

## Let's Build on Our Success PSARA Needs More Members

**P**PSARA needs more members! That's not because we're in a weak position. Far from it. In fact, we're in such a good position that the situation demands we grow.

Our issues are now part of the national political discourse as we head into the 2020 elections.

Every major Democratic Party presidential hopeful talks about raising – if not totally scrapping – the cap on Social Security payroll taxes. Even the candidates who don't like Medicare For All feel they have to come up with some plan to provide medical coverage for more Americans. And even the billionaires in the group acknowledge we have to do something to avert a climate catastrophe.

We know how to fight big battles with small forces. The thing is, as we win the big battles, the small forces need to grow to back up the victories.

It's not at all certain that Donald Trump will be defeated in November. Even if he is, it's not certain we'll have a Congress that will enact the legislation we want to see.

It's even possible that a new Democratic president will give in to political pressure to cut a "grand bargain" with Republicans.

PSARA needs to grow to keep up the fight for a more humane and sustainable world. And as we always have, we rely on you, our members, to help us.

Membership brochures are always available at the PSARA office. Or we can email you materials you can use in contacting your friends and neighbors.

Just contact [organizer@psara.org](mailto:organizer@psara.org) if you're able to help.



*New members mean an even bigger impact when we take to the streets to fight for a better, more humane world. New members mean new ideas for ways to make PSARA a force to be reckoned with.*

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## Preparing for GiveBIG Day, May 6

*By Robby Stern*

**T**he costs of publishing the *Retiree Advocate* and financially supporting educational outreach work makes GiveBIG one of the most important times of the year for the PSARA Education Fund. Dollars raised are critical to meeting the revenue needs of the PSARA Education Fund in 2020.

It costs approximately \$20,000 annually to publish and mail this newsletter. We have targeted an additional \$58,000 for costs associated with educational outreach in this critical election year.

Like last year, individuals on the Executive Boards of the PSARA Education Fund and PSARA will challenge our members to collectively match or exceed the sum of contributions from the Executive Boards. In the April edition of the newsletter, we will announce the amount of the challenge and invite members to contribute.

*Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund.*

## The Retiree ADVOCATE

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## PSARA Takes Medicare For All on the Road



### Medicare for All: Why We Need It Now!

Sunday, March 8, 2:00 p.m.

Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

1033 N. Barr Rd., Agnew

Sponsored by Indivisible Sequim.

Co-sponsored by Voices for Health & Healing, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW, Health Care for All Washington, Health Care is a Human Right Washington, PSARA Education Fund, 24th Legislative District Democrats, Clallam County Democrats

## Save the Dates!

**T**ime For a Green New Deal presented jointly by Sunrise Seattle and PSARA. **March 31, 6:30 p.m., Langley United Methodist Church, 301 Anthes, Langley, Washington.** A presentation by young-people led Sunrise Seattle and PSARA will discuss why we need a Green New Deal to address the growing crisis of climate change and climate justice.

**T**he Power to Heal, a film that tells the untold story of how a new national program, Medicare, led to the mounting of a dramatic, coordinated campaign that desegregated thousands of hospitals across the country practically over night. **Saturday, April 18, 2 p.m., Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave., Seattle, 98144.**

# Bargaining for the Common Good, Part I

By Jeff Johnson, reprinted from *International Union Rights*, Volume 26, Issue 4, 2019

Collective bargaining can and should be used to address climate change and to redistribute economic and environmental justice beyond the workplace.

In 2014, newly elected President of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1316, Mustafa Salahuddin, and his members in Bridgeport, Connecticut were able to do just that. Union members concerned with health, safety, and design issues of the buses they drove eight hours a day began negotiating for a union seat on the procurement committee for new buses. The union negotiated over design features that would make the buses safer for drivers, passengers, and pedestrians and that would phase out diesel-fuelled buses that often made drivers sick and fouled the air for passengers and community members. They also argued that cleaning up the air, reducing carbon emissions was a legacy issue for the company and the union. The result was an agreement to purchase a half-dozen hybrid and a half-dozen electric buses, with a goal to have a completely electric bus fleet by 2030. Now all of Connecticut's Transit Authorities are aiming to electrify their bus fleets.

Authorities are aiming to electrify their bus fleets. This is an example of providing benefits for union members as well as bargaining for the common good of the community as a whole. Without taking anything away from the brilliant efforts of Local 1316, there was a pretty tight nexus between improving the bottom line for the Transit Authority and addressing a common good for the community.

We need to encourage and support all union bargaining efforts, even when the nexus is not so close, whenever and wherever they are aimed at addressing climate change and the common good. The most well known examples of bargaining for the common good are the Los Angeles and Chicago teachers, who have gone on strike not just for a better

contract but for affordable housing and immigrants' rights.

Someday, when the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act 1 passes, and many of the well-documented hindrances to union organising in the US are removed, not only will millions of workers have a fair shot at organising into unions but their right to strike, protest, and boycott over issues at the workplace and the broader community will result in significant leaps forward in social justice. We can and must organise for the passage of the PRO Act. But today, we also have to work on a level even higher than that. The labour movement needs to use every means available to us to organise with other movements to confront the two existential crises facing our planet: climate change and inequality.

## Transition is inevitable, but on whose terms?

At a trade union event held in parallel to the COP21 talks in Paris in December 2015, Clara Paillard, president of the cultural section of the Public and Commercial Services Union, commented: "If the planet were a bank, we would have already saved it." She couldn't have been more right.

Under cover of so-called free markets, climate change and climate disasters will continue to kill off a profound number of species, including a significant number of human beings, exacerbate food and water shortages, force tens of millions of people to migrate from uninhabitable areas of the planet, destroy Island countries and coastlines, and dramatically and negatively impact jobs, health and safety, and income all around the world. Today, the majority of the world's population are already unable to afford the price of a latte at Starbucks – never mind nutritious food and clean water. Extreme corporate greed and the political policies and systems that support it, are the driving force behind these existential crises.



Jeff Johnson

Fossil fuel companies are spending hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising to extoll their efforts in investing in clean energy. These efforts include investments into solar, wind, and algae biofuels. The ads are also aimed at convincing people that a transition to clean, renewable energy by the year 2050 is too ambitious, despite the UN study projection of the need for major advancements by 2030. Instead they offer the year 2070 as an appropriate and achievable time frame. At the same time, since the signing of the Paris Climate Accord in 2016, the world's largest 33 banks have financed an additional \$1.9 trillion in fossil fuel projects around the world! According to CDP, an international non-profit organisation that works with companies, cities, states and investors to prevent climate change impacts, the major oil companies have only invested 1 percent of their capital expenditures this year in low carbon ventures, despite record breaking revenues and profits over the past several years.

If transition is to happen on the terms of the banks and fossil fuel industry then we will soon bust through 1.5 and 2.0 °C limits. Wealth and power will continue to rise to the top.

*Jeff Johnson is the retired President of the Washington State Labor Council and a member of PSARA. Part II of this article will appear in the April Retiree Advocate.*

# The Emperor's Red Button, Part II

By Dorothy Van Soest

**E**ditor's Note: Part I of "The Emperor's Red Button" appeared in the February Retiree Advocate. Part I is set in the present, 2020, as the author tries to answer her granddaughter's questions about a possible nuclear showdown with North Korea. Part II follows.

## The Year 2022 (or thereabouts, no one's really sure)

Ivanka sits on his lap, plants a noisy kiss on his cheeks followed by a feathery caress on his lips. "Good morning, Daddy. I mean, your majesty."

He squeezes her body against his. "You like having a daddy who's emperor of the country?"

She smiles. "Of the world, Daddy."

"That's right, isn't it. Emperor of the whole world now." He smiles, proud to be God's gift to the world, to be the chosen One.

Jared appears, leans against the bedroom door frame. "The whole planet, Dad," he says, smiling indulgently.

"Oh yes. I did that, didn't I." But then his smile fades. His head jerks from side to side, his eyes are saucers, his mouth a suction cup. "Where is it?"

Ivanka points to the bedside table. She picks up the square black plastic box with the red button on the top and places it next to him on the bed, gives it a little tap. Then she runs her fingers through the few wisps of hair remaining on his head, strands of spaghetti turned gray/white long ago when they ran out of hair dye. Jared winks at his wife. He used to get jealous when she sat on her father's lap and wiggled her cute little butt on his crotch. But that was before. Everything is different now.

A bell rings and Ivanka jumps off the bed. "Time for breakfast, Daddy. Bacon and eggs? Or would you like a double hamburger with all the fixings this morning?"

Jared shoots her a warning look. "Or maybe a bowl of cereal for a change, Dad?" He told his wife just last night that their food supply is alarmingly low. Everyone else in the bunker is eating so little they're losing weight. But not him. He's turned into that fictitious fat man he talked about during his presidential campaign, the one who he said, instead of Russia, sits on his bed and hacks into computers.

"What'd you say?" Distracted, he rests the black box in the folds of his stomach and his short fingers stroke the red button like a lover's breast. "Where's Mike? Has he been found yet?"

Ivanka and Jared shake their heads. "I know what he's up to. He wants to be me." He rocks back and forth, one finger on the button.

"It's okay, Daddy. He can't hurt you. Nobody can hurt you now."

"We can't know that. Not until we're sure he's gone for good." One flourishing twirl of his little hands and both forefingers take aim, press the button. "Done!"

Ivanka and Jared exchange meaningful sighs. The system had made him a nuclear monarch and now with the toy button in the bunker—Ivanka's idea and a good one—he still thinks he is, still boasts that his button is much bigger and more powerful than anyone else's.

"Now how about those bacon and eggs," he says. With great effort he lifts himself off the bed and waddles to the door wearing only his underpants. "And after breakfast, how about a round of golf?" He doesn't put on a robe, maybe he forgets, maybe he just doesn't bother, maybe, because they removed all mirrors in the bunker, he's forgotten what he looks like.

He waltzes like an elephant into the spacious dining room and looks around for Melania. Ivanka holds her



breath, hopes he won't ask where she is. The few loyalists still with him after the purge look the other way. "I think I got Mike this time, honey," he says as he jabs his fork into a piece of fatty bacon.

"I'm sure you did, Daddy." Ivanka kisses the top of his shiny head and sits next to him.

He talks a lot, with a mouthful of food as always, about the button that isn't real. He doesn't remember the nuclear football. He has no memory of when, in a fit of rage, he used the code to launch a nuclear attack. He remembers what he was angry about, though. Those damn traitors. Their lies. The unfairness. No one told him that Seoul was wiped out first. Then Seattle. Then the others, a chain reaction. Nothing about human tissue vaporized, the fatal burns, radiation sickness, starving, painful cancers.

He thinks the bunker is his new Imperial Palace and it suits him. His daily life is the same as always. He uses twitter to ward off his enemies with no internet to transmit his vitriolic tweets and no one alive to receive them. But he doesn't know that.

*Dorothy Van Soest is a novelist, activist, retired university professor, and a member of PSARA. Nuclear Option, her third social justice mystery, will be published by Apprentice House Press in Fall 2020. [www.dorothyvansoest.com](http://www.dorothyvansoest.com)*

# Trump Takes Aim at Social Security Disability Insurance

By Linda Petersen

On February 10, Trump released his proposed 2021 budget, and it seems he is going down the same road as Reagan did in the early 1980s. The Reagan administration tried to terminate benefits for thousands of disabled people they considered freeloaders, supposedly loafing on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) instead of getting a job. It did not end well.

The SSDI program protects workers who develop a life-changing disability after having paid into the Social Security system for years. Disabilities often emerge in middle age or late in life, after decades of—and sometimes as a direct result of—hard work. This means SSDI is especially important for seniors nearing, but not yet eligible for, retirement. And the SSDI standards define disability so strictly that the beneficiaries are already among the most severely impaired in the country.

Trump's budget calls for a \$75 billion decrease in spending on the two federal disability programs—SSDI and Supplemental Security Income—over the next 10 years. It's unclear exactly

where he expects to find this amount of savings, but we do know two of his proposals: 1) reduce the amount of retroactive benefits someone can receive after they've been found to be disabled, from 12 months to 6 months; and 2) conduct many more periodic reviews to make people prove they are "still" disabled, and if they can't prove it to the administration's satisfaction, terminate their benefits.

When the Reagan administration tried this, it sparked a public outcry. The administration reviewed about 1.2 million cases and sent out 490,000 termination notices. People panicked, and federal officials acknowledged that several people had committed suicide after being told they were losing their benefits. There were state government protests, and multiple lawsuits.

A whopping 200,000 people had their benefits restored on appeal. Finally Congress pushed back. The administration had to declare a moratorium, and Congress passed a law disallowing terminations without "substantial" improvement in the disabling condition.



Linda Petersen

Now Trump is trying the same thing. Since the cost of doing these reviews would likely eat up most of the savings from any terminations, there is little financial point to doing it. Perhaps the point is the cruelty.

Linda Petersen is Chair of PSARA's Education Committee.

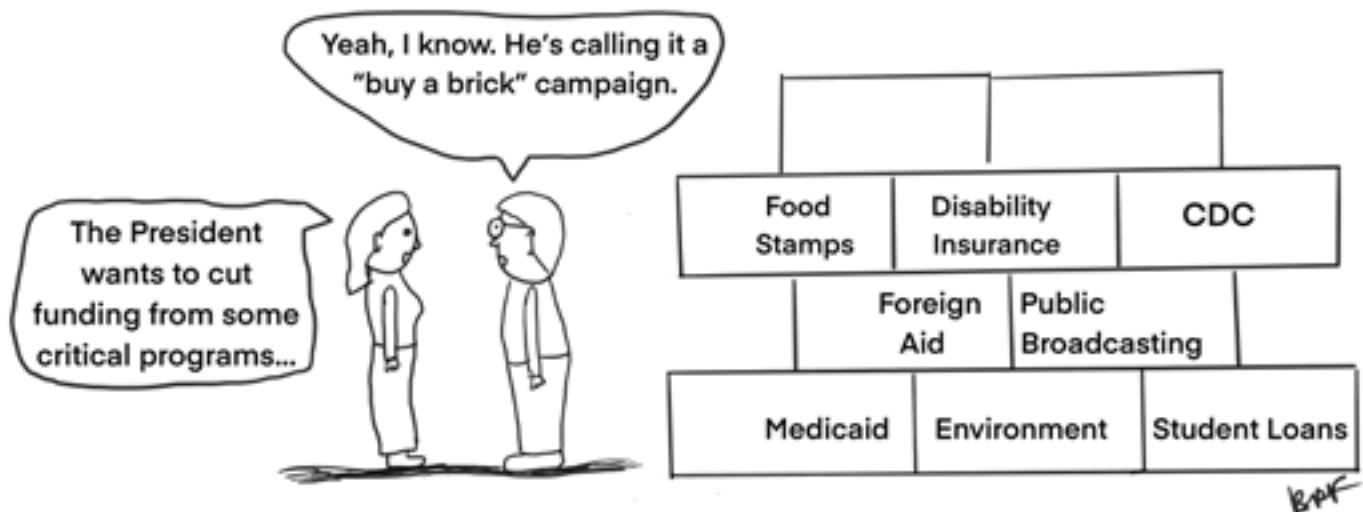
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## The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye

### President Trump releases his 2021 budget



# Innovative Program Increases Safety in Downtown Areas

By Claire Yurdin and Danny Bobrow

Suppose there was a program that reduced low-level non-violent crime and made the downtown core safer while helping these offenders to a better life?

Low-level crime is defined here as trespassing, shoplifting, and prostitution, much of it related to substance abuse and/or mental health issues.

This program exists in the Seattle metro area.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) was pioneered in 2011 in Seattle's Belltown neighborhood by the Seattle Police Department and Public Defenders Association as an alternative to the failed war on drugs and to reduce gross racial disparities in police enforcement. LEAD focuses on routing the low-level criminal to social services to help them get out of the vicious cycle of arrest, conviction, incarceration, and return to the streets. A number of jurisdictions across the country have followed Seattle's example. See [www.leadbureau.org](http://www.leadbureau.org) for the map of LEAD programs underway.

LEAD's statistics are impressive. Participants are

- 58% less likely to be arrested after enrollment than those who went through the criminal justice system as usual
- 30% more likely to be connected with income/benefits, including income from employment as well as from state and federal programs.
- 89% more likely to have permanent housing
- 46% more likely to be employed.
- 50% less likely to have contact with law enforcement.

In addition to helping its clients improve their lives, LEAD saves the taxpayers the considerable money spent on the legal processing and incarceration of these low-level offenders.

The program expanded to Burien in June 2019 under the Burien Police Department. This approach has visibly reduced the homeless presence in the Burien downtown area and created a safer atmosphere. Burien Police Chief Ted Boe explained the program as it operates in Burien at the Southend PSARA meeting at Burien City Hall on January 9, 2020.

Burien Police received a rising number of calls from 2011 through 2017 concen-



Danny Bobrow (left) and Claire Yurdin (right)

trated around the City Hall/Library and Annex areas for trespassing by the homeless and those with mental health and/or addiction issues. Before LEAD, the police officer had no option other than to arrest and incarcerate.

With LEAD, the officer answering the call decides on the spot if the person in question is a good candidate for LEAD rather than arrest. If so, the officer refers the offender to the Burien Human Services Manager, Colleen Brandt-Schluter, and REACH staff to find the right services for the person. A subcontractor to the Burien Police Department, REACH is a branch of Washington State's Evergreen Treatment Services, whose goal is connecting the homeless to services.

There are currently 17 clients in the Burien program, which is funded here by King County. Services include help finding housing and employment, reducing drug and alcohol use, finding mental health and medical care, and legal assistance. Participating social service providers include Transform Burien, the Methodist Church cold weather shelter, Mary's Place, Hospitality House, and local, state, and federal programs for rent, utility, medical, and employment assistance. Each person is treated individually as each has their own combination of issues. The police make an effort to know LEAD clients as well as the non-profit and city staff working with them directly.

As part of the program, REACH outreach workers and Brandt-Schluter walk through town speaking with the homeless/addicted people they find to get to

know them and establish trust towards the end of enrolling them in LEAD.

As an example of the kind of offender LEAD serves, Chief Boe gave the example of Jane Doe (an actual case). Jane has been homeless in Burien since 2014, where she has been arrested over and over for trespassing and shoplifting. She has been to jail 25 times for a total of 167 days; her incarceration and medical care in jail (which jails must provide) cost Burien \$50,000. Add to that several thousand dollars for the salaries of prosecutors and judges. Jane is now enrolled in LEAD.

White Center is the next South King County city slated for a LEAD program. Each LEAD program is tailored to the city it serves.

LEAD has gained national and international recognition. Representatives from cities around the US as well as from Estonia and Colombia have come here to observe LEAD in action. LEAD is now listed by the National Institute of Justice's CrimeSolutions.gov as a promising practice. In 2019, LEAD was named as a best practice in the United Nations "International Guidelines on Human Rights & Drug Policy."

For more information and for strategic support and technical assistance in developing a LEAD program, see [www.leadbureau.org](http://www.leadbureau.org). The Bureau of Justice Assistance is making grants to assist jurisdictions replicating LEAD nationally ([www.bjatrain.org](http://www.bjatrain.org)).

*Danny Bobrow and Claire Yurdin are members of PSARA's Southend Committee.*

# Seeking Refuge From Climate Change

By Anne Watanabe

Climate changes - whether in the forms of massive wildfires, hurricanes or flooding, or slower-onset destruction by drought, sea level rise, extreme heat - will increasingly drive worldwide migration as people flee their homelands.

Over 70 million people worldwide have been displaced by wars, violence, and persecution. But many more are expected to be displaced by climate change's impacts. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that a 1.5 degrees Celsius increase (the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement), will expose 4 billion people to extreme heat waves every 5 years and 114 million people to drought. The World Bank estimates that by 2050, 143 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America will be forced to move within their own countries' borders because of climate change impacts. And Climate Central scientists recently predicted far greater flooding by 2050 than previously forecast. Two hundred million people may be permanently displaced by sea level rise by 2100.

People fleeing climate-caused environmental damage are not recognized as refugees. The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was enacted following World War II to protect people escaping wartime conflicts and persecution. The Convention defines "refugee" as someone fearing persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. People escaping drought or sea level rise are not included. Litigation to expand the 1951 Convention to include climate-displaced persons has not been successful. Given the political climate regarding refugees and immigration, advocates are reluctant to re-open the Convention for fear of inviting changes that harm, rather than help, migrants.

Arguing for a human right to a livable environment may be more effective. Plaintiffs in *Juliana v. United States et al.* alleged that the government's actions concerning fossil fuels violated plaintiffs' constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. Although the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the suit in January, it will be appealed.

Worldwide, lawsuits as well as petitions to international bodies such as the International Court of Justice and the UN are being brought against governments and private actors alleging climate change-related violations of human rights. Many claims arise in the South Pacific island nations, where low-lying islands such as Kiribati are disappearing. Ioane Teitiota, a Kiribati native, sought asylum in New Zealand, arguing that his life and livelihood were threatened by sea level rise. In 2013, the High Court of New Zealand rejected his petition to be declared a refugee under the 1951 Convention, but Mr. Teitiota continued to appeal. This January, the UN Human Rights Committee (which reviews actions pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) also denied his asylum claim. But they acknowledged that under different facts, asylum could be granted because of the dangers posed to life by climate change. The door has perhaps finally begun to open, and others may be able to pass through.

The world has warmed to 1.2 degrees over pre-industrial levels and we are now close to the 1.5 degrees long-term goal set by the Paris Agreement (although the nations' commitments under the Agreement will allow global temperatures to exceed 3 degrees by 2100).



Still from the film "Climate Refugees"  
Alessandro Grassani

The UN predicts that unless an annual 7.6 percent reduction in emissions is reached between now and 2030, we will be unable to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. Unfortunately, the 10 nations with highest emissions (including the US and China) plan instead to allow 50 percent more production of fossil fuels by 2030 than what could be allowed and still meet the upper limit in the Paris Agreement of 2 degrees. There's still time to make systemic changes to reduce the damage, but that time is running out.

The scale of forced migration is poised to increase exponentially. Immediate measures are needed to assist populations in poorer, less-developed countries, who are not the cause of global warming and who cannot wait while developed countries debate emissions reductions. As part of their climate adaptation strategies, nations should be planning how to assist the large numbers of people expected to be displaced from their home regions, including remedies such as asylum or other immigrant status for those whose human rights have been violated by climate change.

Anne Watanabe is an attorney and a member of PSARA's Southend Committee.

# Seattle MLK March: End Poverty, War! Dump Trump!

By Tim Wheeler

Seattle, January 20 -- A vast crowd, African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American, and white marched from Garfield High School to Seattle City Hall, honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and upholding his struggle against racism, poverty and militarism.

A rainbow of all races, religions, and ages, women and men, Gay and straight, the crowd marched under placards and handmade signs that proclaimed "Black Lives Matter," "Defeat Trump: Vote Nov. 3," and "Tax Amazon: Affordable Housing for All."

Many unions marched: United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21, Service Employees International Union, International Association of Machinists.

PSARA marched with their banner, 50 or more strong, including a grandchild of our President and Treasurer, Tom and Pam Lux. It was a family affair with many young couples pushing their youngsters in strollers or carrying them on their shoulders on a fitful day with much sun and also a sprinkle of rain.

The theme this year was "2020 Vision" and the crowd was reminded earlier at a rally in the Garfield High School Gym that Dr. King fought all forms of oppression, including poverty, militarism, and war. In her invocation, Pastor Angela Ying said Dr. King's message was "love and courage" adding, "You are the lover!" The crowd broke into a chant, "We have love."

Rev. Ying shouted back, "No Muslim ban! No Mexican war! No war with Iran!" The crowd cheered.

Josephine Howell led the crowd in singing "Lift Every Voice."

Aneelah Afzali, Executive Director of the American Muslim Empowerment Association of Puget Sound, said Dr. King proclaimed "Black lives matter."

She pointed out that "people under age 40 are the largest potential voting bloc in history." United, and mobilized

to cast their ballots, "We will win," in November she said.

Rapper and school teacher Logic Amen said Seattle needs a "griot" to keep alive the history of the Central District of Seattle, the heart of the Black community. "Why are we here?... Because we are concerned about poverty, an exit strategy to get out of this burning house... We can't pray ourselves out of this burning house..." The people need to build a "staircase out of this burning house," he said.

Seattle poet, Kabibi Monie, read her poem "Take A Knee" written after NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick started kneeling during the national anthem to protest police killing of unarmed Black men. "If the killing of Black people should not go on, take a knee! Take a knee! Take a knee!"

A dance ensemble, "Kuttin up," brought the house down with an energetic dance that ended with all the dancers, all young women in black tights, pumping their fists like Gold Medal winners Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the Mexico City Olympics in 1968.

Greeted with a thunderous ovation was Larry Gossett, former Martin Luther King, Jr. County Councilman. Eddie Rye, Jr., a friend of Gossett, told the crowd Gossett led the 21-year struggle to change the name of the county to "Martin Luther King Jr. County," which was finally won in 2005.

"He was the stalwart. He did not back down. He delivered," said Rye, host of Urban Forum Northwest, a popular talk show. He and Emile Pitre, who headed



The PSARA crew at MLK Day  
Photo courtesy of Tim Wheeler

the UW's Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity, took turns praising Gossett for his leadership. Pitre said he arrived from Louisiana as a graduate student at the University of Washington in 1967.

He and Gossett organized the Black Student Union protesting that only 70 African American students were enrolled. They staged a sit-in in the office of UW President Charles Odegaard in 1968. "Since then, more than 28,000 minority students have graduated from UW," Pitre said. The crowd cheered.

This year's MLK Day celebration was dedicated to the memory of Jacquie Jones-Walsh, who passed away recently from cancer. She was a member of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, a Vice President of the Washington State Labor Council, State President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Vice President, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and a leader of the Seattle-King County NAACP.

*Tim Wheeler is a veteran activist, journalist, and PSARA member.*



## Personal Reflection

# A Fire Alarm at the Seattle Children's Museum

By Robby Stern

About six weeks ago Dina and I took our almost three-year-old grandson, Manny, to one of his favorite indoor play areas, the Seattle Children's Museum in the Seattle Center Armory Building.

He loves grocery shopping in the "grocery store" and checking out with his chosen foods. Sometimes he wants to carry the "groceries" to another part of the building for a "picnic," but inevitably the bag is too heavy to carry. He loves the Metro bus he can pretend to drive or the car that is stacked with luggage on the top that he can "drive" with Dina and I as his passengers.

He knows all the exhibits and runs from one to another until... the time the fire alarms went off with flashing strobe lights and loud alert noises. We had to evacuate the building and wait outside while the fire trucks arrived very close to where we were waiting to reenter. The firefighters determined that there probably had been smoke produced by one of the food court vendors, and we were allowed to reenter the building.

Manny was shaken. He hated the noise and flashing lights of the alarm. We had to assure him that it was okay. Even though the alarm was scary, we explained to him that it was a good noise designed to keep us safe. We kept assuring him that he was safe and that everything was okay when the darned alarm went off for a second time that day.

That was it for Manny. We left, and since that time he has been processing the experience with his parents and Dina and me. While we have returned to the Children's Museum since the fire alarm, we always have to assure Manny, as he raises the subject of the alarm and how much he hated the noise, that

it is safe and not at all likely to happen again.

This incident and Manny's reaction led me to think about the many children around the world who are not safe from the noises and subsequent missiles, guns, and bombs that rain down on them and their families.

These weapons, often manufactured in the US, and/or paid for by our tax dollars, and/or fired by our armed forces are not keeping children safe. They are destroying the homes and communities of children and their families and often times killing or maiming the children and their loved ones. Manny's small but continuing trauma (at least for now) is nothing compared to what is happening to innumerable young, defenseless children and their families around the world.

How can the mostly men who make the decisions to inflict this kind of trauma and pain participate in such cruelty? What can possibly justify inflicting irreparable harm on children and their families? How can any human being, many of whom are parents themselves, knowingly inflict the trauma of violently separating fragile young ones from their families?

It was relatively easy for us to try to explain to Manny that the scary noise was actually a good noise designed to keep him safe. But it is not easy for



*Manny and Dina*

him to process that concept. What can a parent whose child is traumatized by war, conflict, and family separation possibly say to a vulnerable child who is victimized by these instruments of war, destruction, and mean-spirited policies? Evidently, the masters of war and destruction are so detached from the role of parents trying to explain the world to a child and capable of objectifying "others" that they can rain down this cruelty on innocent children.

I am so glad that PSARA has affiliated with the Seattle Antiwar Coalition. Thank you Beth Brunton and Mason Taylor for leading PSARA in this work.

*Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund.*

# PSARA Joins Pass the Federal Green New Deal!

## Pass the Federal Green New Deal!



### Initial list of organizations:

Earthcare Not Warfare

Kadima

National Writer's Union  
[UAW 1981] Washington  
Chapter

Pride At Work

PSARA [Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action]

South Seattle Climate Action  
Network

Sunrise Seattle

UAW 4121

Contact: [gndcoalition.wa@gmail.com](mailto:gndcoalition.wa@gmail.com)

**"Pass the Federal Green New Deal!" is a Washington State-based coalition that comes together to insist that our congressional delegation champions a national Green New Deal. We support enacting policies that will fulfill a promise to working people and frontline and vulnerable communities of a just and equitable transition away from extractive industries and that sharply limits the emission of greenhouse gases.**

**The Green New Deal, sponsored by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (HR 109) and Sen. Ed Markey (SR 59), has five main goals, summarized here:**

- To secure for all people clean air and water, housing, climate resiliency, healthy food, access to nature, and a sustainable environment**
- To invest in the infrastructure and industry of the US and sustainably meet the challenges of the 21st century.**
- To promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of frontline and vulnerable communities.**
- To eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as much as technologically feasible through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers**
- To create millions of high-quality union jobs that hire local workers and pay prevailing wages.**

**Our growing coalition represents Youth, Environmental, Environmental Justice, Labor, Faith, and Community organizations that work for good jobs and a future free of fossil fuels.**

# Trump Advisor's Plan to Dismember Federal Unions and Civil Service

By Steve Kofahl

A leaked 19-page 2017 outline, authored by White House labor and domestic policy advisor James Sherk, was first reported by IBEW on January 12, 2018, then by the *New York Times* on July 14, 2019. More comprehensive coverage was provided last fall by *Politico*, *Peoples World*, and AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees).

Former Heritage Foundation research fellow Sherk envisions an "at will" Federal workforce virtually devoid of job protections, with the President's US Constitution Article II powers allowing him to fire any employee for any reason or for no reason. Civil service legislation and federal employee labor contracts would effectively be deemed unconstitutional, with Executive Orders wielded as a weapon to take them apart. "National security" could be used to justify the elimination of civilian employee unions throughout the Defense Department and possibly at the Veterans Administration and elsewhere. Federal pay and benefits would be slashed.

Private sector workers would also be targeted. Employees of federal contractors would lose the right to paid leave, with Davis-Bacon and Project Labor Agreements weakened or eliminated. The overtime threshold for salaried employees would be lowered, and employees could more easily be misclassified as independent contractors. A variety of administrative actions would make it much harder for employees to form unions, and much easier for unions to be decertified. Any "taxpayer bailout" of underfunded pension plans would be avoided, with pension cuts the only acceptable solution.

Perhaps the most insidious "divide and conquer" strategy in the playbook is summed up with: "Most rank-and-file (private sector) union voters voted for the President, while their unions are run by left-wing ideologues. This cleavage presents an opportunity for the President to appeal to union members

while making it more difficult for union executives to oppose him."

Many of Sherk's stated objectives have been realized in Trump's first three years, and the pace of the attack quickens as elections approach. Three anti-employee, anti-union 2018 Executive Orders have been upheld in court and are being implemented. The White House recently advised officials at the Department of Defense that they may choose to not recognize their unions, and the Federal Labor Relations Authority has just issued a memo supporting the application of the infamous *Janus* decision to reduce federal employee union membership.

The politicization of federal agencies, and a return to the 19th Century spoils system, are well underway. Please let your friends, family, and neighbors know that they need to look behind the Trump tweet storm to see what's happening to their government.



Steve Kofahl is the retired President of AFGE 3937, which represents Social Security Administration workers, and a member of PSARA's Executive Board.

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**"Power is the flower of organization." -- A. Philip Randolph**

## 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

**First Tuesday Vigil with Seattle Anti-War Coalition:** 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 3, Jackson Federal Building, 915 2nd Avenue.

**West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes:** Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 4, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *New Report: Misclassification and the Gig Economy*. Brown bag lunch.

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

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

**Medicare For All: Why We Need It Now!** 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 8, Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1033 N Barr Rd., Agnew. All are welcome.

**PSARA Southend Committee:** 1:00 p.m., Thursday, March 12, Boulevard Park Library, 12015 Roseberg Ave. S, Seattle. Topic: *The Poor People's Campaign*.

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

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

**PSARA Race and Gender Equity Committee:** 11 a.m.–Noon, Thursday, March 19, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

**PSARA Executive Board:** 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, March 19, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

**Time For a Green New Deal:** 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 31, 6:30 p.m., Langley United Methodist Church, 301 Anthes, Langley. Presented jointly by Sunrise Seattle and PSARA.