



Works in Progress

Advocating for social justice since 1990

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To stabilize our economy, push for investments

Senator Joe Nguyen

The coronavirus pandemic has left Washington state not only facing a public health emergency, but also a budget crisis that will shape public policy for years to come. We’ve seen an economic fallout like this before in our state, and the response by legislators then continues to haunt the decisions we make today.

During the 2008 financial crisis, the Legislature addressed a budget shortfall by cutting spending across the board. Now, our most important social services are drastically underfunded and struggling to keep up with demand when assistance is most needed.

Austerity didn’t work in 2008 and it won’t work now.

This is especially clear given that we simultaneously have a historic number of houseless neighbors, few affordable housing options, and some of the richest men in the world all in Seattle. Income inequality has never been clearer in our state, and it hurts all of us in this time of crisis.

So, what are we dealing with?

As of the last forecast, Washington state is expecting a roughly \$4 billion shortfall to our state budget over the next few years. To put that in context, the state operating budget is \$54 billion over a biennium. However, between constitutional requirements and federal matching dollars, 85% of the budget is constrained. This means that any cuts would be made to that remaining 15%—or \$7.7 billion.

That \$7.7 billion includes funding for higher education, early learning, childcare, social services, and public health just to name a few vital programs we desperately need right now. Cutting the budget simply doesn’t work and it will only hurt the people who need help the most.

Each of these services can be funded if we rebalance our tax code to help working families and ask billionaires to pay their fair share.

This time around, we have an opportunity to diversify our state’s revenue sources so that the largest share of our statewide revenue no longer comes from our most vulnerable populations. As is, Washington’s tax code is completely upside-down, with the low- and middle-income earners paying six times more in taxes proportionate to their income than the wealthiest one percent.

A handful of people in our state have increased their net worth by hundreds of billions of dollars during this pandemic, while thousands of others have filed for unemployment that still isn’t enough to keep their families housed and fed. This is not only inequitable; it’s also inefficient

and severely restricts statewide revenue.

I’ve been fighting for progressive tax reform in the Washington State Sen-

ate for the last two sessions, and I won’t stop that work until we have a fair and equitable path forward. The model we have been working under has led to an unacceptable wealth

gap and reforming it would mean a more equal Washington for everyone. That’s the state that we will be working towards in Olympia this Legislative session.

Joe Nguyen is a member of the Washington state Senate representing the 34th District.

Low- and middle-income earners pay proportionally six times more in taxes than the wealthiest one percent.

Estabilizar la economia con inversiones

Senador Joe Nguyen

La pandemia de coronavirus ha dejado al estado de Washington no solo frente a una emergencia de salud pública, sino también a una crisis presupuestaria que dará forma a las políticas públicas en los próximos años. En el pasado ya hemos visto una secuela económica como esta en nuestro estado, y la respuesta dada por los legisladores en aquel entonces continúa acechando las decisiones que tomamos hoy.

Durante la crisis financiera de 2008, la Legislatura abordó un déficit presupuestario recortando el gasto en todos los ámbitos. Ahora, nuestros servicios sociales más importantes sufren drásticos recortes de fondos y luchan por satisfacer la demanda cuando más necesitan asistencia y ayuda.

La austeridad no funcionó en 2008 y no funcionará ahora.

Esto es especialmente claro dado que simultáneamente, en el caso de Seattle, tenemos un número histórico de pobladores sin hogar, pocas opciones de vivienda asequible y algunos de los hombres más ricos del mundo. La desigualdad de ingresos nunca ha sido más clara en nuestro estado y nos duele a todos en este momento de crisis.

Entonces, ¿a qué nos enfrentamos?

Según el último pronóstico, el estado de Washington espera un déficit de aproximadamente \$ 4 mil millones en nuestro presupuesto estatal durante los próximos años. Para poner eso en contexto, el presupuesto operativo estatal es de \$ 54 mil millones durante un bienio. Sin embargo, entre los requisitos constitucionales y los dólares de contrapartida federales, el 85% del presupuesto está limitado. Esto significa que cualquier recorte se aplicaría al 15% restante, o \$ 7.7 mil millones.

Esos \$ 7.7 mil millones incluyen fondos para educación superior, aprendizaje temprano, cuidado infantil, servicios sociales y salud pública, solo por nombrar algunos programas vitales que necesitamos desesperadamente en este momento. Recortar

el presupuesto simplemente no funciona y solo perjudicará a las personas que más necesitan ayuda.

Cada uno de estos servicios puede financiarse si reequilibramos nuestro código fiscal para ayudar a las familias trabajadoras y pedimos a los multimillonarios que paguen su parte justa.



En esta ocasión, tenemos la oportunidad de diversificar las fuentes de ingresos de nuestro estado para que la mayor parte de nuestros ingresos estatales ya no provenga de nuestras poblaciones más vulnerables. Tal como están las cosas, el código tributario de Washington está completamente al revés, y las personas de

ingresos bajos y medios pagan en proporción a sus ingresos, seis veces más en impuestos que el uno por ciento más rico.

Un puñado de personas en nuestro estado han aumentado su patrimonio neto en cientos de miles de millones de dólares durante esta pandemia, mientras que miles más han presentado una demanda por desempleo que aún no es suficiente para mantener a sus familias alojadas y alimentadas. Esto no solo es inequitativo, sino que también es ineficiente y restringe severamente los ingresos en todo el estado.

He estado luchando por una reforma fiscal progresiva en el Senado del estado de Washington durante las dos últimas sesiones, y no detendré ese trabajo hasta que tengamos un camino justo y equitativo hacia adelante. El modelo bajo el que hemos estado trabajando ha llevado a una brecha de riqueza inaceptable, pero reformarla significaría un Washington más igualitario

para todos. Ese es el estado por el que trabajaremos en Olympia en esta sesión legislativa.

Joe Nguyen es miembro del Senado del estado de Washington que representa al Distrito 34. Traducción by Enrique Quintero.

On turning blue

Washington’s Democratic legislature and Republican Secretary of State have made it easy for any citizen to vote in Washington State. Easy to register, easy to get a ballot, easy to vote, easy to return your ballot. One result is that Washington is a predictably blue state: Washington voters have checked the box for the Democratic Presidential nominee in large numbers since 1988. The D’s do not have to work hard to get out the vote.

It’s not so easy in historically red states. There, Republican legislatures and elections officials have erected all kinds of barriers to deter voters (story on p.8).

But in 2020, some red states became bluer despite the barriers. Strategic organizing by long-term activists, Blue Lives Matter and young candidates attacked by Trump as “radical socialists” brought in new voters. We owe them thanks for the fact that Donald Trump will be a one-term President.

—BW

Works in Progress (WIP), is a community newspaper based in Olympia WA, that has been published monthly since 1990.

WIP’s mission is to contribute to the struggle for justice across economic, social, environmental and political realms, and to expand participatory democracy across classes, races, and genders.

Editorial policy

Our priority is to focus on stories that are ignored or misrepresented in the media, especially those that relate directly to our mission. We seek well-researched news stories, serious analyses of issues confronting our communities and account of personal experiences or reflections by local writers. We encourage articles that relate to the monthly theme, but material on other topics is also welcome.

Informed opinion pieces are accepted when accompanied by facts, examples, and sources. We discourage writing where a key point is stated as fact when it’s unproven or in serious dispute. Writing that stereotypes groups or categories of people won’t be accepted.

Once we receive a submission, we may choose to publish it or not. While the views expressed in the material we print are those of the author alone, WIP aims to print material that is consistent with our mission. WIP reserves the right to edit all submissions for accuracy, length, and clarity of expression. We will work with authors if there is a need for editing that extends beyond those areas.

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How to politic... beyond the status quo

A public demand to end the “dramatic expansion ... of policing”

As mass protests have taken place all over the nation, the images of well-armed and flak-jacketed police facing off against protesters and violently subduing them while remaining encased in protective gear stands in stark contrast to our desperately under-equipped health care workers who have been vainly trying to save as many lives as possible during the coronavirus pandemic.

Police are clad head to toe in high-tech gear, face shields and body armor, with no shortage of plastic handcuffs, rubber bullets, and tear gas canisters. The optics of these modern-day gestapo-like forces roaming city streets, bashing in heads and firing tear gas into the faces of unarmed protesters are a reminder of just how many federal and state-level resources we have poured into law enforcement over the years at the expense of health care, education, and other public needs.

THOUGHTS ON THE THEME

Even as the economic collapse triggered by the pandemic threatened to devastate public school systems in the liberal havens of Los Angeles and New York City, law enforcement budgets remained unscathed. California’s Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom proposed big cuts to schools to compensate for massive budget shortfalls at the same time that LAPD officers were receiving \$41 million in bonuses. LA’s Democratic Mayor Eric Garcetti recently released this year’s proposed city budget—typical of previous years—which sets aside a whopping one-third of all city spending on police.

Similarly in New York City, the Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio’s proposal to compensate for pandemic-related revenue losses is to make cuts to the school budget that are 27 times that of his city’s police budget cuts. Alice Spери writing in the Intercept explains: “The US spends some \$100 billion annually on policing,” and “[i]n cities across the country, policing alone can take up anything between a third and 60 percent of the entire annual budget.”

And while the pandemic is forcing cities to make hard choices about which public services to slash, police department budgets have remained immune to cuts. Liberal cities like LA, New York and Minneapolis, in the words of one journalist, “keep piling money on police departments.”

Just as congressional Democrats for far too long have poured money into the US military to fuel wars abroad—even outdoing Trump’s thirst for military largesse—the Democratic Party’s state and local leaders have poured money into our domestic armed forces—the police—to fuel a war on us, and especially those among us with black or brown skin.

Now, because the collective public rage over police violence and impunity has reached a fever pitch, something extraordinary is hap-

pening. A long-standing activist call to defund the police is receiving a mainstream platform. On May 30, the New York Times published an op-ed by Philip V. McHarris and Thenjiwe McHarris entitled “No More Money for the Police.” Black Lives Matter has explicitly called for, “a national defunding of police,” and is demanding, “investment in our communities and the resources to ensure Black people not only survive, but thrive.”

Author Alex Vitale’s 2018 book, *The End of Policing*, aptly articulated on its cover: “The problem is not police training, police diversity, or police methods. The problem is the dramatic and unprecedented expansion and intensity of policing in the last forty years, a fundamental shift in the role of police in society. The problem is policing itself.”

Vitale’s work has taken on new urgency during the protests over George Floyd’s killing. In a recent piece he wrote for the Guardian, he explained that the solution for local authorities to tackle police, “is to dramatically shrink their function.” Vitale added, “We must demand that local politicians develop non-police solutions to the problems poor people face.”

That means mayors and governors from all parts of the political spectrum need to stop subscribing to the notion that police can solve problems caused by poor education, health care, and jobs, and directly start diverting money from police into education, health care, and jobs. Liberal leaders in particular, who have paid mere lip service for years to social justice, need to put their money where their

mouth is and wrest it out of the hands of police departments.

—This is an excerpt from an article on police violence by Sonali Kolhektar, printed originally in inequality.org

And more in this issue on citizens doing politics

A state senator succinctly puts the case that more public investment is the solution to the pandemic plunge. On page 3, citizens demand that local leaders use the power they have (see page 5) against unauthorized militia instead of against people forced to live in their vehicles.

For more examples of citizens getting organized, read about the local Democratic Socialists and check out the results of progressive initiatives on worker rights, taxing the rich and more on pages 6-7. You’ll also find out what happened in significant elections in Thurston and Pierce Counties—did voters go for climate deniers or climate realists, for example.

It’s extremely important to us in Washington state what happens in other states, because when they elect members of Congress who are committed to denying democracy—we will suffer the consequences along with all the other states.

Turn to page 10 for a blow-by-blow report on long-term organizing that is producing a shift toward governing for the many in Rhode Island, and the back cover for a startling look at the erosion of our right to vote and its consequences for a viable government.

Still more stories about people acting to bring about change directly: Read about a valiant effort to save precious second-growth trees on page 9. As always, find out what kinds of amazing things are going on despite the pandemic on page 11 Community Spotlight.

—BW



Ideas for next issues

January. What we can’t face. Here is a reason to write about this: “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” James Baldwin. **Deadline December 15**

February. Time. Time seems to loom ever larger in our understanding of how to live...the time we spend on daily demands—and the time we have to address the gorilla in the room—climate change **Deadline: January 15**

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City leaders: *Please get your act together*

Enforce existing laws

[Ed note: The letters below were sent to members of the Olympia City Council after they asked Governor Inslee to change state laws to provide severe penalties for people who form private armed militias—complaining that existing penalties were insufficient. The fact that Olympia's city leadership hadn't enforced even those penalties struck some citizens as a problem.]

Dan Leahy to the City Council:

I want to thank you for your October 8th letter to Governor Inslee and Attorney General Robert Ferguson.

While you ask the Governor for a “severe penalty,” please direct our police department to enforce existing laws including RCW 38.40.120, the violation of which is punishable of “up to ninety days in jail or a fine up to \$1,000 or both such fine and imprisonment.”

There is ample sworn testimony in the OPD's Internal Investigation of Police Officer Tiffany Coates, dated August 20, 2020, that Olympia police officers witnessed both members of the American Wolf and the Washington Three Percenters acting as a private militia with no state license to do so, clearly carrying weapons capable of causing bodily harm in the midst of civil disorder and giving the impression that they were assisting the police in enforcing the law.

RCW 38.40.120 makes it illegal for groups of people to organize as a private militia without permission of the state. RCW 9A.48.1120 states

it is a felony to teach how to use devices capable of causing bodily harm in the unlawful pursuit of civil disorder. RCW 9A.60.045 states it is a crime to create the impression that someone is a law enforcement officer or give that impression to a reasonable person. (Precise language can be found in attached document).

I agree that to be concerned with the presence of these armed vigilantes in our city is not unreasonable. You worry that our “capitol city may well end up like Charlottesville, Virginia on August 12, 2017.” I think it could be much worse.

The white power movement in the United States utilized the *Turner Diaries* by William Pierce to develop strategic and tactical coordination. US Army veteran Timothy McVeigh was a major distributor of this book and, of course, his plan for blowing up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma mimicked the plan in the *Turner Diaries*.

The Washington Three Percenters has on its website (wa3percent.org) a single book listed under its “Recommended Gear” section. The book is *299 Days*, actually a

series of books, by Glenn Tate, a supposed pseudonym of a former Olympia lawyer.

I read book eight, *The War*. The author recounts a New Year's Eve attack on the City of Olympia by 100-plus armed “patriots” of the “17th Irregulars” for the purpose of installing their own state Governor and government.

On their way to the Delphi overpass on Highway 101, they had to get past a fictional town called “Frederickson.” I suppose this could be Aberdeen or maybe Montesano or Elma. This obstacle was eliminated by a police lieutenant who arranged for the town leadership to gather in a large conference room for a New Year's Eve party with alcohol and promises of fresh meat (women).

Once everyone had gathered, the Lieutenant threw two fragmentation grenades into the conference room and then dispatched leaders still alive with a “.40 to the head.” To finish his job so the 17th Irregulars could travel on to Olympia, the Lieutenant ordered his police force into the town's “MexiZone” to kill all males, known as gang bangers.

I know. Fiction. So were the *Turner Diaries*. Please enforce the existing RCWs. We can't wait for more severe penalties.

JJ Lindsey to the City Council

I couldn't agree more with Mr. Leahy and join him in thanking you for the letter sent to the Governor and AG. I also ask that you take meaningful and serious steps to enforce already existing state law in the City of Olympia, such as regarding the behavior of Officer Tiffany Coates and the militia she was cavorting with.

To make such a pointed request to state leaders, but not enforce existing laws yourselves, is a contradiction. I think you will agree: that contradictions show weakness and lack of resolve in intent and action, and that there is no room for such contradictions in times like these. I think, given Olympia's polarized population, it could definitely be much worse than Charlottesville, and therefore it is *imperative* that the City show strong intent of non-negotiation, and strong corrective action, when it comes to militia threats.

If you ARE the law, then exercise it with these aggressive and violent-leaning militia groups—otherwise, they will creep closer and closer to “showdown.”

Please look closely at yourselves as city leaders, and bravely step up to do what it is you yourselves are asking for.

City Manager Jay Burney's response to Dan Leahy is online at www.olywip.org

Sending a message—the wrong one

The local Black Lives Matter movement was dealt another blow by the Olympia Police Department on October 14 when a ceremony was held to present Tiffany Coates with the Officer of the Year Award she had won in 2019. Officer Coates had landed Olympia in national news when she greeted and posed with armed members of the far-right, anti-government militia group the Three Percenters while on duty on June 5.

Whether intentional or not, the Department's decision, and the City Council's apparent complicity, gives a nod of approval to the Three Percenters as well as other right-wing militias. The Three Percenters are American based, but have a presence in Canada, where some experts consider them the “most dangerous extremist group” in the country.

Creating a special public opportunity to praise the officer whose actions revealed a camaraderie with the Three Percenters hurts and endangers our entire community. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), white supremacists and other rightwing extremists have been responsible for 67% of domestic terror attacks and plots so far this year, with at least half of that violence targeting protesters

These far-right extremist ideologies are spreading at a time when Americans have been living with years of unaffordable housing and a lack of tenants' rights, unaffordable/inaccessible healthcare, stagnant wages, and loads of student and medical debt. All of this is compounded by increasing joblessness due to the pandemic, leading to economic devastation for many Olympia and Thurston County

residents while the federal government does effectively nothing to help.

Olympia's poverty rate is 16.7%. According to the Thurston Regional Planning Council, “the gap between the income needed for self-sufficiency in Thurston County and the Federal poverty level continues to grow.”

Between 2014 and 2020, the gap for a one-person household more than doubled, from \$5,629 to \$12,706. This coupled with the president's hateful, racist rhetoric and active encouragement of these armed vigilantes serves as a tinderbox waiting for a spark. In many countries, poverty, civil unrest, and racism were a recipe for civil war. And here in the US, BLM supporters are not the ones with the weapons.

Now the City of Olympia has joined the most dangerous President in our country's history in celebrating and rewarding those who view right-wing hate groups as friendly supporters.

We can hope the effects of this decision by the City and OPD are “just” more demoralization and fear among our city's Black, Indigenous, and Latinx residents, as well as those who put their bodies on the line to fight for racial justice, to stop the murder and brutalization of Black people at the hands of our country's police.

As for the City and OPD, the first step to correct course would be to rescind the award given to Tiffany Coates and stop giving preferential treatment to untrained, armed vigilantes. They should act now and not let up to discourage the militias from causing even more lasting damage.

—Eleanor Steinhagen



Officer Coates thanks Three percenters for “protecting” a gun store

Just go “somewhere else”

[Ed note: The following information is taken from a letter sent by Just Housing to the Mayor and Councilmembers. Read the full letter at <https://justhousingolympia.org/>]

After the City of Olympia said it would not evict people living in vehicles on Ensign Road because the Attorney General informed them it was illegal, the City found another way to accomplish their objective.

On Monday people breathed a sigh of relief when the City put its planned sweep on hold and instead said people would be asked to leave voluntarily. On Tuesday they found out how meaningless that was: Ensign Rd. was barricaded for hours on both ends with cones, public works vehicles, and police. No advocates or other witnesses were allowed to cross the barriers.

The ostensible purpose for the closure—installing “No Parking Zone” signs—took only a brief time, but more time was needed to get the residents to leave. Some residents

were offered a gas card or 4 nights in a hotel. Some residents were threatened with tickets if they stayed. They were then told that only those who left could not come back without risking a ticket. Then the information changed again—everyone would be at risk of receiving a ticket. Finally, residents were told that the City actually doesn't know yet.

In effect, the subtext of a continually changing message was the real message—the residents of Ensign Road who had no place to go, but would face a threatening uncertainty if they stayed They would be subject to the whims of City staff rather than any clearly interpretable law or policy.

Staff from the City said the only thing the AG's letter changed was that they wouldn't be “compelling” people to leave. But the plan was that they would leave.

—Just Housing

In pursuit of defunding the Olympia PD

“It can’t happen here”

Eleanor Steinhagen

One afternoon in August 1991, police officers barged into my aunt's living room in Berkeley, California, pulled her out of her chair, and shoved her into her front yard where they beat her with their batons until she fell to the ground. As she struggled to breathe, they searched her home, dumping the contents of cupboards and drawers on the floor and rifling through closets. Her then 8-month-old daughter, whom she'd been breastfeeding when police arrived, lay on the living room floor crying.

Eventually, they shoved my aunt back into her living room, where an officer yelled and hit her several times with his fist. In shock, she couldn't understand what he was saying or what was happening. Then they went out to their patrol cars and drove away. It happened within minutes, but the bruises the police left on my aunt's body kept her from sitting on the toilet for a week.

It *can* happen here

As the struggle for racial justice unfolds in Olympia, my biggest fear is that too many people believe our city is too liberal for anything like what happened to my aunt or Rosebud Denovo or George Floyd to happen here.

Only a matter of time

First, it already has. In 2019, 14% of Olympia Police Department's use of force was against Black residents. And 11% of people booked into City jail were Black though they represent only 3% of the population. Given this and officers' lack of accountability, it is reasonable to assume it's only a matter of time before Olympia police irreparably harm, or extinguish, another life.

As James Baldwin wrote in 1966:

“the police are simply the hired enemies of this population. They are present to keep the Negro in his place and to protect white business interests, and they have no other function. ...and, since they know that they are hated, they are always afraid. One cannot possibly arrive at a more surefire formula for cruelty.”

A long history of violence and racism

The problem of police violence spans centuries, administrations, and every direction across the country. Since their origins as slave patrols and gangs paid to quash organized labor, police departments have maintained and gained so much power they are all but untouchable. Despite their history of violence and racism, they enjoy almost complete immunity at the city, state, and federal levels.

While the finding of innocence for the cops who murdered Breonna Taylor is a gross injustice, no one should be surprised. Of the 6,249 killings by US police since 2013, roughly 2% have resulted in officers being charged with a crime. It would have been more shocking if justice were served.

My aunt is a person who is Black, an immigrant from Mauritius whose first language is French. She was 37 at the time. Their suspect was an 18-year-old unhoused white woman with mental illness from Kentucky who police had encountered several times over the years. Later that day, she learned they had gone to the wrong house.

In my aunt's case, the officers did not present a warrant. They did not charge her with a crime. They offered her \$20,000 to settle out of court. A year later, they shot the young woman they'd been looking for three times, once in the back, killing her after she'd broken into a home. Her name was Rosebud Denovo. She was 19 years old.

Berkeley is arguably one of the most, if not the most, liberal cities in the U.S. So is Minneapolis. But this hasn't made them immune to police violence. Since 2015, Bay Area police have killed 110 people. Black residents made up 27% of those killed, while they make up only 7% of the population, one of the largest such disparities in the nation.

For every person killed by police, many more are brutalized and survive. Studies show most excessive force, like that which injured my aunt, is against people who are unarmed and/or are experiencing a mental health crisis.

The only recourse left

Cities across the nation have started to embrace the need to defund their police departments as the only viable path to prevent more violence, as well as crime itself. And many are succeeding, including the Berkeley City Council who in July voted to cut \$9.3 million from their police budget.

Councilmember and Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn said defunding the police is not a particularly radical idea, but a fiscally responsible way to shift how the city uses its valuable resources. The council is now developing a plan to redistribute the funding to programs and services that support BIPOC and reduce residents' encounters with police.

Continuously increasing funds for the police

In 2011, the OPD budget was \$13.1 million. In 2020 it has ballooned to \$21.9 million—a 67% increase. Meanwhile, total calls for service, which are logged each time an officer responds to any situation while on duty, have increased by only 7%. According to OPD, they are more likely to receive a 911 call for found property than for any of the following: robbery, amber alert, abduction, abuse/neglect, assault, arson, auto theft, attempted crime, burglary, DUI, escape, fraud, harassment, physical control, reckless driving, sex offence, stalking, trespassing, or vandalism.

At the same time, 5% of our 2019 police budget, or \$1.1 million, was spent on overtime. Starting salary for officers fresh out of training, with no education requirement beyond what the police tailor for themselves, is \$76,000 per year, not including pension and other benefits.



More than all other department budgets combined

More funds are spent per capita on Olympia's police department than on public works, parks, arts, recreation, community planning and development, and general government combined. Despite there being no correlation between an increased investment in policing and reduction in crime, one third of our entire city budget, per capita, is spent on police.

Models for redistributing taxes from police departments

In addition to Berkeley, more than a dozen cities across the country have begun to halt the unchecked flow of taxpayer money into their police departments' coffers. City councils are working with activists, who deeply understand their communities' needs, to redistribute funds to affordable housing; job training; education; healing space for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color; and other programs that support residents. We have several models to pull from and many strategies to employ.

Finally begin to address the needs of other workers

In Olympia, the first step should be to address urgent needs BIPOC and other oppressed and vulnerable community members are experiencing. While OPD officers enjoy comfortable salaries, pensions, and automatic promotions with pay increases, many of the people they police are suffering from years of unaffordable housing, stagnant wages, and lack of access to health-care, now compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents have the additional impact of daily racism to deal with, including racial profiling by police and all the associated fines and legal fees, going back generations. For this and other obvious reasons, a reparations program should be a central part of any defunding effort.

Seek leadership from those impacted by police violence

The next step should be to invite and pay BIPOC, Transgender, houseless, disabled, poor, and other residents most impacted by police violence to lead a community research process to learn from

Olympia residents what needs could be met with dedicated long-term funding redistributed from OPD's budget. Regardless of how the work gets done, BIPOC should be at the head of the table with decision making roles throughout the process.

It is THE issue of public health and safety

Many people see defunding the police as a political issue. It is not. It is an issue of public health and safety. People like my aunt do not get to choose whether their lives are going to be shattered one day by violence at the hands of the police. Defunding the system that has shown itself incapable of stopping the violence it perpetrates while remaining above the law is our obligation as fellow human beings.

To join the local effort to defund OPD, email info@olydsa.org. To get involved in local racial justice and equity work, email AmplifiedVoicesofOlympia@amplifiedvoicesoly@gmail.com.

Eleanor Steinhagen has lived in Olympia for 11 years. She works in communications

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In Washington, people participating in unauthorized militias are breaking the law

What is a militia?

Federal and state laws generally use the term “militia” to refer to all able-bodied residents between certain ages who may be called forth by the government to defend the United States or an individual state. See 10 U.S.C. § 246. When not called forth, they are sometimes referred to as the “unorganized militia.” A group of people who consider themselves part of the able-bodied residents referred to as members of the militia under state or federal law is not legally permitted to activate itself for duty. A private militia that attempts to activate itself for duty, outside of the authority of the state or federal government, is illegal.

How do I know if a group of armed people is an unauthorized private militia?

Groups of armed individuals that engage in paramilitary activity or law enforcement functions without being called forth by a governor or the federal government and without reporting to any government authority are acting as unauthorized private militias. They sometimes train together and respond to events using firearms and other paramilitary techniques, such as staking out tactical positions and operating in military-style formations. They often purport to have authority to engage in military and law enforcement functions such as protecting property and engaging in crowd control.

These groups often engage in behaviors that show their intent to act as a private militia, such as wearing military-style uniforms, tactical gear, or identifying insignia; wielding firearms or other weapons; and operating within a coordinated command structure. Other factors—such as statements by leaders or members’ efforts to

direct the actions of others—also may suggest that a group is acting as a private militia. Groups of armed individuals may engage in unauthorized militia activity even if they do not consider themselves to be “members” of a paramilitary organization.



Washington three percenters’ self-styled “militia” training in violation of Washington laws. (Photo from an ADL article)

Does the Second Amendment protect private militias?

No. In fact, the Supreme Court decided in 1886—and repeated in 2008—that the Second Amendment “does not prevent the prohibition of private paramilitary organizations.” *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 621 (2008) (citing *Presser v. Illinois*, 116 U.S. 252 (1886)).

Is it legal to act as a private militia in Washington?

No. All 50 states prohibit private, unauthorized militias and military units from engaging in activities reserved for the state militia, including law enforcement activities. Some, including Washington, also prohibit paramilitary activity

during or in furtherance of a civil disorder. Washington’s laws are described below:

Washington Constitution: The Washington Constitution forbids private military units from operating outside state authority, provid-

ing that “[t]he military shall be in strict subordination to the civil power.” Wash.Const. art. I, § 18. It also makes clear that the “right of the individual citizen to bear arms in defense of himself, or the state,” does not authorize “individuals or corporations to organize, maintain or employ an armed body of men.” Id. § 24.

RCW Prohibiting private military units: Washington law makes it illegal for groups of people to organize as private militias without permission from the state. It is a misdemeanor for any “organized body other than the recognized militia organizations of this state, armed forces of the United States,” military schools, and veterans organizations to “associate themselves together as a military company or organize or parade in public with firearms.” Wash. Rev. Code § 38.40.120.

RCW Prohibiting paramilitary activity RCW 9A.48.120
It is a Class B felony in Washington to teach or demonstrate how to use, apply, or make “any device or technique capable of causing significant bodily injury or death to persons, knowing, or having reason to know or intending that same will be unlawfully employed for use in, or in furtherance of, a civil disorder.” This is a Class B felony punishable by up to 10 yrs imprisonment and/or a fine of \$20,000.

RCW Prohibiting impersonation of law enforcement - RCW 9A.60.045
It is also a crime in Washington for a person to “create an impression that he or she is a law enforcement officer” and “act with intent to convey the impression that he or she is acting in an official capacity” such that “a reasonable person would believe the person is a law enforcement officer.” This is a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in County Jail and/or a fine up to \$5000.

What should I do if I see armed groups in my neighborhood or gathering in community spaces?

- **First**, document what you see:
- What are the armed people doing?
- What are the armed people wearing?
- Are they carrying firearms? If so, what type? If not, are they carrying other types of weapons?
- Are they wearing insignia? If so, what does it say or look like?
- Are they bearing signs or flags?
- Do they seem to be patrolling like a law enforcement officer might do?
- Do they seem to be coordinating their actions?
- Do they have a leader?
- Are they stopping or talking to people outside of their group?
- Do they appear to be provoking or threatening violence? If so, what are they doing specifically?
- **Second**, notify your political representatives and ask them to enforce state laws that prohibit unauthorized militias.

This Fact Sheet was prepared by the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) at Georgetown University Law Center, with the pro bono assistance of law firms Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, Jones Day, and O’Melveny & Myers. ICAP’s mission is to use the power of the courts to defend American constitutional rights and values. Visit us at www.law.georgetown.edu/icap/.

Washington State has other laws not directed specifically at unauthorized militia. These laws, if enforced, should call for the arrest of weapons-carrying individuals or groups who parade around in public while armed or present themselves in public as “defending” the community, or “protecting” others’ property:

RCW 9A.12.020 makes the carrying of any weapon “apparently capable of producing bodily harm, in a manner, under circumstances, and at a time and place that either manifests an intent to intimidate another or that warrants alarm for the safety of other persons” punishable as a gross misdemeanor.

RCW 18.170.160 (4) provides that after June 30, 1992, a person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor if he or she performs the functions and duties of an armed private security guard in this state unless the person holds a valid armed private security guard license issued by the department.

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REFLECTIONS

How things played out at home...

Emily Lardner

While ballots were being counted in many states days after election day, here in Washington State, our legislature remains solidly in Democrat hands. However, as everyone knows, all Democrats are not equal. The question is, how well will we do in the upcoming legislative session? The answer, from a progressive point of view? Better.

The Washington Conservation Voters (WCV) organization scores senators and representatives on how they vote, on key environmental and public health issues.

Their 2019-2020 “scorecard highlights that while significant progress was made there is still no comprehensive plan to address climate change and meet the state’s emissions goals.” Still, their website lists two legislative victories for the environment in 2019—a first-in-the-nation, 100% Clean Electricity law, and an increase in funds to clean up the state’s toxic waste sites—the first significant change to the Model Toxics Control Act since voters passed it in 1988.

Writing for the *urbanist.org*, Doug Trumm argues that

“this is the most progressive legislature in [Washington’s] modern history as progressive challeng-

ers muscled out moderates. The Republican party made zero gains in urban areas. The 19th District was the only bright spot for them... ..and prospects of regaining former conservative bastions...appear dim. ...we’re due for a redistricting following the results of the 2020 census, which is likely to shift seats and tilt the scales only farther toward urban and suburban districts where Republicans have been getting their clocks cleaned. The state legislature is likely entering an unprecedented era of progressive control. Let’s act on it.”

Legislative District 22, Thurston County, elected three Democrats endorsed by the FUSE WA progressive voter guide and the LCV. Sam Hunt was re-elected to the State Senate and Laurie Dolan and Jessica Batement will serve as representatives.

In Legislative District 28, which includes Pierce County, progressive Democrat T’wina Nobles defeated conservative incumbent Steve O’Ban, making her the first Black state senator since 2010. Nobles was endorsed by the Washington Progressive Party and Women of Color in Politics.

Her victory not only flips a seat in the state senate, but adds another

progressive Democrat pushing for broader reforms. In Legislative District 29, which also includes Pierce County, Melanie Morgan, endorsed by the WA State Progressive Caucus, the Urbanist, and the LCV, was re-elected, defeating her Republican opponent by close to 15,000 votes. Morgan, who centers her legislative work in equity, supports Medicare for All, a capital gains tax and renewable energy.

Opportunities to enact progressive policies have opened up in the Pierce and Thurston County Councils. In Thurston, Carolina Mejia, endorsed by the WA State Progressive Caucus, defeated her opponent by more than 25,000 votes, with 116,542 votes counted. Even if Democrat Michael Steadman doesn’t defeat the incumbent, there will be a Democrat majority on the board.

In Pierce County, although activist and Evergreen grad Sarah Rumbaugh lost to climate-denier Hans Zeigler for a seat on the Council, Ryan Mello and Jani Hitchen each beat their opponents. For the first time since 2004, Democrats are in the majority on the seven-member county council.

More important than constituting a majority is what the Democrats plan to do. Both newly elected

commissioners are serious about addressing climate chaos. Mello has a strong track-record of climate activism, as does science teacher Jani Hitchen, who earned an endorsement from the WA State Progressive Caucus.

Achieving a better version of a social democracy remains an aspiration, and it’s hard not to be discouraged by the outpouring of support for Trump and Trumpism at all levels of government. However, the luxury of despair belongs only to those who can survive or even thrive within the status quo.

Yet it’s clear that there is another movement across the country, made visible by “the Squad” at a national level, and the candidates described here at a local level. They are paying attention to the needs of real people, making that the center of their agenda, and winning. That is cause for hope.

Emily Lardner lives in Pierce County and writes often for Works in Progress.

Olympia City Council With the election of Jessica Bateman to the legislature, the City Council will need to appoint a replacement. After County elections are certified by the Auditor on November 24, the City will set up an application process for members of the community to apply. Whoever the Council appoints for the remaining two years of Bateman’s term will be in a good position to win an election in 2023.

How to politic when the politicians won’t

There is so much more to politics than deciding between what the Democratic Party and Republican Party chooses to put on the ballot. Around the country this year, people organized in behalf of direct ways to address the inequality that is driving us toward disaster. Here some of the efforts - check them out to see how well they fared:

Building a stable society

One of the biggest fights over fair taxation is raging in San Francisco, where voters had the chance to approve a raise in the real estate transfer tax on sales of properties values above \$10 million. Big developers and corporate lobby groups marshalled over \$2 million to fight the proposal.

Another San Francisco measure would increase taxes on corporations that pay their CEO more than 100 times their median employee in that city, a proposal loosely based on an existing tax in Portland. Sarah Anderson of the Institute for Policy studies wrote about the details.

Arizona’s Proposition 208 would increase taxes on incomes above \$250,000 to pay for higher teacher salaries and better schools.

In Oregon’s Multnomah County residents voted on a proposal to tax higher earners to pay for preschool for all..

In Illinois, residents voted on a constitutional amendment to replace their regressive “flat” income tax with graduated progressive rates.

Colorado voters got to decide whether to implement a statewide paid medical and family leave program, funded by a payroll tax.

California’s Proposition 15 would tax commercial and industrial properties worth more than \$3 million at their market value instead of their purchase price to raise revenue for local governments and schools.



Worker protections

On the labor front, California voters confronted Proposition 22, a corporate-backed effort to overturn a state law that required Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, and other platform-based companies to treat workers as employees with basic labor rights instead of shifting risk to them as “independent contractors.”

Since 1998 there have been 22 ballot proposals to increase state minimum wages. They’ve passed every time. This year, only Florida is considering a state minimum wage hike. If it has passed, it would be the first state to raise the minimum to \$15 through a ballot measure. Organizers in Portland, ME offered a similar \$15 proposal.

Housing

At a time when the country is facing a massive wave of likely evictions and foreclosures, many

voters had a chance to vote on increases in affordable housing and tenants’ rights. California’s Proposition 21, for example, would let local governments enact rent control on almost all rental housing over 15 years old. Portland, ME also had rent caps and increased tenant protections on their ballot.

Organizers in other cities succeeded in getting ballot proposals to address homelessness and affordable housing. King County

voters have decided whether the county can sell, lease, or transfer properties for below-market value if it’s used for affordable housing. In Denver, voters decided on a ballot measure to raise sales taxes to pay for increased services for the homeless. San Francisco had a proposal to build 100,000 units of affordable housing and San Diego voters weighed in on an affordable housing measure. San Francisco also had a bond measure that would boost funding for parks, public areas, and facilities meant to support the homeless and addicts.

Poverty is not a crime

Finally, among the long list of important criminal justice reforms on ballots across the country, some address the criminalization of poverty. For example, California voters decided whether to get rid of cash bail, a system that means many

people await trial in jail for weeks or even months. In Los Angeles County, residents voted on allocating 10 percent of county revenues towards community investment programs that provide alternatives to incarceration.

Money in politics

Alaska had a ballot measure to adopt ranked-choice voting, along with campaign finance reforms to make the true sources of political donations more transparent. Massachusetts voters also had the chance to choose ranked choice voting.

Oregon’s Measure 107 would allow for limits on campaign contributions and spending and also force more transparency in the source and distribution of money, and on political advertisements.

Brian Wakamo compiled this information. He is a research analyst on the Global Economy Project at the Institute for Policy Studies.

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Olympia DSA

Building a politics that serves the many

Riley Woodward-Pratt, on behalf of Olympia DSA

It's a tall order trying to build a more humane world and save ourselves from ecological collapse. In the Olympia chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), we know that the solutions to our biggest problems must come in the form of working people organizing from the bottom-up, to protect and build power for ourselves.

Looking to 2021 and beyond, the Olympia DSA is working on several concrete ways to accomplish these goals:

Supporting workers at Providence

Right now, Providence St. Pete's workers from nine technical units—the people who give us ultrasounds, our CAT scans and our EKGs; who hand us our medication, who help us breathe and so much else—are fighting for their first contract. Their employer does not want them to have the same sick-leave bank that is given to all other units in the hospital, and cannot promise them enough time to rest, even during a pandemic.

OlyDSA will be in the fight with those workers until they have their just contract, because every group of workers who organize to win their rights brings us closer to the power we need to make a better world.

Electoral organizing at the local level

In 2021, four seats on the Olympia City Council will be up for election, including some of the strongest progressive voices on the council. This off-year election has the potential to shape our City Council and determine its path into the future. Will our City attempt to simply manage the status quo in an increasingly unmanageable

world? Or will our approach be to assert popular interests and make the effort to build a more caring and democratic alterna-



tive at the local level?

We look forward to waging this campaign by doing what we did to support Bernie, Mary Ellen Biggerstaff (LD-22), and Marianna Everson (LD-19)—talking with ordinary people about what matters in their lives—whether on their doorstep, over the phone, or via Zoom.

Redefining public safety for Olympia

Whatever the composition of the City Council, Olympia DSA will continue to assert the need for a community that ensures safety for its residents through care, not cops. The current moment has placed the role of police in the public eye in a new way, and

than expanding policing, which always falls on the most vulnerable members of our community.

Implementing a new public housing strategy

At the county level, Olympia DSA is excited for the prospect of working with a new County Commission to implement a visionary social housing plan. Currently, the Housing Authority of Thurston County only builds public housing for the poorest residents of the

county, leading to income segregation and lower housing quality (the old problem of programs for the poor being poor programs). We can do better.

By investing in housing across large sections of the market where anyone would

want to live, we can create public housing that is truly for everyone. Vienna, Austria is the shining example of this approach, with the majority of the city's residents living in public housing.

But we don't have to look that far away. Vancouver, WA, has high-quality apartments appropriate for anyone earning a typical worker's income. And even better: proper public investment in housing can be revenue positive, even with subsidized rents for the poorest residents, providing a surplus that can fund further social housing development. We do not need to trade away our city to private high-end developers to increase density with modern, and attractive housing. We can do it ourselves and build housing that belongs to all of us and serves all of us.

We...can put forward winning candidates ... in every town and district...ready to enact transformational policies.

Strengthening rank-and-file unions

To win these and other demands, we must do more than simply protest. We believe in winning political power for the working class. We can do this through an expanded and rejuvenated labor movement that can enable workers to stand up to their bosses (and the capitalist class as a whole).

Grassroots organizing

We can do it through a new political

organization that is truly democratic and can put forward winning candidates like Rashida Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Mary Ellen Biggerstaff in every town and district, ready to enact transformational policies. Through this kind of popular organizing, from grassroots campaigns to strengthening rank-and-file unions, we can make meaningful progress on issues like reallocating resources from policing to fund social programs, creating a robust social housing system, and meaningfully addressing climate change.

Member-based, democratic and ready to work

We have the ability to take on these fights because DSA is a member-based, democratic organization. Everyone in DSA from the local level to the National Political Committee is an equal member. We don't rely on funding grants or NGOs to pressure politicians. We contribute our time and resources through dues that fund campaign logistics, tech tools like VAN and staff to support campaigns across the country.

The power of DSA comes from members' willingness to step up, take responsibility, and assume leadership on these issues. And our power is growing. In Thurston County, our Local has grown from a few dozen members in 2016 to over 200. This year alone we welcomed over 90 new members.

Understanding where we come from and the work that led up to this point is essential. Members new and old can develop their understanding of politics, economics and strategy through political education events like our Socialist Night School and regular discussion events on topics ranging from the Presidential race to progressive tax policy, and what solidarity truly means.

We have a world to win!

Anyone interested in joining should drop in at a general membership meeting (every 3rd Saturday at 4pm), or visit www.olydsa.org to arrange a one-on-one meeting with an organizer. and become a full member by going to <http://dsausa.org/join?source=Olympia+WA>.

Riley Woodward-Pratt is co-chair of the Olympia Local DSA and co-chair of the DSA National Political Education Committee.



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Olympia as a whole needs to decide what we want to build our community around. Do we want to be a city that regulates public order through handcuffs, mace, and guns? Or can we create a city that is livable for everyone, where we are all safer because none of our neighbors suffer the deprivations of homelessness, isolation and social neglect?

Olympia's spending on police has nearly doubled over the last decade, yet our city is neither twice as large nor twice as safe. We must ask what this money is going towards, and what it could be better spent on. We throw millions of dollars to the police department, while hundreds of our neighbors are evicted to sleep in tents. Our social care infrastructure is grossly underfunded. We believe our City can create better public safety by helping people stay in their homes and supporting them through difficult times, rather

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www.thurstonhousinglandtrust.org

Join or renew before Dec. 5 by mailing \$25 to THLT, PO BOX 303, Olympia, WA 98507 or by visiting www.thurstonhousinglandtrust.org

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Join or renew membership today!

Thurston Housing Land Trust Annual Meeting (via Zoom)
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Time to change course

The on-going assault on representative democracy

From WIP correspondents
far and wide

Our government prides itself—officially—on the idea that its authority is based on the consent of the governed. We rely on elections to manifest this consent: the more of those governed who vote, and the more the majority vote is reflected in the government, the more legitimate is the authority of the government.

Rule by the minority

The Republican Party does not believe in democracy. It does not want everyone to vote. In fact, its policy is to disenfranchise people. After taking control of many state legislatures, Republicans designed new electoral districts to concentrate likely Democratic voters, enabling a smaller population of conservatives to determine the makeup of the state's Congressional delegation. After the Supreme Court in 2013 gutted the Voting Rights Act, Republicans legislators set up new barriers to voting that primarily affected people who were poor, black or brown, or transient.

First, prevent people from voting

Barriers ranged from wholesale challenges to voter registration, closing polling places, restricting hours when you could vote, requiring picture IDs and limiting the kinds that would qualify. They appointed hundreds of right-wing judges to protect those barriers in court. In the current election, Republicans attacked voting by mail, stripped the post office of resources, and sued election officials in efforts to limit voter registration, and further restrict voter access.

Another chance: the Electoral College

Despite these actions, Republicans lost the popular vote in 6 of the last 7 Presidential elections, but they had a fall back. The Electoral College gave them the presidency for 3 terms. The Electoral College reflects the power of the states, not the will of the people.

Each state gets electors equal in number to their Congressional delegation. This gives significantly more influence to states with small populations, compared to a system

based on one person one vote. But there's more.

Most states send electors to vote for the candidate of the party that won the majority of votes in that state. It's a winner-take-all

states as well.

So don't count every vote

Trump tried (unsuccessfully) to officials in several states from counting millions of votes mailed by election day but

The Republican Party does not believe in democracy.

system, which further erodes the one person one vote principle. Only the votes cast for the state winner count in the Electoral College. Though this undermines the representative element of the vote, it's the way states have typically handled their electors; but it's not required.

Further eroding the consent of the governed

There is a way that a state could change its approach to electors in order to contest election results – a way that could, for example, keep Donald Trump in the Presidency.

What If there's a disagreement over election results in a state? What happens when absentee ballots timely mailed, arrive after election day? Counting all legally cast votes seems like one good way to determine the will of the people. In Washington, we count ballots up to the deadline for reporting final results (21 days), and that is true in other

received after Nov. 3. Another strategy involves filing multiple lawsuits to delay certification of results. This can create opportunities to dispute which slate of Electors should be sent to the Electoral College and even to replace the slate indicated by the completed vote count with their own.

Or what if a Republican-majority state legislature decides to appoint a competing slate of electors even though the Democratic candidate won? Then Congress decides which slate of electors should be counted to determine who becomes president.

Trump's backers simply continued the attack on voting that the Republicans have engaged in for decades. Their goal as always is to further a Republican Corporate Christian agenda—which can only occur if most of the American population is excluded from participation in elections.

Awakened and on the move

Because these possibilities and others are real, in this election, many groups prepared to act preserve the integrity of the election – not only in the face of challenges in court, but in anticipation of actions foreshadowed by right-wing militias. Protect the Results, a coalition of more than 100 organizations; Choose Democracy, a group that trained several thousand activists committed to nonviolent demonstrations; and Labor Action to Protect Democracy, which roused local and national unions, worker centers and allied labor organizations to commit to labor actions – all saw the possibility that Donald Trump might attempt a coup.

A politics that represents the will of the majority

Even if the immediate task is accomplished—to elect Joe Biden to occupy the presidency in place of Donald Trump—this just the starting point. “Pressuring” a Biden Administration is a delusion. To dismantle the race and class system that has defined America will require a coherent strategy and a lot of hard work.

To start with, progressive forces need to win victories that deliver substantial immediate benefits to all who are affected by today's interlocking health, economic and racial crises, especially the most vulnerable. At the same time, it is essential to build the political power needed to enfranchise all eligible voters and to steer the country on a new course.

Excellent sources for this article and more can be found at Organizing Upgrade (Max Elbaum “Three Tough Laps to Change the Balance of Power”) and “The Game Plan: Election and Beyond,” TheFrontline among other sites.

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Dia de los Muertos at the NW Immigrant Detention Center

On Sunday, November 1 (Dia de los Muertos), leaders from *La Resistencia* guided the creation of an *ofrenda*, or offering, to honor people who died in custody at the hands of, or because of, Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This year, many lives were lost due to violence incited by law enforcement and negligence treatment of detainees in the pandemic. Thousands more people detained across the nation are at extreme risk for contagion, without access to adequate health care. *La Resistencia* has organized these Day of the Dead celebrations outside the Northwest Detention Center since 2014.

—Photo Lindsey Dalthorp

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PERSPECTIVE

The Chameleon blockade

A response to climate crisis and green hypocrisy

Ian Frederick

Residents of the South Sound region are blessed with a panoply of natural beauty surrounding us: Cascades to the east, Olympics and ocean to the west, and some unique and wild places right here in our backyard.

The unrecognized value

Anyone who has spent time in our native second-growth forests (forests allowed to regrow naturally) can see and feel the difference between them and the countless acres of Weyerhaeuser and Green Diamond land, with their densely packed mono-cropped fir trees. The remaining second-growth stands are much richer, more biodiverse and more interesting places. They have immense value that is clearly not visible in our current economic system, or public administrators. Herein lies the problem.

Old growth timber sales give the lie to “green”

The Chameleon timber sale in the Capitol State Forest is the most recent example of the stark disconnect between our state politicians’ “green” image and the results of their policies.

Chameleon is 187 acres of mixed-age forest, auctioned off to Murphy Logging Co. from Eugene, Oregon. “Unit 1” is the 72-acre stand of old forest that greets those entering Capitol Forest at the Waddell Creek Entrance. Many of the trees are around 100 years old. Certain indicator plant species of “old-growth” forests are starting to appear.

As of this writing, it appears that clearcutting of all 187 acres of Chameleon is imminent; by next spring we can expect a new addition to our tattered landscape of “working forests.”

Locals acting to protect irreplaceable trees

On September 28, concerned residents from Olympia and Tumwater decided to take action and declare the value inherent in these old

forests. That day, they blocked an access road to “Unit 1” with a vehicle tethered to a platform in a nearby Doug fir. The platform was occupied by a man named “Tree’angelo.”



Photo courtesy of www.chameleonblockade.com

By blocking access to the unit, the group was peacefully protecting the lives of the old trees and all the other plants and animals who

Marshalling the police power against the people

About ten days after the blockade began, around 20 officers from four different agencies stormed the camp, detaining those on the ground and beginning a siege of Tree’angelo that lasted for five days.

After being isolated, soaked by rain, deprived of sleep and constantly harassed by the police, they decided to exit their lofty perch, effectively ending the blockade. Throughout the whole ordeal, Tree’ remained in good spirits and was encouraged and energized by supporters shouting

her subordinates at DNR may see themselves as stewards of public lands, but under our current “natural resource” laws and economic disparities, their mandate is to bring in as much revenue as possible from public lands. This comes at the expense of degraded forests, rivers and the ocean.

How can they continue to use words like “green” and “sustainable,” when we can plainly see the devastated forests, the looming extinction of the salmon, the acidified waters?

Old growth forests are not tree farms

The very real climate crisis that Franz and Inslee have used for their political platforms is fundamentally changing the forests of the West Coast. While our area was mostly spared by this year’s fire season, we see many of the same factors that contributed to massive fires elsewhere.

Science provides a wealth of evidence as to why mature second-growth and old-growth forests are more fire resistant, and how they help mitigate the effects of climate change. Evidence also overwhelmingly shows how susceptible monoculture plantations are to fire events. So why are our public lands managers treating rich, biodiverse forests the same as these aberrant tree farms? If we can see and acknowledge that the climate crisis is worsening, why are we still clearcutting our forests like it’s the early 1900s?

It’s past time to declare a climate emergency

The immediacy of this problem demands that we act accordingly. It’s past time to start applying serious pressure on our state authorities to declare a climate emergency, and to begin remaking policies accordingly.

We need to protect our remaining second-growth forests. We need to listen to Indigenous voices, shaped by their ancient stewardship of these lands and waters. We need to challenge the ridiculous assertion that clearcutting our oldest remaining forests is the only way to pay for schools and other public infrastructure. The Chameleon protest was one response to decades of ignorance and lack of true stewardship by state “authorities”. This is only the beginning.

Ian Frederick is an outdoor educator, avid gardener and mycophile living in Olympia, WA. Contact at wteim3@gmail.com.

We need to challenge the ridiculous assertion that clearcutting our oldest remaining forests is the only way to pay for schools and other public infrastructure.

live there. Their action also raised some legitimate questions about the competence of our current forest managers.

A makeshift camp sprung up around the blockade as dozens of local people came out to show support and marvel at the beauty of the threatened forest. A local indigenous group, Protectors of the Salish Sea, visited one night and shared prayers and songs with the forest defenders.

and singing to them from beyond the reach of the police.

Destroying public resources to fund public needs

The Chameleon Blockade came from a profound sense of concern for the current state of our climate and forests, and a profound sense of disappointment arising from the inability of our lawmakers to address the crisis in any meaningful way.

While DNR Commissioner Hillary Franz and Governor Jay Inslee present a “Green” image and appear to take climate change seriously, they are still deeply beholden to corporate interests and “the bottom line.” Franz and



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BOTANICAL HAIR CARE PRODUCTS

A guide to organizing that pays off for insurgents

Ryan Grim

[Ed note: This is a detailed description of successful organizing in Rhode Island that describes a politics that can put working people in charge of government.]

In the summer of 2016, two years before Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez ousted Joe Crowley in New York and kicked off a national insurgency in the Democratic Party, progressives in Rhode Island were organizing one of their own.

Out-organizing the Democrat establishment

With the help of the Working Families Party, which began in New York City but had slowly expanded to other states, four progressives ousted incumbent Democrats, including state House Majority Leader John DeSimone, a right-wing Democrat typical of the Rhode Island party establishment. A Jamaican-born teacher, Marcia Ranglin-Vassell, beat him by just 21 votes.

The party establishment spent the last four years trying to win those seats back, mounting challenges to the 2016 upstarts. This cycle, they found out they had bigger problems, forced to fend off nearly two dozen insurgents challenging establishment politicians.

Building a state-wide political infrastructure

A new organization called the Rhode Island Political Cooperative, founded by veteran Ocean State lefties and built to recruit and provide infrastructure to an entire slate of candidates, fielded 14 candidates for state House and Senate races and teamed up with local Sunrise Movement chapters to run field programs for them.

Reclaim Rhode Island, another new group made up of former Bernie Sanders organizers, endorsed an additional four candidates, and one of those campaigns was run by the local chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America.

The Working Families Party continued its push, endorsing 11 people for office, eight of whom were also backed by Reclaim, the cooperative, or DSA. Of those 21 candidates, a startling 15 won their primaries in either the House or Senate, including wins against the Senate president pro tempore and the Senate Finance Committee chair.

Covering all the bases

The most unusual intervention in the primary, from the Rhode Island Political Cooperative, endorsed candidates all the way down to the town council level. Typically, organizations vet candidates for endorsements, and then support their candidacies as much as makes sense and is doable.

The political cooperative not only recruited the candidates but effectively ran their campaigns, providing them with access to data, which is crucial for a campaign, as well as strategic and staff guidance, also critical for first-time, mostly working-class candidates.

The cooperative relied heavily on help from local chapters of Sunrise, the youth-led climate movement that is a growing electoral force. Two Sunrise hubs in Providence

and South County played a critical role, with more than 10 full-time organizers dedicated to the operation, which generated thousands of volunteer voter contacts.

Progressives owed much of their success to the organizing groups that had sprung up over the last few years, much of it flowing from Sanders's 2016 presidential campaign. Yet despite the work Rhode Island volunteers did for Sand-



ers's victorious New Hampshire campaign this year, the Vermont senator rebuffed efforts to win an endorsement for Rhode Island candidates running in his mold, sources involved in the attempt said. A Sanders spokesperson declined to comment.

The progressive slate argued for raising taxes on millionaires, while the Democratic governor and much of the party leadership pushed for social spending cuts.

Parlaying the hard work for Bernie

Daniel Denvir, host of the podcast “The Dig” and a writer for Jacobin magazine, co-founded Reclaim Rhode Island after writing an essay in the magazine encouraging Sanders not to let the organizing capacity he built fester.

“We did such hard work here in Rhode Island [for Sanders,] sending bus after bus to New Hampshire... the same in southeast Massachusetts. We had two huge rallies that we organized on our own...” Denvir said during an interview for the Intercept podcast “Deconstructed.”

“We had built this incredible organizing infrastructure, incredible leadership, with an incredible volunteer base. And we didn't want it to go to waste. What I was hoping that the Bernie campaign would do nationally ... is try to help facilitate the infrastructure that all of us had put so much sweat and so much time into building, to not let it go to waste and to build successor organizations. And that didn't happen.”

Strategic assessment of opportunities

In addition to the progressive infrastructure that powered their wins, the insurgents had another advantage: The numbers needed to win these local races, often low-turnout affairs, are surprisingly small. Cynthia Mendes, for instance, a health care worker and single mom was outspent several times over by Senate Finance Chair William Conley Jr., yet blew him out 62 percent to 38 — yet her total haul of votes was just 1,727. Brianna Henries, a theater teacher in East Providence,

similarly bested her incumbent opponent 62-39 for a House seat with just 727 votes.

One of the biggest upsets was pulled off by Leonela Felix, who won a House seat in the heavily white working class city of Pawtucket, showing that with the right message and enough work, a progressive woman who grew up in the Dominican Republic can win the votes of people who don't look like her.

Felix had long been active with the Working Families Party, which coaxed her to run this year. Her race was the top priority of Reclaim Rhode Island, which launched its largest canvassing operation for her. She knocked on plenty of doors herself; by the end of the campaign, her watch tallied more than 370 miles of walking the district's blocks.

Taking on critical issues before taking office

The new progressives aren't waiting until they enter office in 2021 — as they're virtually assured to do. They're working immediately to address the most pressing political problem confronting Rhode Island lawmakers: their state's budget shortfall and its implications for taxing and spending policies.

The progressive slate has argued for raising taxes on millionaires, while the Democratic governor and much of the party leadership has pushed instead for social spending cuts.

Rejecting the “austerity solution”

The wins this week give a boost to, and also complicate, the effort to push back against the governor's austerity drive. A measure to add a new tax bracket to the code that would kick in at \$1 million per year is being led in the House by Rep. Karen Alzate, also of Pawtucket, who was backed by the WFP in a 2018 bid that flipped her district progressive.

In the Senate, the bill was being carried by Conley, who was defeated in the primary by the cop's Mendes. Conley was far from a leftist champion but was arguably progressives' closest ally in the party leadership — an admittedly

low bar — and WFP and Reclaim Rhode Island refrained from backing Mendes. “His proposing of the taxing of the top 1 percent came on after I announced my candidacy. And so it was convenient, the timing,” Mendes said in an interview for Deconstructed.

Understanding the legislative rules

To pass a budget in Rhode Island, you need a two-thirds vote in both chambers, which means that just a handful of lawmakers can block any given proposal. An effort to organize such a bloc is underway, led by Reclaim and other progressive groups, is already starting to flex new muscle, threatening to block a budget that includes cuts to funding for schools, health care, cities, or other key services. A press conference with old and new lawmakers is being planned for later this month, said David Segal, a Reclaim member and the co-founder of RI WFP.

“This budget fight is one of the most critical legislative efforts since I first moved to Rhode Island a couple decades ago,” he said. “And we need progressives and other populists in the Assembly, old and new, to come together to wield their procedural power to block a budget that hurts ordinary Rhode Islanders in the middle of this pandemic and economic catastrophe.”

Allies eying old problems in a new way

Mendes said she looked forward to being part of that bloc. “The beautiful thing about running with a slate of candidates [is] we all have eyes on that budget in new and unique ways. And another way is that we are not bought by the political establishment. We are not bought by corporate PACs. We're able to look at that budget with the people that we've talked to for months in mind,” she said. “The budget will go under some deep scrutiny, and there will be a major shift going forward.”

Ryan Grim is DC Bureau Chief for The Intercept, an online investigative reporting platform where this article appeared. Contact him at ryan.grim@theintercept.com @ryangrim. And consider joining The Intercept Newsletter for original reporting.



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Community Spotlight



Scientists on the Go Program

The WET Center's popular science packets are now digital! The “Scientists on the Go” program offers rotating science activities along with digital science packets focused on grade level topics for K-5. Each packet includes activities to take learning off the computer. Learn about wolves, salmon, and the water cycle. Check back weekly for new ways to engage your scientists: **Scientists on the Go program** <https://wetsciencecenter.org/virtual-science/scientists-on-the-go/>.



Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

The Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons meets through ONLINE VIDEO during the Coronavirus pandemic. Be part of productive meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month starting at 5:00 pm sharp through a Zoom video conference. Please join us on **Thursday, November 19th**. Contact Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net in advance for the link and the agenda.

West Central Neighborhood Park

This welcoming neighborhood park was created after community members showed that the City's approval of a 7-11 on the corner of Harrison and Division failed to meet city standards. For almost 10 years, volunteers have planted and tended a variety of shrubs, flowers, fruit trees, vegetable gardens and special pathways. Enjoy the glorious commingling of fall colors while getting the park ready for winter. Join a great group of volunteers at a (social distancing) work party **any Sunday from 11 to 1**. To learn more: <https://www.aparkforus.org>

Vigils—not vigilantes

Vigils for peace and nonviolence. **Wednesdays at Sylvester Park from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm** (Le-gion & Capitol Way). **Fridays at Percival Landing from 4:30 to 6:00 pm**. Come for all or part of the hour to witness in a friendly way for peace and non-violence. We provide plenty of signs. Wear a facemask. Info: 360-491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

“Women in Black” silent vigil. **Fridays from 5:00 to 6:00 pm**, on the south side of W 4th Ave, near the spray fountain. Since 1988, part of a world-wide network of women publicly opposing war and all violence. Event for women only. Info: Rosemary Barnhart 350-866-4768

Peace vigil in Centralia. Saturdays from noon to 1:00 pm at the edge of WashingtonPark (Locust & Pearl) in downtown Centralia. For info: Lewis County Fire Mountain FOR chapter, Larry Kerschner, peacepoet@protonmail.com

Electronics recycling at Best Buy

Responsibly get rid of mystery cables and dead computers—no matter where they came from! Best Buy offers a free electronics recycling programs in Thurston County (and throughout the US in fact). The company collects more than 400 pounds of product for recycling every minute stores are open. Some of the many products they recycle for free (limit 3 items per household per day): Laptops, hard drives, mice & keyboards, modems, webcams, tablets, printers, etc. A full list is at www.bestbuy.com/site/services/recycling



Orca Books Cooperative opened its new doors at **315 5th Ave SE on October 1**, next to Rainy Day. The store's new hours for Covid-times are **12:00pm – 6:00pm every day**. The co-op is still offering curbside pickup as well for customers who do not want to come into the store. The cooperative is fosters community education by supporting authors and artists and creating a friendly and safe space for all—as well as offering access to a diverse collection of new and used books. Go to www.orcabooks.com for their calendar of events, to order books or for info about joining the co-op.

A fresh start with the shower bus

From one woman's idea in 2018 to a solid reality this summer, a bus equipped with 17 showers is now providing showers for those without. **Every Tuesday**, the shower bus will be at Unity Church on the Westside, off Fern St. SW. On other days, the bus will serve encampments, mitigation sites, and faith communities throughout Thurston County. There are plenty of opportunities for volunteers, ranging from an at-home position doing admin tasks, to onsite positions as Equipment Assistants, Welcome Booth staff and Trailer Assistants—specific tasks and the portal to volunteer are on their excellent website at www.buildabushome.org. During the first half of November, the Shower Bus is part of The Community Foundation's “Give Local” campaign. To contribute go to www.thecommunityfoundation.com under NEWS.

The Olympia Free Clinic

TOFC provides acute medical care for problems like sudden illnesses or mild injuries for people 18 years or older who aren't covered by insurance or can't use their coverage. It doesn't matter where you live. The clinic is open just now on an appointment basis, scheduled in advance, but hopes to reopen for walk-ins soon. For help: call 360-890-4074 #3, email clinic@theolympiafreeclinic.org, or request an appointment online—a staff member will contact you within 2 business days to confirm your appointment.

La Clínica Gratis de Olympia brinda atención médica aguda para problemas como enfermedades repentinas o lesiones leves para personas mayores de 18 años que no están cubiertas por el seguro. TOFC está cerrada por visita sin cita previa. Volveremos a abrir lo antes posible. Todavía estamos aquí para ayudarlo por teléfono. Para obtener ayuda, llame al 360-890-4074 y presione la opción 6, o envíe un correo electrónico a clinic@theolympiafreeclinic.org.



Your Event HERE!

To be featured on the Community Spotlight, send 120 words about your program or event to olywip@gmail.com before the 4th Thursday in the month. Send regular meetings and other items for posting on our Community Calendar (LocalMotive) online—and be sure to look for events there too. We can also feature items on our Facebook page and instagram. Check our twitter feed for pithy comments on the current situation. Above all, read and share Works in Progress!



A new online source for local news, The Olympia Tribune launched in September with free content (no paywall). Its founders intend it as a platform for often unheard community voices, serving as “a bulwark to protect the ideals of justice, fairness, and inclusivity in our community and government.”

Writers include a diverse bunch of journalists, essayists, poets, activists, visual story-tellers and others posting about local and state government issues, homelessness and human rights, neighborhood news and politics.

Find the Tribune on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/TheOlympiaTribune/>; on the web at <https://theolympiatribune.com/> and on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/OlympiaTribune/status/1321619719409917952>

Olympia Mutual Aid Partners

Volunteers with Oly MAP offer services to houseless people and communities in need of essentials like water, food, cleaned clothes and trash removal. They also provide self-governance and neighbor relations support to people living in encampments. By partnering with many local organizations, the needs of unhoused neighbors and the larger community can be met. Oly MAP accepts donations of many kinds: financial, items, clothes and food. Read about them at <https://olympa.org/>

International Migrants Day

Today, more people than ever live in a country other than the one in which they were born. While many individuals migrate out of choice, many others migrate out of necessity. In 2019, the number of migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million, 51 million more than in 2010 The observance of International Migrants Day on **December 18** this year focuses on the varied and unique stories of social cohesion for each migrant living a new life and building new communities all over the globe. Read the 2020 UN Report on migration, its causes and effects at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/wmr_2020.pdf

International Day of Solidarity

Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA) is calling upon Churches to Preach Palestine by incorporating Palestine in elements of worship on **Sunday, November 29**. The 29th is International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the 1st week of Advent in the Christian Calendar. FOSNA's Clergy and Seminar Action Council has collected and curated a variety of worship resources from various traditions. View our resources here: <https://www.fosna.org/clergy>

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KEY DATES FOR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY 2021

NOV 03	Election Day: In a close election, we are unlikely to know which candidate won on election night.
DEC 08	The “Safe Harbor” Deadline: States must resolve disputes over which ballots to count and report final vote totals or risk their Electoral College votes not being counted by Congress.
DEC 14	Deadline for Governors to Report Election Results to Congress: In each state, the governor must send a document called the “certificate of ascertainment” to Congress reporting which candidate won the state and which slate of electors has been appointed to the Electoral College.
	The Electoral College Meets: In each state, the winning candidate’s slate of pledged electors meet, cast their votes, and send a record of their votes to Congress.
JAN 03	Start of the 117th Congress: All newly elected or reelected senators and representatives are sworn in.
JAN 06	Congress Counts Electoral College Votes: Congress meets in a joint session, with all the Members of Congress and all the Senators, to count Electoral College votes and choose the next president. This vote by Congress is the vote that officially makes someone President.
JAN 20	Inauguration Day: The newly-elected President is sworn in. If Congress hasn’t chosen a new president, the newly-elected Vice President is sworn in as the acting president. If Congress hasn’t chosen a new Vice President, the Speaker of the House is sworn in as the acting president.

Free, take one!

¡Gratis, toma uno!

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 CHAMELEON BLOCKADE <i>Fighting for old growth trees in Capitol Forest</i> pg. 9	 i No a la austeridad durante una crisis! pg. 1	 KEEP CALM AND ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES
 So much money, so little crime pg. 4	 <i>Building infrastructure with local campaigns, strategizing opportunities, using the Sanders energy base, and other tangibles</i> An organizing guide for insurgents pg. 10	THIS ISSUE:  How to politic pg. 6-7