

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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May 2019

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State Senate

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GiveBIG -- It's Now!

By Robby Stern

GiveBIG Day is May 8 and you can make your donation to the PSARA Education Fund any time between now and midnight on May 8.

Your donations will finance the publication of the Retiree Advocate and educational work essential to winning expansion of Social Security and Improved Medicare for All that will cover hearing, vision, dental, and long-term care. It will also help finance the new educational presentation we will be mounting on climate change and what we can do to counter this monumental challenge to the lives of all generations.

As we bring our educational presentations into new geographic areas and figure out ways to spread the message in areas where we already have a presence, our costs increase. Your contributions will help us meet the revenue demands of this growth.

Donations can be made at <https://www.givebig2019.org/psara-education-fund> or by going to [givebig2019.org](https://www.givebig2019.org) and entering the PSARA Education Fund.

As a reminder to members who prefer not to donate online, you can send a check to the PSARA Education Fund any time between now and May 8. Please write in the memo line, GiveBIG. Mail your check to the PSARA Education Fund, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle, 98144.

Please help meet the challenge donations from the individual members of the Executive Board. Donate during the GiveBIG campaign to help achieve our fundraising goal of \$20,000 for the GiveBIG campaign.



Your GiveBIG donations help support unique educational programs like this presentation of Herstory: Stories of Old Lesbians. (Photo: Garet Munger)

Join PSARA for May Day

Wednesday, May 1
March begins at 1:00 p.m.
Judkins Park
2150 S Norman Street, Seattle

Look for the PSARA banner at the 20th Place S entrance to Judkins Park.

"This year we march once again to reclaim our struggles as immigrants, workers, and without borders.

"We are here because of the insecurity, crime, and corruption unleashed in our countries by bad governments with the support and intervention of the U.S.

"We are here because of political repression and exploitation of workers and the dispossession of our natural resources and territories.

"We are here refusing to be victims of the few who benefit from this system and the impoverishment, displacement, and death that they wreak upon our peoples."

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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information or to renew:
www.psara.org
or visit PSARA on Facebook

A Big PSARA Thank You to Nick Licata and the Seattle Labor Chorus

The Fundraising Committee had two wonderful and successful events in the past month. Our thanks go out to Nick Licata, who discussed his book, *Becoming a Citizen Activist*, took questions, and participated in a spirited discussion.

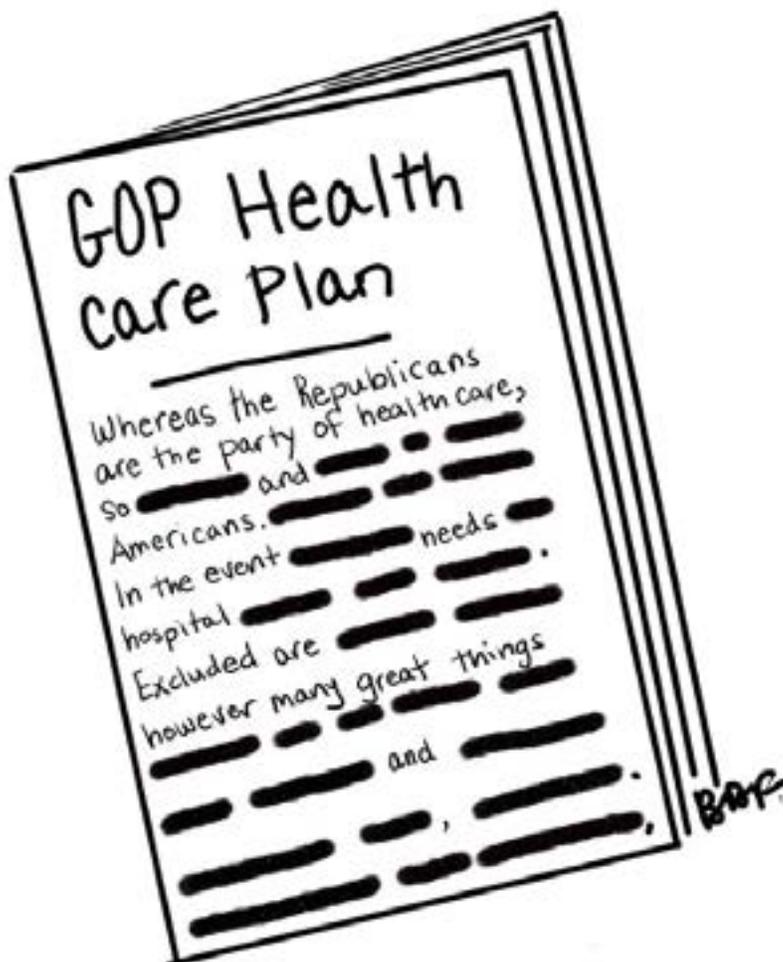
To a standing-room-only crowd, on April 13, we had the great pleasure of a play that re-enacted the Seattle General Strike and heard the great voices of the Seattle Labor Chorus. We thank Janet Stecher, the director of the Chorus, the Chorus Members, and Conor Casey and Crystal Rodgers from the Washington State Labor Archives.

For an article on the performance by PSARA member and veteran journalist Tim Wheeler, see Page 4.

We particularly thank those who contributed to PSARA to allow us to continue our work to make retirement real for all generations.

The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye



Redacted!

Long-Term Care Trust Act Passes Washington Senate

By Robby Stern

In a dramatic vote on Tuesday, April 16, the Long-Term Care Trust Act (LTCTA) passed the Washington Senate by a vote of 26-22. It was mostly a partisan vote, with one Republican joining 25 Democrats voting in favor, and three Democrats joining 19 Republicans voting in opposition. The legislation, which was passed by the Washington House of Representatives on February 21, was amended in the Senate. It now goes back to the House for concurrence with the Senate amendments, and once the House concurs, it will proceed to the Governor's desk for his signature.

As was stated over and over in the Senate debate, both by proponents and opponents, this is a very significant policy decision. Washington will be establishing a Social Security-type system for long-term care services. Benefits begin in 2025, after the administrative process is developed and funds are collected for several years. Once implemented, Washington residents meeting the requirements of the legislation will be entitled to up to a \$36,500 lifetime benefit, which increases with the CPI (Consumer Price Index).

As PSARA's lobbyist Pam Crone stated, one cannot underestimate the importance of advocacy by both the lobbyists on the scene and individuals from PSARA and other organizations who communicated with their legislators. Also critical was the cohesion of the coalition organizations that comprise Washingtonians for a Responsible Future and the excellent leadership provided by Maddie Foutch, from SEIU 775, who has been coordinating this major undertaking.

After a five-year effort, we are almost at the finish line of the legislative



PSARA members (from left) Tim Burns, Pam Lux, Jessica Bonebright, Mindi Lee, and Ruth Egger at a hearing for the Long-Term Care Trust Act.

Ruth testified on behalf of PSARA.

process. A very big thank-you goes to PSARA member Ruth Egger, who represented PSARA in the coalition work and testified numerous times in Olympia, and to Pam Lux, Chair of PSARA's Government Relations Committee, who spent several days in Olympia at hearings and personally contacted PSARA members and others to lobby their legislators.

Pam Crone and Nancy Sapiro actively represented PSARA day-to-day in the legislative process and did a great job! Additionally, the PSARA Education Fund held numerous educational events around the region explaining the long-

term care crisis and how the LTCTA would help. Many people participated in these forums, some of who bared their souls by telling heart-wrenching stories of their family struggles with long-term care.

And last, but far from least, we express much gratitude to the legislators who led this effort, Rep. Lori Jenkins, Rep. Drew MacEwan, Sen. Annette Cleveland, and Sen. Guy Palumbo, and the 63 Representatives and 26 Senators who voted to pass this monumental, first-of-a-kind legislation. Once again, Washington is creating an example for the rest of our country.

Seattle Labor Chorus Sings of 1919 General Strike

By Tim Wheeler

On April 13, a capacity crowd greeted with standing ovations a performance by the Seattle Labor Chorus of "Labor Will Feed The People," a musical play that celebrates the centennial of the 1919 Seattle General Strike.

Workers from 100 unions a century ago walked off their jobs in solidarity with striking Seattle and Tacoma shipyard workers, 65,000 in total, idling the city for five days.

The Washington State Labor Council meeting hall was packed as the chorus members sang and spoke their lines, reflecting the fight-back during that shutdown, the most dramatic assertion to date of the unity and power of organized labor in the US.

This was the second performance of the play by Ed Mast in collaboration with the University of Washington Labor Archives. The first was February 6 at the Seattle Museum of History and Industry. Janet Stecher, director of the Seattle Labor Chorus, indicated more performances are planned.

The play begins with a meeting of the Seattle Central Labor Council, (CLC) January 21, 1919, to hear an appeal by the shipyard workers for sympathy strikes. The shipyard workers had been on strike for weeks against the U.S. Government's Emergency Fleet Corporation that built ships for the US Navy to gird US participation in World War I. The war has been over for three months but a Government promise to reopen negotiations to give the workers a desperately needed raise has been broken.

One by one, the unions vote "yes" to join the strike: Electrical Workers, Leather Workers, Hotel Maids, Cooks & Assistants, Teamsters, Ferry Workers, Longshoremen, Waitresses, Women Laundry Workers, Street Car Workers, Typographical Workers.

The play stresses the multi-racial and gender unity forged during the strike. Unionized Japanese American workers voted to join the strike and stood firm,



The Seattle Labor Chorus re-enacts the 1919 General Strike in song and spoken word. (Photo courtesy of Karn Richter)

even though threatened with mass deportation. Yet they had been excluded from the Seattle AFL and barred from the CLC. More than 300 African American longshoremen joined the strike despite racist segregation that excluded them from many of the unions in the city and nation.

Earl George, an African American worker, later a leader of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union, joined the strike. His description of the General Strike was quoted in the play, "Nothing moved but the tide."

The Strike Committee urged workers to stay home, no picket lines or mass rallies, a target for police attack. Culinary workers set up cafeterias---thus the title of the play. Milkmen delivered to milk stations throughout Seattle to feed babies and the infirm. Drug stores were permitted to refill prescriptions.

Mayor Hanson was determined to smash the strike. He added 600 police, deputized 2,400 goons and authorized them to arm themselves with rifles and

shotguns. Two regiments of Federal troops were brought in amid shrieking headlines against "Bolshevism." The General Strike ended peacefully. The shipyard strike continued.

Amid the "Red Scare" the Palmer raids were unleashed nationally, rounding up and deporting or imprisoning thousands of workers.

Yet in 1919, strikes swept the nation and the world – at least 3,630 walk-outs – including the 1919 steel strike of 365,000 workers and a textile strike by tens of thousands of immigrant workers in Massachusetts.

One of the voices from the chorus proclaimed, "We went from having no power at all in the work force to becoming a power..." "The chorus sang Utah Phillips's moving anthem, "Ship's gonna sail to peace and justice. Ship gonna sail, gonna sail someday..." Again, the crowd sang too.

Tim Wheeler is a veteran activist, journalist, author of the book News From Rainshadow Country, and a member of PSARA.

Locking In the Old Rules

NAFTA 2.0 a Threat to Climate and Environment

By Michael Righi

Can you imagine an international agreement in these times that does not take climate change into account? How about a trade agreement that does not even mention the climate? Welcome to Trump's "new" NAFTA – NAFTA 2.0.

Back in the day – say, the 1950's and 1960's – trade agreements were about trade, lowering tariffs on goods and services. Not any more. Starting with the original NAFTA, in 1994, so-called trade agreements have been about protecting and extending the rights of corporations and wealthy investors. These laws make sure that corporate elites are unimpeded by laws or policies that might keep them from taking advantage of the lowest wages and working conditions for workers.

They make it possible for corporate polluters can locate where environmental laws are weakest, or extract natural resources without bothersome rules about protecting people, habitats or climate. That is NAFTA 2.0, no different from the original, perpetuating the old rules in a time of environmental and climate crisis.

Trade Rules

How do those rules work? An example: US lead battery recyclers, facing US regulations on pollution and safety, moved operations to Mexico where labor and safety standards are one-tenth as stringent as in the US. Dozens of factories in the US were abandoned. Then NAFTA allows them to import lead back into the US without duties. They get lower costs, weak regulation in Mexico, and therefore pollution outsourced, and profits enhanced.

A very critical report on the battery trade was issued by a commission set up under what are called the NAFTA "side agreements" on labor and the

environment. But there are no enforcement rules. None. For example, there is no provision allowing US jurisdictions to ban the import of polluting products, or put tariffs on those companies that might account for the environmental and health damage done.

What NAFTA 2.0 calls for is "harmonization" of regulations between the three countries. What "standards" do corporate polluters like these battery companies want? Self-regulation is their mantra. And, of course, who writes trade agreements such as NAFTA 2.0 in the first place? Hello, Chamber of Commerce.

Let's add in another example. Metalclad, a California company, set up a toxic waste dump in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosi. The community realized its water sources were being poisoned and refused to issue new permits, creating an ecological preserve instead. Metalclad sued (their property and profits were taken!) under NAFTA's corporate-dominated private "trade courts" and won. Mexico had to pay the company \$15 million.

NAFTA 2.0, because of popular movements against these corporate rights (wrongs, more accurately), especially around the fight against the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), has backed off a little on corporate rights to sue. Only the huge climate polluters, such as Exxon and Shell, would still be able to sue. This is what we are supposed to hail as "progress"?!

Instead, we have a new chapter on "good regulatory practices." What do you suppose our closeted trade agreement negotiators think good practices amount to? You got it, corporations are going to help write the regulations (does that sound familiar?); they are going to be notified when some jurisdiction is thinking about regulating them so that they can "help"; they will

have greater rights to challenge and repeal any rule that affects them. And if governments do not follow these practices, anti-regulation governments will be able to challenge the rule. And NAFTA 2.0 actually provides enforcement provisions for this!

Green New Deal versus NAFTA

How much does any of this matter, really? We have a climate crisis, and, thankfully, Green New Deal advocates are calling for a dramatic overhaul of American society. School kids are leaving classes en masse. These folks, and the scientists putting out report after report, understand the scale of the problem.

NAFTA 2.0 is written to stifle anything like a Green New Deal. Policies to "buy green and local," or employ local workers and companies to build new energy infrastructure, or manage supply and help farmers and ranchers transition to climate-friendly practices – all of these contravene trade agreements. The old rules are in place, and that's the way the big corporations want it.

Corporate elites know they are under challenge. They are hoping these agreements will provide them with an additional line of defense. We need to expose these agreements for what they are. And work to oppose NAFTA 2.0 when Trump puts it before Congress.

But it's up to us to do the necessary work to get Green New Deal policies before the people in every way we can. Then we can write positive trade agreements, ones that enforce adherence to climate goals, prohibit fossil fuel subsidies, provide incentives for local sustainable industry and agriculture, and require enforcement of environmental standards we have won and will continue to win.

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

Memories of Phyllis Baker

By Jo Anne McGaw

When Phyllis and I were new to each other, shortly after she moved into Willis House, she mentioned that her daughter, M-Jo, was urging her to get a full-time volunteer job. I was *thrilled!* I'd been wishing for a minion for some while, to help me better organize my work for WASARA. WASARA – the Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans – was housed, most graciously, in the second room of PSARA's suite in the Seattle Labor Temple. "Have I got the job for you!" I practically cheered. "Come and be my minion!" And she did.

Phyllis joined me most days in the second room. We did work, but mostly we talked. We *talked*. From the outset, she claimed not to "get" organizations. So we talked. Things change as time rolls on, and things changed in the second room. For one thing, though she never complained about being a minion, she did keep upgrading her job description. She also got to meet the brilliant and charismatic Will Parry. I found myself second in line for her services if she decided he needed anything. And finally, after much long and meandering philosophical discoursing, Phyllis came to appreciate the point – and the social value – of organizations. Especially this one – PSARA.

She had fallen in love with the commitment to an organizational effort to make the world better. Making the world better was her *raison d'être*. Trusting no one's judgment but her own, determining what would make the world better, how to make the world better, and what she, herself, could do to make the world better was what Phyllis *did*.

She did it personally, listening to her friends and neighbors, gathering contributions of all kinds, and deciding where to send them. Listening, researching, record-keeping, translating official language into understandable steps, finding worthy recipients for food and clothes, and sending books to pris-

oners. Listening, laughing and arguing, meeting health challenges, celebrating birthdays and solstices, following Roger's directions, watching Doc Martin, eating sweets with Nancy and dancing at Irwin's, sharing books and DVDs, visiting friends in long-term care and hospitals, talking politics, posting helpful information on the bulletin boards – this very kind, erudite, musically gifted, intellectually fastidious woman became one of my closest friends. She had been a star student at a prestigious college, had sung classic German Lieder, wrote poetry, played many instruments, read widely.

She was the living expression of a successful Classic Liberal Education in America. When she cleared her bookshelves to make room for her hospice bed, it caused a sharp spike in the quality of our Community Room library. She never tired of doing research. She continued writing poetry and prose, working with, entertaining and hosting musicians, and celebrating life with her friends until her death.

I'm pleased to have been the one to have brought her devoted services to



Phyllis Baker
(Photo courtesy of Jo Anne McGaw)

PSARA, and I'm grateful to PSARA for having provided a warm and welcoming home for her gifts.

Jo Anne McGaw is a member of PSARA. Phyllis Baker was a beloved member and one of our longstanding Advocate proofreaders.

We Remember Jacquie Jones-Walsh

Washington State Labor Council Vice President Jacquie Jones-Walsh, PSARA member, member of the Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME, and State President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), passed away this month.

"Jacquie's unexpected passing is a major loss for the labor movement in Washington State," said WSLC President and PSARA member Larry Brown. "I've known Jacquie for more than 30 years, and she's been a tireless advocate for women's rights in the workplace, racial justice, and public employees at all levels of government. She and her family are in our thoughts as we celebrate Jacquie's proud legacy by continuing to fight for the issues she was so passionate about."



Jacquie Jones-Walsh

Walking With People Detained in Tacoma

By Dina Burstein

The judge in the courtroom at the Northwest Detention Center on March 25 slowly read through the pages of the detained man's medical records. The detained man, in an orange jumpsuit, sat silent as the judge read. His 25 supporters also waited to see if the judge would finally treat the man fairly.

The man detained, Larry Nicolas, Filipino father, son, and 17-year permanent resident of the US, has been detained at Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) since August 2018. He is anxious to return to his teenage daughter and family in Portland, for whom he is the sole breadwinner. He suffers from a serious chronic medical condition but has received no medical treatment at the Tacoma Detention Center. Although immigration judges twice ordered the NWDC to obtain Larry's medical records, the records had only just arrived in time for his March hearing.

Larry faces deportation to the Philippines, "where he faces heightened violence under the Duterte regime's bloody war against the poor, thinly veiled as a drug war," said Laurie Rocello Torres of Migrant Seattle, an organization which seeks justice for Filipino immigrants. "We must remember that thousands of Filipinos are forced to leave the Philippines every day because of severe poverty, a lack of jobs, and ongoing war carried out by a president who blatantly says he will not help the Filipinos, who have no choice but to migrate, while encouraging violence against those left behind."

Our group of supporters in the courtroom on March 25 had come from Portland and Seattle, invited to witness this moment in Larry's life by Migrant and the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN). We have come to understand that if there are supporters in the courtroom, outcomes are better for the people detained. In Larry's case,



Dina Burstein

the judge read through his medical records, then ordered a court-appointed attorney to represent Larry in his effort to gain release. A new court date was set, and Larry finally turned to face his family and supporters. We poured all the love and hope we could into him for those few minutes, then he was gone.

Larry is one of more than 1,500 people detained in the Detention Center in Tacoma, a for-profit detention center owned by the Geo Group (which contributed \$250,000 to Trump's inauguration celebration in 2016). Each person in the detention center has a story, as Larry does. I believe that each person detained there deserves fair treatment and, with few exceptions, immediate release.

Your presence at bond hearings for people like Larry can make a big difference in how they are treated and even on the amount of bond set by the judge. WAISN and the Church Council of Greater Seattle train and dispatch volunteers to attend court hearings, to accompany immigrants to appointments, errands, and to form relation-

ships with each other. We retired members of PSARA, who can choose what we do during the day, are in a powerful position to volunteer to attend bond hearings and accompany immigrants to appointments.

If you would like to volunteer to attend bond hearings, please contact me at dinaburstein@gmail.com. I will arrange for you to attend a brief training and contact you when hearings or appointments are scheduled.

The WAISN Fair Fight Bond Fund needs our donations now. This fund gives immigrants a fighting chance to pay their bond and go back to their lives and families while they build a case to gain legal status.

At the time of this writing, Larry Nicolas has a bond hearing scheduled April 18. I will be there, with a few of my comrades, and at the next one, until he is released. And I will respond to calls to attend other people's bond hearings as often as I can. I invite you to join me!

Dina Burstein is a member of PSARA and helps lead the Central/SE Seattle Interfaith Migrant Rights Network.

Do We Have Climate Change Yet?

By Michael Shilley

The year 2018 saw the largest changes in our climate and storm intensity ever. Listening to our government one would think things were normal. Have they not heard word from Europe, where 16-year-old school girl Greta Thunberg has skipped school every Friday to lobby and protest her government's inaction on combatting this catastrophe? Greta has addressed the COP24, the European Union Conference, and the World Economic Forum. Among other high profile addresses, she also gave a TED Talk. Greta's videos should be required viewing. Having tissues on hand is recommended as you watch her passionate plea for ACTION to world leaders of government, industry, and entertainment. How do we get sufficient coverage from our media, which is so obsessed with tweets from high places?

The "Sunrise Movement" is a group of young climate activists here in Seattle and around the country that are hard at work spreading the word through their activities and civic action. Go to their website to watch their powerful ACTION in the halls of Congress.

Meeting Seattle's three principal leaders, I was struck by how different they are, yet all three are dedicated climate activists. Victoria is a high school junior, so passionate about Native American rights and saving our salmon. Harry I want to call "the reluctant leader," a quiet young man whose father would take him to anti-war protests as a small child. Schooled as a community organizer, he brings people together in this organization of some 300 members. Connie was undecided on her future after completing her studies at the UW. Armed with knowledge, she has focused her passion on climate and social justice. Sitting with these young activists one cannot help think we are heading for very active and exciting times as we lobby our politicians to adopt the "Green New Deal."

What is the "Green New Deal"? Bobby Righi's article in last month's *Advocate* was a great introduction. In fact, it was the reason I went to the PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee meeting, where I was asked to write an article about the Sunrise Movement.

Be sure to obtain a copy of the Green New Deal resolution presented to the 1st session of the 116th Congress by new Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. What the resolution proposes is a tall order in a country so divided and with so many of the candidates' ideology centered on "voting for ME" rather than saving the planet.

I would like to keep in contact with Sunrise as they grow, and hope this is just the first article and contact we have with these wonderful youngsters. Can you imagine going door to door together, one PSARA member and a Sunrise member handing out a well-thought-out flyer, explaining why we have to take CLIMATE ACTION NOW?

Michel Shilley is a member of the PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee and a retired member of the United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 32.

PSARA Endorses Green New Deal

On April 18, the PSARA Executive Board unanimously endorsed the Green New Deal.

Key parts of this ground-breaking legislation include:

- Guaranteeing a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all people of the United States.
- Providing all people of the United States with high-quality health care; affordable, safe, and adequate housing; economic security; and access to clean water, clean air, healthy and affordable food, and nature.
- Providing resources, training, and high-quality education, including higher education, to all people of the United States.
- Meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources.
- Repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in the United States.
- Building or upgrading to energy-efficient, distributed, and 'smart' power grids, and working to ensure affordable access to electricity.
- Overhauling transportation systems in the United States to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector as much as is technologically feasible, including through investment in zero-emission vehicle infrastructure and manufacturing; clean, affordable, and accessible public transportation; and high-speed rail.
- Spurring massive growth in clean manufacturing in the United States and removing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from manufacturing and industry as much as is technologically feasible.
- Working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers in the United States to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector as much as is technologically feasible.

Eyes on the Prize: Getting Rid of Donald Trump is Not Enough

Don't Let the Mueller Report Substitute for Progressive Politics

By Mike Andrew

I confess I have mixed feelings about the Mueller Report.

The report confirms all the bad feelings I've ever had about Trump – he's a venal huckster who surrounded himself with a gang of grifters so ignorant they didn't even realize they were conspiring with foreign agents.

On the other hand, who needs a 448-page report to know that Trump is a horrible person?

Most of all, I'm worried that the report will steer us in the wrong direction.

Even before the report came out, many Democrats seemed to inhabit a dream world where all they had to do was remove Trump from office. Impeach him, some said. Find the candidate who can beat him in 2020, others replied.

And so the Democratic Party lurches on toward a reprise of the 2016 debacle.

If demonstrating that Trump is a despicable human being were enough to disqualify him, Hillary Clinton would be president today. One more report, one more Congressional hearing, one more leaked tape changes nothing.

Remember why Trump is president. Clinton won almost three million more votes, but she lost the electoral votes of key states she was counting on – Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. And she lost there by very narrow margins, mere thousands of votes.

It's been established by polling that some voters who backed Obama in 2008 and 2012 switched to Trump in 2016. But these voters would not have been enough to swing the election, had it not been for another crucial factor.

Clinton significantly under-performed Obama among some key voting groups – young voters, people of color, and even among white women, who were supposed to be her base. They didn't switch to Trump, for the most part they just didn't vote in the numbers that turned out for Obama.

Had Clinton done as well as Obama among these groups, she would have carried Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, she would be president today, and we would have a much different set of issues to deal with.



*Do we really need a Special Prosecutor to tell us this guy shouldn't be president?
(YouTube)*

Why did she under-perform Obama and therefore lose the election? That's the central question.

I believe this is the answer: To win a campaign against Donald Trump we have to do more than bash him. We have to offer voters hope for a better life, because without that vision they have no reason to vote.

In other words, a winning campaign against Trump has to be about the voters, and not about Trump at all.

What would that look like? Once again, remember why Trump is president. What did he offer voters? Not a vision of the future, but a vision of a mythical past, where white Christian men were kings.

Clinton offered...well, not much apart from the observation that Trump is reprehensible. Her campaign appeared to be saying "Everything is fine, don't rock the boat." This didn't play with people for whom everything is manifestly not fine.

The argument that Trump needs to go because he's undermining US institutions sounds too much like saying "Everything was great before Trump, and let's go back to the good old days."

No, no, no. Instead, let's go forward with a program that really challenges the neoliberal set up. And you know what? That kind of program would be overwhelmingly popular!

Seventy percent of Americans support the idea of Medicare for all (Reuters poll, August 2018).

Fifty-five percent support a \$15 per hour minimum wage, and another 27 percent support increases at a lower level (Harris Poll, January 2019).

Seventy-four percent of Americans say Social Security benefits should not be reduced in any way. Sixty-five percent of adults aged 18 to 29 oppose cuts to Social Security; 77 percent of adults aged 30 to 49 hold that view; and 80 percent of adults over 50 agree (PEW Poll, March 2019).

Eighty-four percent of voters said they're more likely to back candidates who want federal government action to lower prescription drug prices.

Sixty-six percent said they're more likely to back candidates who support expanding and increasing Social Security benefits, vs. 18 percent who are less likely.

Sixty-four percent of voters are more likely to back candidates who support expanding Medicare, vs. 22 percent who are less likely (PPP Poll, March 2018).

Let's keep our eyes on the prize. Everybody knows what Trump is. The way forward is to fight for a better future, not to go back to business as usual.

Donald Trump's 2020 Budget Proposal is His Latest Attack on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid

By Nancy Altman

On the presidential campaign trail, Donald Trump promised to make no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Since taking office, he has broken that promise time after time.

Trump's 2020 budget is the latest example of that lie. It proposes that over just the next 10 years, the federal government cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid by a combined \$2.5 trillion. Worse, it proposes to end Medicaid as we know it.

Trump's budget would have drastic consequences for all Americans, but especially for seniors and people with disabilities. First, cutting Medicaid by \$1.5 trillion, as the Trump budget proposes, would be a disaster for seniors and people with disabilities who need long-term care. Medicaid is the primary payer for long-term care, covering 6 in 10 nursing home residents. Few families could cover the cost without it.

Worse, the Trump budget would turn Medicaid into a block-grant program distributed to states. Block grants would end the insurance that Medicaid is. Instead states would be given a capped lump sum for Medicaid services that doesn't change based on need and possible rising costs. When the funds ran out, too bad for the people; state legislatures would inevitably chip away at which benefits are covered.

On top of those devastating proposed cuts to Medicaid, Trump's budget slashes our earned Medicare by \$845 billion and our earned Social Security and its companion SSI program by \$84 billion, over just the next decade. Among the harmful cuts is a proposed reduction in past-due payments from 12 months to 6 months.

Back payments are necessary because the Social Security Administration has been prohibited from spending an adequate amount on administration, despite the fact that it has a \$2.9 trillion surplus from which those

administrative funds come. The Social Security Administration is extremely efficient. Of every dollar it spends, less than a penny is spent on administration. More than 99 cents is paid in benefits. Yet, as 10,000 Americans turn 65 every day, it must spend adequately. Because it has been starved, working families can wait years to begin to receive the Social Security disability benefits they have earned. Indeed, thousands die while waiting, while thousands more find themselves homeless as a consequence of the wait.

Despite the outrage that Americans are becoming homeless and even dying while waiting to receive their earned benefits, Trump is proposing to slash the Social Security Administration's already inadequate budget by \$400 million in 2020. These cuts, on top of others Republicans have made in the last decade, would lead to more field office closures and longer wait times. Trump and his friends apparently want to make it more difficult for Americans to access their own earned benefits in order to undermine the public trust in our Social Security system.

The Trump budget also contains additional attacks on Social Security. These include charging significant fees for replacement Social Security cards for the first time in the program's 84-year history. This attack disproportionately hurts women, who may change their names at marriage or divorce, causing them to seek replacement cards with their current name.

The good news is that thanks to the Democrats taking control of the House of Representatives last November, the Trump budget proposal is unlikely to become a reality. The other good news is that, thanks to the Democrats taking control of the House, the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee is holding historic hearings on legislation to expand Social Security while restoring it to long-range



actuarial balance, so that all benefits, including their expansions, can be paid on time and in full for the foreseeable future.

While the Democratic Party supports expanding Social Security, as does an overwhelming majority of the American people, it is not likely to become law with the Senate in Republican control and Donald Trump in the White House. That is just one of the many reasons that the 2020 election will be so important.

For those who support Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, it is essential to get involved in the 2020 election. Most importantly, those of us who support these essential programs must vote for those who want to expand them, not cut them. Opponents will claim to want to "save" them. Donald Trump might even try to con us once again by lying that he opposes cuts to them. But only supporters of the programs will say that they want to expand them with no cuts. So, those who care about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, listen carefully and vote accordingly. All of our economic security depends on that.

Nancy Altman is President of Social Security Works, Chair of the Strengthen Social Security Coalition, and member of the Social Security Advisory Board.

A Symbol of Strength and Resilience

By Moe Yonamine

March 31: Yesterday, we had the honor of visiting Grandma Shimabukuro (Fumiko Shimabukuro), who started the Henoko Bay sit-ins, to stop a US base, 22 years ago. A symbol of strength and resilience for so many of us, she has continued to fight unapologetically and fearlessly against the destruction of Oura Bay by the US base.

Taken to the hospital at the age of 90 just a few days ago, she graciously invited us to come meet her and visit as she rested, welcoming our stories, connections, and questions from her hospital bed. Having read the morning papers, she asked Kaiya about her documentary and the youth she had interviewed, and told us about her memories from war, decades of movements she's been a part of, and her current fight for Henoko Bay.

Amongst all that was sacred and special about the moment we spent with Grandma Shimabukuro, we got to deliver the gift and letter from my incredible student, Eva. Eva, in learning about our current fight as Uchinanchu indigenous peoples to protect our ocean, quickly rose to action in expressing solidarity through her indigenous ancestry — from the Tlingit and Haida nations of Southeast Alaska and the Nez Perce and Cayuse tribes of Oregon and Idaho. With necklaces threaded with beautiful beads and shells handmade before our departure to our islands, she included a letter full of love.

In it, Eva wrote: "The necklaces I made for you are to share my love and solidarity as an Indigenous person from the US...All of the necklaces are made from beads given by my family and people in my community. I put shells into them to show what connects us as Indigenous people: the ocean. And though we are in different parts of the world, we are one through water."



Grandma Shimabukuro
(Photo courtesy of Moe Yonamine)

Through tears falling down her cheeks, Grandma Shimabukuro asked us to send a message back to Eva. "Thank you, Eva," she said, holding the necklaces she draped around her neck. Wiping her tears, she repeated, "I understand. I understand."

Moe Yonamine is a school teacher in Portland, Oregon, and a member of PSARA. She and her daughter Kaiya have recently returned from a trip to Okinawa. Kaiya is working on a movie about Henoko Bay and the Okinawan resistance to the American helicopter base being built there.

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

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Meetings and Events

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 1, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). *Topic: Washington State's unfair tax structure.* Brown bag lunch.

May Day March & Rally: 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 1, Judkins Park, 2150 S Norman St, Seattle. See Page 1.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 2, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 2, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave S. All are welcome.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1 p.m., Thursday, May 9, Burien Firehouse, 900 SW 146th St, Burien. *Special Guests: Burien Mayor Jimmy Matta and Vice Mayor Austin Bell.* All are welcome as we plan PSARA events in South King County.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday, May 13, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave S. All are welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 14, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Race and Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.–Noon, Thursday, May 16, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave S, Seattle. All are welcome.

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

Making Retirement Security Real for All: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Thursday, May 30, Third Place Commons, Town Center at Lake Forest Park, 17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Park. Presentation and interactive discussion on Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Long-Term Care. All are welcome.

Save the Date: PSARA Summer Potluck & Membership Meeting. June 20. Details in June issue of the *Advocate*.

Save the Date: PSARA BBQ. September 14. 2821 2nd Ave, Beaumont Room. Details in future issues of the *Advocate*.

