

Join Us for Our Winter Potluck and Membership Meeting Thursday, December 12

Join us for our December potluck and membership meeting Thursday, December 12, at the historic Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Avenue, on Seattle's Capitol Hill.

This year we're trying something novel. Instead of a single featured speaker, we'll have a panel discussing the 2019 election and what it could mean for 2020.

Our panel includes Cherika Carter, Political and Strategic Campaign Director for the Washington State Labor Council; Sharon Maeda, former Executive Director of Pacifica Radio and President of Spectra Communications; and Aaron Ostrom, Executive Director of FUSE. Our own Robby Stern will facilitate.

At 11:30 a.m. you can start bidding on our silent auction items. We're also repeating our very successful raffle. You have a chance to win a gift certificate to the Langley Motel on beautiful Whidbey Island for only \$5 per ticket.

All the proceeds go to fund PSARA's activities. Buy holiday gifts or just keep them for yourself. We won't tell anyone. You can also enjoy a delicious potluck lunch starting at noon.

But it won't be all fun and games. We also have some business to attend to. At the meeting, we'll elect new officers and executive board members. If you wish to run for a position, please contact our Elections Committee, chaired by Robby Stern, at psaraedfund@psara.org

To reserve your place at our winter event, RSVP to organizer@psara.org or call 206-261-8110. Please indicate what potluck item you'll bring to share with the group.



Like our Summer Potluck, pictured above, our Winter event promises to be festive as well as informative. (Photo: Gareth Munger)

Please Consider End-of-Year-Donation

By Robby Stern, President, PSARA Education Fund

As the end of 2019 approaches, many of us consider making end-of-year donations as part of our holiday spirit. We do what our financial circumstances allow us to do.

If you are making end of the year donations please consider the PSARA Education Fund. Besides producing the *Retiree Advocate*, the Education Fund supports forums and presentations that help clarify critical issues that are at stake at both the federal and state level. In 2020, we will do everything we can to make sure that climate justice and preserving and expanding Medicare and Social Security are an important part of the election campaign.

Please consider a donation, small, medium or large, to help us do the progressive education we need to do!

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

Published monthly by the PSARA Education Fund, 321
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Thank You, Larry Gossett



One of the sad consequences of this year's election is that PSARA member Larry Gossett will be retiring from his King County Council seat.

Larry served on the Council since 1994, and chaired the Council in 2007 and 2013.

Although he served many years in elected office, Larry never stopped being an activist fighter for civil rights.

Whether we lived in Larry's County Council District or not, we all owe him a big THANK YOU for his years of service.

House On Fire: Demonstration for Climate Justice!

Monday, December 16 from 11:00 a.m. to Noon
Join PSARA and the Sunrise Movement at the Federal Building,
915 2nd Avenue, Seattle

More Details Coming Soon

Time for a Green New Deal in Sequim



Some 40 people attended PSARA's climate justice presentation, co-sponsored by Indivisible Sequim on November 10. (Photo: Morgan Wheeler)

Open Letter to Washington Congressional Delegation

October 22, 2019

Dear Representatives & Senators:

On October 3rd, 2019, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) entitled "Protecting and Improving Medicare for Our Nation's Seniors."

Rather than "Protecting and Improving Medicare..." the EO threatens to do incalculable harm to present and future Medicare beneficiaries. Congress should take steps to equalize the two Medicare programs to assure that there is an end to discrimination against the Medicare recipients who choose the traditional Medicare program.

According to the Center for Medicare Advocacy, the EO "exacerbates an existing imbalance between traditional Medicare and the Medicare Advantage (MA) program, and demonstrates the Administration's ongoing efforts to maximize enrollment and the scope of coverage in MA plans." The Center for Medicare Services (CMS) has demonstrated a preference for MA plans. By authorizing private MA plans to provide services unavailable to the majority of Medicare beneficiaries who are part of traditional public Medicare, CMS is creating significant incentives for beneficiaries to select MA over the traditional public Medicare plan.

The October 3, 2019, EO mandates that CMS should further expand and enhance the services private MA plans may offer – benefits unavailable to approximately 70% of Medicare beneficiaries who are in public traditional Medicare. This EO is another significant step in efforts to privatize Medicare, turning it over to private insurance corporations. This goal is achieved by allowing the private plans to offer and advertise these additional benefits.

At the present time, private MA plans provide benefits that traditional Medicare cannot provide such as hearing, dental, and vision benefits, gym membership and transportation to and from appointments. Medicare beneficiaries are inundated with advertisements promoting private, and in most cases, for-profit MA plans that feature these additional benefits. The existing bias in favor of private MA plans discriminates against the major-

ity of Medicare beneficiaries who choose coverage through traditional Medicare.

The Affordable Care Act, in response to MA plans being more costly to the Medicare system as a result of higher reimbursement rates, attempted to rein in excessive payments to MA plans. Unfortunately, these efforts have not stopped MA plans from costing the Medicare system more than traditional Medicare spends per individual.

A 2018 article in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) stated that some studies comparing MA plans to traditional Medicare "suggest that Medicare Advantage does not serve certain beneficiaries well, such as those with the greater illness severity." The article concluded, "Despite the important and increasing role of Medicare Advantage plans, there is fairly little insight into the relative value Medicare Advantage provides to beneficiaries or the funder, the US taxpayer."

We urge you to advance legislation requiring services and coverage be provided equally for all Medicare beneficiaries. Both payments and coverage need to be equalized. If that fails to happen, the Medicare traditional public plan is in jeopardy of dying on the vine, as the oldest, sickest and most expensive among us will end up constituting the majority of beneficiaries in the public program, which will financially sabotage the traditional plan. Medicare recipients will have no choice but to enter the private market and the goal of privatizing Medicare will have been achieved.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue,

Robby Stern, Chair, Social Security Works Washington

p.s. A more detailed analysis of the Executive Order of Oct. 3 can be found at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities website.

Medicare Advantage May Not Be an Advantage

By Robby Stern

Most of us who are on Medicare are aware that Medicare Advantage plans offer additional benefits that traditional Medicare cannot offer at the present time. But there is more to know about Medicare Advantage that we will not see in their unending advertisements. A recent article in the New York Times by Mark Miller, the journalist who writes about retirement issues in the business section of the NYT, provides information that Medicare beneficiaries should know.

To quote the article, a 2018 report "by federal investigators found that Advantage plans have a pattern of inappropriately denying patient claims." This report from the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Health and Human Services found "widespread and persistent problems related to denials of care and payment in Medicare Advantage plans."

The report was based on appeals that were filed by patients from 2014 to 2016. Approximately 1% of patients denials are appealed which means the number of denials were actually much higher.

Miller speculated that the "Advantage payment model reimburses the plans a preset amount per patient. He quoted the report that concluded the payment model creates incentives for the plans "to deny preauthorization of services for beneficiaries, and payments to providers, in order to increase profits."

Miller then quotes David Lipschutz, associate director and senior policy attorney at the Center for Medicare Advocacy who stated "We see plenty of denials by Advantage plans that shouldn't be denied, and wouldn't be if the patient had been enrolled in original Medicare." According to Lipschutz, the most common problem areas are early hospital discharges, denial of care in skilled nursing facilities, and home health care.

On the Road to Recovery?

By Bob Shimbukuro (Feeling a lot better about being able to hold thoughts.)

More than a month has passed since Lorraine Pai's memorial service, I'm still angry.

Got tired of hearing about the nice, kind, pleasant Lorraine. Nobody talked about the time she worked with the Murases. They were fighters, and so was Lorraine. Tough, tough woman. She had shoulders Michelle Obama or Angela Bassett could only dream of.

* * *

Everything may be a little spotty because we're going to do this without Alice or Mira helping us, we'll show them we can do this ourselves.

Bob's Leadership training--find something a person's good at and let them do it.

Norma T: Bob, I'm getting REAL ANGRY. All right if I cut loose?

Bob: Okay, go ahead.

For about 2-3 minutes, she went on, with some restraint (no 4-letter or 4-syllable words)

NT: How'd I do?

BS: Great! You're good at this. You can come to all the meetings I have to!

And then I walked away to ask the other groups' spokespersons, "Why aren't we in these discussions earlier?"

They seemed to get the message. I don't want you to think I invented this strategy. (It's just a variation of "good cop/bad cop;" But I learned a lot from spending a week with New York filmmaker Christine Choy in Portland, while promoting her film *Mississippi Triangle*. That's a later story.

Norma turned out to be good in a lot more things also.

She was awarded the 2019 Acey Social Justice Feminist Award a few months ago--congratulations.)

* * *

Dad's leadership training---Don't do what I do, do what I say. Don't get angry.

I was sick at home. Unfortunately, Dad was home on vacation.

Short version of the story: 7th Day Adventists come by. Dad invites them in.

I'm aghast.

They wanted me to read to them.

"Show them, Bob. Show them how good you read," says Dad"

I reluctantly began and soon was nearing the end of the page. Dad was just about ready to gloat about my reading when I heard, "That's very good, Bob, would you like to read the next page too?"

Thank goodness, Dad woke up from his trance and chased the two guys out.

I can't write a story about an art exhibition in Bellevue because it would be embarrassing to the family of the sponsor of the exhibition; the next day I'm angered about all the issues that involved the Keiro Nursing Home, the demise of the Japantowns, Chinatowns, and the march to the top of the world by the top 1½% to take over the world, a world which is crying from the bottom of the sea that, "enough is enough." Bummer. Maybe next issue.

I had come to Portland to celebrate my "tree" son's first birthday. (Hey, if New Zealand can give personhood to a forest, surely I can get treehood for me). The point was, I wanted to reconnect with my Portland family which had kept me alive.

I stomp into house really irritated.

Lynn: What's the matter?

Me: I can't figure it out. You guys all drive faster than me. I get all the tickets.

Lynn : Go look in the mirror.

Me: Oh.

So much for the intent of this article. I think I'll tell another story.

This is a Christine Choy story that Dr. Marian knows nothing about. (At least it will show her I got lot of memory power.)

On a cold call, using a number on an outdated poster, I called Christine Choy who was a New York filmmaker and asked how much she would charge to show her movie.

I didn't know what a "New York filmmaker" would like for lodging, but Marian had a house in Lake Oswego and she said she was going away for a few days and was willing to let Chris stay there. She also had a Toyota Celica, which she said I (and only I) could drive.

Well, as you can guess, Chris did drive it, and she did scratch it and I thought I would get a lot of flak from Marian. I was waiting for Marian to say something about it, but she never did.

I had started another piece that was supposed to be about culture, race, and equity. But it started to get long and boring and up to 2500 words. But I also wanted to recognize the people who I believe really saved my life at many points past. And it involves a lot a cross-cultural thinking.

There'll be a lot of time for thought but I just want to leave you with this:

Cathie and I had just returned to Portland after our wedding.

"Well Bob, I did have a talk with your mom yesterday morning."

"What did she say?"

She said, "You have to take care of him, he gets sick often."

* * *

Cathie: "I can't stay here. I got something in the morning. You think you can make it up the stairs?"

"Yeah. I'll try."

* * *

A little later I saw "The Wash," with Tama Tokuda (Kip's mom) + Harry Fujita. I cried.

Thanks Cathie.

Bob Shimbukuro is Associate Editor of the Retiree Advocate and Co-Chair of PSARA's Race and Gender Equity (RaGE) Committee.

Will the Road to Universal Health Care Run Through the States?

By David Loud

On November 8, Bay Area Rep. Ro Khanna (CA-17) introduced the State Based Universal Health Care Act of 2019 (SBUHC or HR 5010) with 15 original co-sponsors, including our own Pramila Jayapal and Adam Smith. This represents an important step in building the movement for a universal national health plan and Medicare for All.

The SBUHC proposal was first introduced by Congressman Jim McDermott in 2015, and then by Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal in 2018 – both leading advocates of a universal, publicly funded national health plan. Indeed, Jayapal is now prime sponsor of HR 1384, Medicare for All, and Co-Founder of the Medicare for All Congressional Caucus.

The idea behind SBUHC as a pathway to a national plan starts with the reality that several states (including California and New York) are getting close politically to creating universal health care systems, thanks to years of grass-roots campaigns. But to succeed, states would need control of the federal health care dollars flowing to their states (Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, TRICARE and Affordable Care Act) as well as the regulatory authority to require participation from large, self-insured employers.

The second basis of the SBUHC initiative is the recognition that while public and Congressional support for universal health care and Medicare for All are at an all-time high and growing, the health care industry and its Republican and Democratic allies will mount an increasingly aggressive campaign to defeat the idea in Congress. Even with Democrats in control of the White House and both houses of Congress in 2021, it may take more than one election cycle to overcome the opposition to a universal, public national health plan. Passage of SBUHC might well be an easier political lift in DC.

But starting at the state level has its own advantages. Here's what Rep. Jayapal had to say in Rep. Khanna's press release announcing the introduction of HR 5010: *"I'm proud to support this critical bill, which builds on my state-based universal health care legislation from last Congress. So many progressive accomplishments have started at the state level and grown to fuel national change. Americans are fed up with a broken health care system that lines the pockets of insurance and drug company executives at the expense of families struggling to keep up with skyrocketing costs. Supporting state-based universal health care efforts will help build momentum for the grassroots energy we need to achieve bold, structural federal reforms through Medicare for All."*

Indeed, many of our important national policies first started at the state level. Think marriage equality, abortion rights, Social Security and much more.

This year the WA State Legislature created a Universal Health Care Work Group to study how our state could achieve universal and affordable health care. The Work Group includes representatives of consumers, labor, business, health care providers, community health advocates and legislators. It is to report its recommendations to the Legislature right after the 2020 elections. Now it will have SBUHC to consider as one pathway to the goal.

Advocates for SBUHC in the health justice movement and in Congress are clear that SBUHC and Medicare for All are parts of a two-track, state-federal strategy. It is time for us to win more co-sponsors from our WA Congressional Delegation for both SBUHC and Medicare for All (HR 1384 and S. 1129), and to persuade our state legislators to support a universal and affordable plan for all Washingtonians. If we make this a winning issue in the 2020 elections, we can make real progress in 2021.



David Loud

Summary of State-Based Universal Health Care Act of 2019 (HR 5010)

Sec. 1 Short title and purpose

Bill is referred to as the 'State-Based Universal Health Care Act of 2019' and describes its purpose as providing flexibility for states to offer comprehensive universal health care coverage to all residents in a given state and/or regional state collective.

Sec. 2 Waiver for State Universal Health Care

Creates a new State Innovation Waiver in the Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148) with a provision that allows states to combine several federal health care funding streams if the state offers a comprehensive universal health care plan that guarantees all residents of their state are covered. To be eligible for this waiver, states would have to provide a detailed description for enacting a comprehensive universal health care plan and provide an implementation plan for meeting the requirements of the waiver.

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Book Review: Naomi Klein's *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal*

By Beth Brunton

Have you heard the joke about the secular Jewish feminist invited to advise the Pope at the Vatican? Not a joke. Naomi Klein so describes herself and her climate change speech at the recent Vatican press conference, revealing the possibility of an extraordinarily broad-based movement united to stop the climate crisis.

Environmental journalist Naomi Klein says the only way we can avert climate catastrophe is by bringing together diverse folks working for a common agenda. In her new book, *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for the New Deal*, Naomi Klein explains how the Green New Deal can show the connection between natural and human exploitation, offering an opportunity to solve many challenges at once. Climate scientists now urge replacing failed, obsolete economic policies that waste and pollute our natural resources. These same policies harm human lives in many ways, from wage stagnation, gaping inequalities, and crumbling services to surging right-wing backlash.

What exactly is this Green New Deal (GND)? In *On Fire*, Klein explains a vision for social and economic transformation to reduce carbon emissions, pollution, and waste of resources while converting to clean energy. This would create more meaningful, well-paying, low-carbon jobs. It would also meet more of our basic needs including education, health, homes and transit. By changing how we live, grow our food, work, and move around, we could improve our quality of life and reduce waste.

How could we win this GND? In her chapter, "When science says that political revolution is our only hope," Klein reveals that our current economic paradigm is a threat to ecological stability. Prioritizing GDP growth above all else, it disregards human or ecological con-

sequences. Many scientists have been moved by their research to advocate action, lead marches, even get arrested for resisting pipelines, coal mines and fossil fuel investments.

In a sample commencement speech, Klein exhorted new college graduates, to "Stop trying to save the world all by yourself," warning that no single career or lifestyle choice would suffice. We can only meet this tremendous challenge together as part of massive local and global multi-issue, multi-generational, and multi-identity movements.

In "Movements will make or break the Green New Deal," Klein warns that we still have a long way to go to unite our movements and dramatically expand their bases. Voters need to elect representatives who have the courage to stand up to powerful fossil fuel interests and banks that finance them. She warns the GND will not be won through elections alone, but by changing hearts and minds about what is possible. Klein ends the book answering the question why the GND has a better chance to win and work than other incremental too little-too late proposals. In the Epilogue Klein lists nine reasons including massive job creation, a fairer economy, and the power of new multi-issue, multi-cultural, multi-generational alliances working together against common threats and for common purposes.

As in prior books Klein writes with the clear, concise style of a professional journalist. She adds her personal stories -- meeting with Pope Francis, Swedish teen Greta Thunberg, and world leaders, as well as sharing her own family suffering a summer of sunshine lost to wildfire smoke. For those who critique the limited specifics of the GND so far, she would reply that the precise details will be up to each sector, institution, city, state, and nation.



One can hope Klein's future books will elaborate how to pay for the GND transition. Klein briefly mentions reducing military spending. As the largest part of the US discretionary budget, redefining national security to reallocating funds from "weapons to windmills" would yield trillions while also reducing the carbon footprint of war and weapons.

If you are looking for hope and a way to fight the climate crisis while creating a more just, sustainable world, read this book. If you are already fired up to turn your outrage into action, you can join PSARA's Climate and Environmental Justice Committee. Also, you can join Got Green, 350 Seattle, and many local groups working together to win fair green jobs, healthy food, affordable homes, and free public transit, a Seattle Green New Deal.

Beth Brunton is a member of South Seattle Climate Action Network, Earth-care Not Warfare, and PSARA.

PSARA Winter Potluck and Membership Meeting

Thursday, December 12
Seattle First Baptist Church
1111 Harvard Avenue,
Seattle
Between Spring and Seneca
on Capitol Hill

Delicious potluck

Silent Auction and Raffle

Panel on the 2019 election and what it suggests for 2020, with Cherika Carter, Sharon Maeda, and Aaron Ostrom

PSARA officer and Board elections

Time to catch up with old friends and make new ones

Silent Auction starts 11:30 a.m.

Potluck at Noon

Panel 12:30 p.m.

PSARA elections 1:30 p.m.



"I say, Tim, shall we have Medicare for All?"

"Yes, father, health care for everyone!"

RSVP to organizer@psara.org or call 206-261-8110

Money Can't Buy You Love: How Amazon Wasted \$1.5 Million on the Election

By Mike Andrew

Amazon wasted \$1.5 million on Seattle's City Council election. Its clumsy intervention in local politics turned public opinion against its candidates, leading last-minute voters to break decisively for progressives.

Even worse for the mega-corporation, Seattle voters now think "big businesses like Amazon" have "too much" influence in Seattle politics, according to a new post-election poll.

Amazon's Number One target, District 3 incumbent Kshama Sawant, ended up beating her opponent, Egan Orion, by 1,751 votes after lagging behind by almost 2,000 on election night.

Late voters, who are historically younger, poorer, and more progressive than early voters, broke decisively for Sawant. In this case, they had the added motivation of voting against Amazon's domination of city politics.

Lisa Herbold, arguably Amazon's Number Two target, beat Amazon-backed Phil Tavel by more than 4,000 votes for reelection to her District 1 seat.

In District 2, community activist Tammy Morales – denounced by both Amazon and Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan as a "socialist" – also beat Amazon's candidate, Mark Solomon.

Dan Strauss in District 6 and Andrew Lewis in District 7 both rode union endorsements to victory.

Debora Juarez, the District 5 incumbent, was endorsed both by labor unions and Amazon and was always expected to win reelection. The only casualty of Amazon's spending spree was Shaun Scott in District 4.

Tax business

A post-election poll commissioned by two unions, SEIU 775 and UFCW 21, echoes what voters said with their ballots: the people of Seattle overwhelmingly support taxing big business and the wealthy "to pay for vital services."

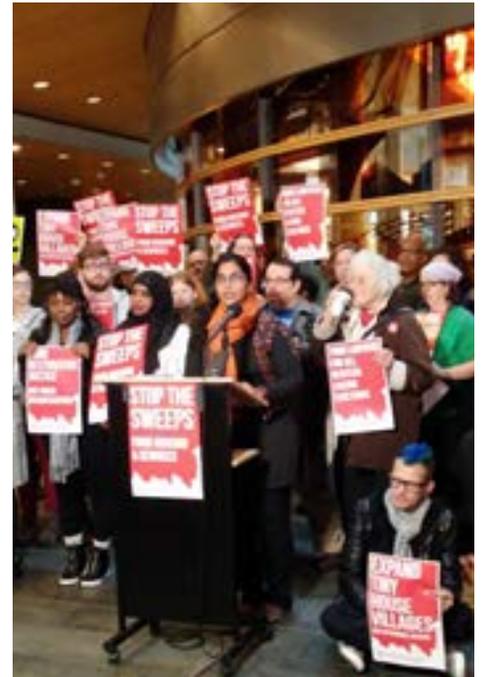
According to the poll, 75 percent of respondents support the council passing a law that "raises local taxes on big businesses and the wealthy to help pay for vital services." More than half of those people "strongly" back the idea.

Fifty-three percent of respondents think "big businesses like Amazon" have "too much" influence in Seattle politics.

Federal Way gives new rights to renters

Meanwhile, voters in Federal Way passed Initiative 19-001 aimed at ensuring fair rights for renters. The measure was sponsored by Washington CAN!

The new law will require landlords to prove just cause for evicting tenants, ensure that family members may live together, bar retaliatory evictions, and protect members of the military, first responders, seniors, health care providers, and educators from discriminatory evictions.



Putting her reelection victory to good use, City Council member Kshama Sawant calls for sweeping changes to the City's budget priorities.

The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye



Lebanon and Chile: Popular Uprisings Against Austerity

By Michael Righi

In Chile it was a 3% increase in metro fares. High school students led a campaign to dodge the fares (even though they had special fares – they acted for their families), the military was called out, and then nationwide protests to kick out the governing elite followed.

In Lebanon it was a tax on WhatsApp phone calls. Same result: a massive outpouring of anger across the country. Anger and joy: dancing and weddings in the streets, holding hands in a human chain across sectarian lines across the whole country. Over a million people, led once again by youth, “the children of the financial crisis.”

In both cases, the wealthy rulers rescinded the increases. But that did not stop the uprisings; the issues are much bigger. As signs in Chile said: “It’s not about 30 pesos, it’s about 30 years.”

Thirty years of what? Inequality, low pensions, the privatization of public services, high electricity prices, unequal access to education and health care, government corruption. Thirty years of following the “Chicago Boys,” Chilean economists who learned their economics at the feet of Milton Friedman with his conservative neoliberal theories. Chile became a free-market model under the dictator Pinochet, revised only slightly under succeeding elected regimes.

For Chile this has meant “responsible” fiscal policy (low social spending and little redistribution), low taxes, privatization of everything from water to public services such as health care and social “security,” and an extractive export economy based on minerals, lumber, fish, avocados. (Exporting avocados is really just exporting the water resources used to grow them.)

The result has been sharpening inequality. The top 1% take home 33% of total income, one of the most unequal distributions in the world. Education was supposed to be the road to opportunity. It was also privatized, so

there are now hundreds of for-profit schools and students taking out loans from private lenders. The average course costs 41% of the average income.

The demonstrations in Chile broadened to put the whole neoliberal system on trial. In Santiago, over a million people have come into the streets regularly, with others (*cacerazos*) banging pots and pans from their windows. And singing, again, in particular a song of Victor Jara, killed in the stadium when the dictatorship took over in 1973: “El Derecho de Vivir en Paz,” (The Right to Live in Peace).

“Lebanon is Burning”

Neoliberalism is not just Chicago Boys, it’s also debt and the institutions that enforce paying it back. The International Monetary Fund and the EU lent \$11 billion to Lebanon in 2018 and required that they balance their budget. In a country where youth unemployment is between 30% and 40%, electricity provision is sporadic, and public health provision is abysmal, the government is required to implement a radical austerity program!

Ruling elites (as in Lebanon, with foreign sponsors from the EU to Iran and Saudi Arabia) use sectarian conflict to demobilize people. But youth protesters in particular are making it clear that they reject sectarian identity: “Everyone means everyone.”

Meanwhile, south of the capital, Tripoli, wildfires broke out (prior to the uprising), because of extreme heat and drought conditions. Cedar trees were already threatened and dying because



Protest in Chile, October 21
(Photo: Time)

of climate change. The government had three planes, but did not maintain them. Volunteer firefighters fought the fires; communities took care of each other with housing and food.

Chile is also suffering a drought, the most severe in 60 years, prompting the government to declare an agricultural emergency. Analysts are predicting a water crisis in Santiago, the capital, if conditions continue.

In both countries, the uprisings appear to be, and are often presented in the press as, “spontaneous.” This is true in the sense that we don’t know when social movements will kick off, but we do know that neoliberal policies have been exposed as failed since the 2007-08 financial crisis. Uprisings are occurring all over: also in Haiti and Ecuador and Sudan and Iraq. Frustration at political elites and unresponsive governments seems on the rise.

But we should recognize that activists have been working for years to mobilize movements. It’s not all spontaneity. There is not yet a clear alternative perhaps, but the free-market minimal-government orthodoxy is collapsing, and new organized opposition

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Venice Council Rejects Climate Change Measures, Then Evacuates Chambers to Escape Flood

By Mike Andrew

Veneto regional council, located on Venice's Grand Canal, was the victim of poetic justice November 13, when it voted down measures to combat climate change, and then had to evacuate its chambers ahead of a flood.

"Ironically, the chamber was flooded two minutes after the majority League, Brothers of Italy, and Forza Italia parties rejected our amendments to tackle climate change," Andrea Zanoni, deputy chairman of the environment committee, said in a Facebook post.

The League, Brothers of Italy, and Forza Italia are right-wing parties that control Venice's regional government.

The council chamber in Ferro Fini Palace started to take in water around 10:00 p.m. local time, as councilors were debating the 2020 regional budget.

Zanoni accused the right-wing coalition of presenting a budget "with no concrete actions to combat climate change," and presented amendments backed by the minority party group. They were rejected.

Among the rejected amendments were measures to fund renewable sources, to replace diesel buses with "more efficient and less polluting ones," to scrap polluting stoves, and reduce the impact of plastics. According to the council majority, the amendments would have been too expensive.

Venice is prone to flooding because most of the city is built on piers driven into marshy ground, but it is experiencing the worst flooding there in more than 50 years. AFP press agency said the damages would run into the millions of euros.



PSARA Presents

Our Island's Treasure

The Seattle debut of *Our Island's Treasure*, filmed and directed by Okinawan American high school student Kaiya Yonamine. Kaiya will join us for Q&A and discussion.

The video documents Okinawa's resistance to the building of a new US military base in Oura Bay. The ongoing landfill work for this base has created a crisis that is destroying thousand-year-old coral reefs, and other aquatic life in the bay, including the dugong, an aquatic manatee-like marine mammal, that is listed as vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Saturday, January 11

2:00 p.m.

321 16th Avenue S, Seattle



PSARA member Bob Barnes joins with other activists to block a shipment of pipe destined for the Trans Mountain pipeline.

(Photo courtesy of Bob Barnes)

Summary of State-Based Universal Health Care Act of 2019 (HR 5010)

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Implementation plans would have to show how states would provide health care for 95 percent of their residents, with no more than five percent spending over 10 percent of their adjusted gross income on health care. After five years, participating states would be required to demonstrate that they reached these targets and provide a plan to cover the remaining five percent of their population. States that do not reach the 95 percent target after five years would have to revise their plan to achieve the targets. Technical assistance would be available.

Section 2 makes clear that the benefits provided by states have to be equal to or greater than that which beneficiaries receive now. An independent assessment panel, made up of health care experts and officials, would evaluate for the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) whether a particular state's proposal meets the requirement of providing as much as or more coverage than the individual streams. Also, the state would have to provide an assurance that it has the legal authority to implement its universal health care plan.

In order to combine streams of funding, provide flexibility, and allow for states to offer comprehensive universal health care, provisions in law that are waived pursuant to this bill include: (1) the requirements for the establishment, creation and maintenance of health benefit exchanges; (2) cost-sharing reductions under the ACA; (3) premium tax credits and employer mandates under the ACA; (4) Medicare; (5) Medicaid; (6) CHIP; (7) FEHBP; (8) TRICARE; and (9) ERISA pre-emption provision.

Waiver Consideration and Transparency. Not later than six months after enactment, HHS will issue regulations that provide for public notification and comment, a process for the waiver application process and reporting on the implementation and evaluation process. The HHS secretary will provide

Congress an annual report on the applications received and programs conducted through the waivers granted.

Regional Waiver Request. Allows two or more states the option of submitting a waiver application together.

Granting of Waivers. Underscores that state coverage, among other things, would:

1. be no less and cost no more than what residents would have received under the federal program;
2. provide coverage and cost sharing protections against excessive out-of-pocket spending;
3. include all state residents, including DACA recipients, but exempts from these requirements those eligible for benefits through the Indian Health Service, the VA and military treatment facilities.

Coordination between HHS, Treasury, Office of Personnel Management, Defense, and Labor is required through an interagency MOU to ensure that all regulations are administered to have the same effect absent a waiver.

David Loud is PSARA's representative to the Health Care is a Human Right coalition (HCHR).

Lebanon and Chile

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movements are being built. In Chile, hundreds of neighborhood meetings – *cabildos* – are coming together to map a way forward.

What about US?

Austerity is not the way forward, that is clear. "Forward" these days feels like a future of encroaching seas, devastating wildfires, and increasing inequalities. What is needed is a responsive government willing to direct resources toward the common good, taking on the interlinked challenges of inequality and climate change.

The United States is the center of the neoliberal system. Get out your pots and pans.

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

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, December 4, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *The Power of Personal Habits*. Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, December 5, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, December 5, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday, December 9, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, December 10, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Winter Potluck and Membership Meeting: 11:30 a.m., Thursday, December 12, Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Avenue, Seattle. See flyer on Page 7 for details.

Our Island's Treasure: 2:00 p.m., Saturday, January 11, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. Seattle premier of award-winning documentary. See article on Page 10 for details.

Save the Dates! February 6, PSARA Lobby Day; February 22. Forum with PSARA members who were also members of the Black Panther Party. Details in the January *Retiree Advocate*.