 13-20, 2018, p. 23)

So, get ready for your next conversations about a just transition to clean energy.

Watch, listen, and read these stories of real people who are reinventing power. Farmers who are surviving by adding wind farms. Proud coal miners who discovered better work, lives, and climate by becoming solar technicians. If we vote for it, we can make it happen here and everywhere.

Beth Brunton is a leader of South Seattle Climate Action Network, Earth Care not Warfare, and a PSARA member.

CARE Documentary in Port Townsend • Herstory in Langley

PSARA is proud to present two exceptional events this month: a showing of the award-winning documentary CARE, and a presentation of Herstory, a collection of stories from old lesbians.

CARE Documentary

Wednesday, October 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Port Townsend Community Center, 620 Tyler Street, Port Townsend

By documenting the lives of real caregivers and the clients they help, CARE illustrates the breakdown of our home care system.

Vilma, for example, is undocumented. Her own life in the US is precarious, yet she is the sole lifeline for her 92-year-old client, Dee. Dee was an active business woman until dementia ended her career and made her dependent on her caregiver.

In an isolated town in Appalachia, Larry, a former coalminer, fights depression as he waits for a lung transplant. His wife, Tiff, and his caregiver, Laurie, struggle to keep him active as they take care of his day-to-day needs.

At first Toni was reluctant to have home care workers in her home at all hours. But her husband, Peter, has an aggressive form of Parkinson's and she has no alternative. Eventually she realizes how much she depends on his caregivers.

All these stories are set against the reality of a home care system in crisis. As the older population expands, there will be increasing demand for compassionate and skilled home care workers.

And yet, as CARE demonstrates, many home care workers are barely able to make ends meet.

After the film, a panel -- including Rep. Steve Tharinger, Madeleine Foutch from SEIU 775, and two care workers -- will discuss efforts to pass the Long Term Care Trust Act in the 2019 state legislative session. This legislation will help address some of the problems raised by the film and confronting Jefferson County and Washington State.

Herstory: Stories of Old Lesbians
Sunday, October 28, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
WICA (Whidbey Island Center for the Arts), 565 Camano Avenue, Langley

What was it like to be a lesbian in a time when being "out" presented real dangers of violence, arrest, confinement in a mental institution, or loss of a job and standing in the community?

How did lesbians define themselves when there were no websites, TV shows, magazines, or books that represented their lives in a realistic way, or advocated for them?

The Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project (OLOHP) has been collecting stories to document this untold legacy, focusing on lesbians 70 or older. To date, they have interviewed more than 600 women.

Some of their stories are harrowing, some sad, some hilariously funny, but all are packed with emotion.

The stories are told by readings from the original interviews, supplemented with a DVD that documents additional stories, and helps explain how the stories were collected.

The readings will be introduced by Air Force Major General (retired) Trish Rose, the first openly lesbian service member to achieve a two-star rank.

After the presentation, there will be time for questions and discussion, and OLOHP will have books available, based on the interviews.

All are welcome. A donation of \$10-\$20 will be requested to help cover costs and support the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project.

To See Ourselves as Others See Us



Donald Trump by the Brazilian cartoonist Carlos Latuff.

Report From the September 14 Candidate Forum

By Pam Lux

On September 14, PSARA co-sponsored a candidate forum in Tukwila organized by King County Aging and Disability Services. Candidates from the 30th, 33rd, 34th, 37th, and 47th Legislative Districts were questioned by PSARA about issues that are important to us. In the interests of informing our members where the candidates stand, we've summarized their answers below.

How do you envision Washington State providing Health care for all?

30th LD House candidate Claire Wilson: The LGBTQ community is still not having their issues addressed in this area. We should be using and improving the State Plan. Along with health care we should be looking at the cost of drugs and affordable and available transportation to get people to their medical provider.

33rd LD Rep. Mia Gregerson: She is for health care for all and thinks that with all the technology in the state that we can utilize that to improve what we have.

33rd LD Rep. Tina Orwell: She is for health care for all. She also thinks that aging in place and mental health are important things to focus on.

33rd LD Senator Karen Keiser: She is for health care for all plus paid family and medical leave. Medicare should be handled at the state level given what is occurring at the federal level. She believes that the state can do it better. She is in favor of the Long Term Care Trust Act.

37th LD Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos: She is for health care for all but thinks that Federal and State governments should work together to solve the problems. She believes that single payer is the way to go and to diversify revenue with a different tax structure

37th LD Senate candidate Beth Broadway: Is not for single payer or health care for all. She believes that the free market will take care of the health care crisis.

37th LD Senator Rebecca Saldana: Is for health care for all. She thinks that expanding the School District Health care plan is a good idea, giving larger money pools to the participants. She want to change the state tax system to be less regressive.

47th LD Rep. Mark Hargrove: Is for free market insurance because it works the best and has more options to offer if the current restrictions are removed.

47th LD House candidate Debra Entenman: She is for health care for all. Believes Medicare works and single payer is the way to go.

47th LD Senator Mona Das: She believes everyone has a right to health care and is in favor of single payer.

What proposal do you have to provide more low income and workforce housing? And how do you propose to pay for it?

Wilson: Where we place housing is important. Housing locations should have necessities such as transit, commerce, and medical providers. We need strong communities to aid and care for seniors.

Gregerson: Local jurisdictions should work to make it easier to build low-income, workforce housing so people can be able to stay in the community where they live currently.

Orwell: There should be more affordable and workforce housing.

Keiser: More homeless housing and more support for the homeless population in the way of assistances to help with all the other things that went to create the homeless situation they are in.

Santos: The state gives money to local entities, cities, counties, transit, etc. and they purchase land. When they don't need all the land they sell the excess property for a profit. They should be required to set aside a percentage of the land for housing. The land could be leased to low-income trust funds for development of more housing.

Broadway: There should be a change in the Growth Management Act, reducing liabilities for developers.

Saldana: Zoning changes to allow more density with restrictions. Streamlining the building process would speed things up.

Hargrove: Keep housing affordable by freeing builders from legislative regulation.

Entenman: Affordable housing is her priority

Das: Aging in place needs to be affordable, we need diversified housing, look at the Condo cap and the issues with building them as a first home and a last home.

What are your feelings about accountability for corporate tax incentives? Should there be a sunset clause and how will you require job creation?

Wilson: We should look at the B&O tax. No head tax. Focus on apprenticeships and CTC programs among the corporations receiving the tax incentives.

Gregerson: The head tax has worked for years in Bellevue and Redmond. It is the State's responsibility to help communities create living wage jobs with benefits

Orwell: We need to review and sunset all incentives. We need to rethink the use of internships and apprenticeships.

Keiser: Look at the tax loop holes and revisit the tax system. The B&O tax is not effective and we should look at a business income tax on profits.

Santos: We need accountability and a regular review of incentives. Establish requirements on all new incentives. We need sunset clauses but we also need accountability and transparency. There should be a tax expenditure report annually to account for all the expenses, including the incentive money given.

Broadway: We should clarify what requirements are current for incentives with no sunset clause. There should be an accountability check to make sure they are doing what they said.

Saldana: Tax incentives should have public benefits, jobs, housing, and community. Likes the idea of sunsets.

Hargrove: No sunsets. We should look at the results. Sunset clauses will be detrimental to businesses. He previously tried to get incentives for all manufacturing businesses.

Entenman: Keep tax incentives to businesses like Boeing but only if they keep the jobs in Seattle.

Das: We need more green jobs and incentives should go to the companies that are doing that.

Pam Lux is Co-Chair of PSARA's Government Relations Committee.

Questions for Andrew Saul

Continued from Page 6

B) and have Part B premiums deducted from their Social Security checks. As health care costs continue to outpace general inflation, those premiums will take a bigger bite out of their checks.

Before 1981, children of retired, deceased, or disabled workers continued receiving benefits through age 22 if they attended college. Now benefits end once a young person turns 18 and finishes high school. Reinstating college benefits could help children and their families achieve their dreams, as well as reduce socioeconomic barriers to education and lifetime opportunities.

Given these facts:

- 1) Would you advise this administration to change the consumer price index used to determining the annual cost of living increase in Social Security benefits to the CPI-E (CPI for the Elderly)?
- 2) Would you advise this administration to reinstate Social Security benefits for children through age 22 if they attend college?

Passing on Social Security's legacy

As you may be aware, in anticipation of the "baby-boomer" generation's retirement, Congress increased payroll taxes and reduced future benefits for millions of Americans in the early 1980's, building a large surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund. The latest Trust Fund report projects Social Security can pay all benefits in full and on time until 2034, and 75% of benefits thereafter.

You may also be aware there is a cap on taxable earnings for the purposes of Social Security (currently \$128,400). Congress set the cap in 1977 and indexed it to average wage growth, intending it to cover 90% of all wages. But over the past several decades, wage growth among lower- and middle-income Americans has slowed, while wages at the top have grown dramatically. As a result, the cap now covers just 82% of aggregate wages.

This rising inequality in earnings accounts for 43.5% of the projected 75-year shortfall in Social Security funding. Put another way: if the cap on taxable

income had continued to cover 90% of total earnings since 1983, the Trust Fund would have at least an additional \$1.1 trillion today.

Given these facts:

- 1) Would you advise this administration to consider increasing the cap on taxable earnings in order to pay full benefits beyond the year 2034 – or even increase benefits?
- 2) You were previously on the Board of Directors of the Manhattan Institute. The Institute has previously advocated for privatization or partial privatization of Social Security. Do you support any level of privatization of Social Security?

Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund and Chair of Social Security Works Washington.

Aaron Keating is Managing Director of the Economic Opportunity Institute and a member of PSARA.

Nacy Altman is Chair of the Strengthen Social Security Coalition and founder of Social Security Works.



PPSARA members David Westberg and Mindi Lee turned out to support New Seasons workers at the Ballard Farmers Market. Want to stand with them? Renew your membership in PSARA with the handy coupon at right.

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): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Meetings and Events

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 3, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *Identifying Fake News*. Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, October 4, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 4, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S. All welcome.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 10:30 a.m. - Noon, Monday, October 8, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S. All welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, October 9, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

CARE Documentary: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 10, Port Townsend Community Center, 620 Tyler St., Port Townsend. Details on Page 9.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 11, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E. Green Lake Dr. N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1 p.m., Thursday, October 11, Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd Street, Burien. This month: All are welcome as we plan PSARA events in South King County.

Meet the Writers: 2:30 p.m., Sunday, October 14, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. Details on Page 1.

PSARA Race/Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Thursday, October 18, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. All are welcome.

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

Herstory: 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., Sunday, October 28, WICA, 565 Camano Ave., Langley. Details on Page 9.

