

A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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Lawsuit Filed to Defend Homeless Against Attacks

FRESNO — The City of Fresno is violating the constitutional rights of homeless people whose personal possessions are being destroyed and confiscated in ongoing raids, according to a lawsuit filed in October in federal court by civil rights groups. The groups are seeking a temporary restraining order and a permanent injunction to stop the relentless attacks on Fresno’s homeless residents. The lawsuit was filed in Fresno’s Federal District Court.

The City has carried out numerous raids of areas where homeless people live, destroying their personal belongings, according to the complaint filed by the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, the ACLU of Northern California and the law firm of Heller Ehrman, LLP. Clothing, medication, tents and blankets, as well as irreplaceable personal possessions, such as family photographs, personal records and documents have been destroyed. The raids are carried out by Fresno’s Police and Sanitation Departments, who use bulldozers and garbage trucks to confiscate tents and shopping carts full of personal belongings, usually crushing them on the spot, often with the homeless owners watching and protesting.

“The City cannot seize and destroy someone’s property just because they are homeless,” said Paul Alexander, a partner at Heller Ehrman LLP. “The Constitution does not allow it.”

“These unlawful raids on the City’s poorest residents are particularly egregious given the lack of available shelter,” added Oren Sellstrom of the Lawyers’

Committee for Civil Rights. Sellstrom cited a recent report by a consortium of local government agencies and providers that found shelter in the Fresno area is available to only 1.4% of the homeless population, which is estimated at between 4,400 and 8,800. The lack of shelter for women is particularly acute. One of the few shelters in the City for women has capacity for only 25 women on any given night.

Pamela Kincaid has lived for the last 5 to 6 years in the area just south of downtown Fresno. About a year ago, she left her property unattended and when she returned it was gone. “Almost all of my possessions were taken, including important documents like my identification, my birth certificate, and my telephone/address book, which had important contact information for people I want to keep in touch with. Worst of all, I lost family photos, including the only pictures I had of my sister, my daughter, and my deceased mother. Those photos can never be replaced.”

“Until I saw and heard what has been happening I would not have imagined that the City of Fresno would inflict this type of harm on any of its people,” said ACLU-NC attorney Michael Risher. “The City’s attacks on the homeless violate the Fourth Amendment’s protections against unreasonable seizure of property, the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections against the deprivation of property without due process of law, and specific California statutes that require the government to safeguard property that comes into its possession.

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The Community Alliance is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental, & economic justice; immigrant rights; and a living wage for all working people. We seek to expose social and political injustices and to link the diverse network of activists working in our community.

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The Community Alliance newspaper reserves the right to edit all articles for space and clarity.

Letters to the Editor

While looking over my sample ballot I discovered that Mr. Wesley Firch outlines his plans for California, should he be elected State Senator, 14th District. He wishes to make California an anti-abortion state. Look on the page opposite where VOTER's PAMPHLET is printed, the numbers on the bottom of the page are CS-1300-1. You will see that he lists his plans for California. He is the Democratic candidate, but I cannot vote for him...if you feel as I do please pass this information on to others who share your feelings. I cannot recommend the other candidate but there is a write in candidate I can recommend, Vickie Fouts who is willing to run.

Vickie Haas

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Are you looking for a progressive alternative for the California 14th District Senate race? Are you tired of voting for the lesser of two evils? Do you want to vote for a Democratic candidate who didn't even get his own party's endorsement? As Madera County Chair of the Peace & Freedom Party, I have a suggestion. You are welcome to write in my name, Vickie Fouts, as a vote you can feel good about. Friends from three political parties – including Democrats - have urged me to volunteer to be the candidate in an unofficial write-in campaign that would represent a protest vote against candidates who do not represent their positions on the issues. Vote for Vickie Fouts – the candidate for Peace and Freedom.

The Peace and Freedom Party, founded in 1967, is committed to socialism, democracy, ecology, feminism and racial equality. We represent the working class, those without capital in a capitalist society. We organize toward a world where cooperation replaces competition, a world where all people are well fed, clothed and housed; where all women and men have equal status; where all individuals may freely endeavor to fulfill their own talents and desires; a world of freedom and peace where every community retains its cultural integrity and lives with all others in harmony.

Vickie Fouts

I laud the efforts of the Community Alliance in covering the issue of homelessness in Fresno. As one of the working class, I view the problem of homelessness as related to the affordable housing crisis in Fresno.

City and County legislators routinely link Fresno's affordable housing crisis to home ownership, and consequently more apartment complexes are being allowed to sell as condominiums than ever before, such as in Southeast Fresno where I live. This is unfortunate, because single college students or lower-middle class workers such as me, are not well-positioned for home ownership. The attractions of Fresno are already minimal. Think how attractive metropolitan cities, such as New York or Seattle are, in comparison. Not only is there a higher percentage of affordable rental units, but thriving arts, thanks to the disposable income which city dwellers, free of mortgage debts, have.

Turning Fresno's older apartment buildings into condominiums is not the same as buying into a retirement community replete with maintenance associations. Whereas custom condominiums are created exclusively for model residents to buy into, local condominiums converted from older apartment buildings discourage such associations. Residents coerced into ownership are less likely to know how to assert their rights when building and grounds maintenance issues arise. When my apartment complex, whose roofs have leaked for several years in a row, becomes leased as condominiums, I shall be responsible for repairs as well as mortgage payments- and lose twenty percent of my living space every time it rains!

Now I ask, what does a multimillionaire like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who lives in mansions, know about this? He isn't a man to have to worry about maintenance bills. If a room in his mansion leaked, it would only amount to two percent of his living quarters. Just as it is difficult for the extremely rich to understand problems of the working class, so it is for the working class to understand the complexities of simply surviving on the street with only a shopping cart for a room.

Please vote Democratic this November. It makes a difference if we vote for and support lawmakers who really represent our interests.

Christine Kroll



From the Editor

This month's front page story about the homeless illustrates the value of having an alternative/independent newspaper in town. The Community Alliance has shined a light on the City of Fresno's attack on the homeless, which resulted in increased community awareness, and has now led to a lawsuit to protect their civil rights. Without this newspaper's investigation, Public Records Act requests, and relentless determination to tell the story, the plight of the homeless would have remained invisible.

The spin-meisters at The Fresno Bee reported on June 23, 2006 that the City of Fresno was doing a great job of cleaning up our city streets. Their headline on that day was: *Cleaning house, Fresno crews descend on downtown area to tidy up a haven for homeless.* More recently, Bee columnist Bill McEwen slammed the American Civil Liberties Union for their support of homeless people's civil rights. The headline on Tuesday, October 19 was

Homeless people not served by ACLU suit. Why does the corporate media get it so wrong?

One reason the corporate media does not get the homeless story is because they are often missing in action. They do not put the resources into investigative journalism needed to tell such an in-depth and complicated story. They rely on city officials to tell them what is going on and they frame the story from the perspective of the ruling elite in this community. The superficial reporting that results, serves the power structure of this community very well. Public Relations personnel for the City of Fresno give the corporate media their spin on events. If reporters tell the story the way the spin masters want it to be told, that leads to access to interview people like the Chief of Police and other government officials. The reporters for the corporate media need this access to public officials so they can keep their jobs. It is a self-perpetuating system, but not a good way to find the truth in a difficult story. In this case, the homeless remained invisible, under constant attack by a city that wants to eliminate the homeless, not end homelessness.

The Community Alliance newspaper has given extensive coverage of these attacks on the homeless. We have reported the story not by standing under a tree talking to city spin-masters, but by interviewing the homeless themselves. In this issue, we tell their story (see page 7) and the story about the lawsuit to protect their rights (front page). The reason the lawsuit is taking place is because the attorneys saw what was happening in Fresno and they were appalled that homeless people's rights were being violated in such a flagrant manner. The attacks against the Fresno homeless are so intense and unique that it caught the attention of several Bay Area legal groups who came to this community and offered their services to help stop this injustice. They are doing this pro-bono (for free).

This community should not tolerate the homeless having their shelters destroyed by bulldozers, their medicine thrown into city garbage trucks, and being constantly stopped and harassed by the

Fresno Police Department. This would not be tolerated if it was happening to any other segment of the community. Could you imagine the outrage that would follow such treatment of the Jewish, African American, or Gay community?

Recently, I was told by several homeless people that they were prevented from registering to vote. They were told, by government workers that because they are homeless, they can't register or vote. What they are being told is a lie! By telling them that they can't register and vote, they are being disenfranchised of their democratic rights in this country. While the Community Alliance has not had time to investigate this story yet, it will be something you will be reading about in a future issue. We will also have an in-depth look at the Diebold voting machines being used by Fresno county.

If you value a Free Press and want to keep this important news coming to you, it is essential that you support the Community Alliance newspaper. We need you to subscribe, donate, and/or advertise in this newspaper. Information about advertising and subscribing is in the box on the upper left hand corner of this page. We can't do this alone - we need your support as we struggle for peace, social, and economic justice in this community.

Stir it Up!
First Wednesday at 3 PM
Fourth Friday at 5 PM
The Community Alliance has these two radio shows on KFCF 88.1 FM.
Hear interviews, analysis, and call-ins about what is happening locally in the struggle for peace, social and economic justice.

Veterans and Their Families Speak Out

Veteran’s Day - November 11, 2006

The Community Alliance invited veterans, their families, and community members to send us their thoughts about this day. Here is what they had to say:

I remember Veteran’s Day as a kid of ten or twelve sitting with my Dad on the curb and waving a flag as tanks and soldiers passed by in parade. I played war with my brothers and friends and thought it was “cool.” To me, Veterans always seemed to like war and be desirous of more military spending by the government.

I no longer think war is “cool” and now know it as the scourge of mankind throughout the ages. I am a Viet Nam-era veteran. I served honorably for four years in the US Coast Guard. I wish veteran’s organizations would focus on advocating on behalf of the mentally and physically wounded veterans and let others advocate for ever-increasing defense spending. My wish for Veteran’s Day 2006 is that the United States stop generating more veterans, and that my grandchildren or anyone else’s never be called upon to fight an unnecessary and unjust war. The world can never be at peace as long as war is profitable.

Paz,
Larry R. Mullen
Green Party Activist
US Coast Guard, 1961-65

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Unless you’ve been there, you will never understand what it feels like to hold your husband and say goodbye to him. There is the thought lingering in the back of your mind that he will possibly never come home. Standing in the airport watching my husband walk away was the worst day of my life.

My husband is deployed to Iraq for a year. I am reminded of the lyrics of the song, “Seasons of Love” from the musical Rent. “525,600 minutes - how do you measure, measure a year?” How will this next year measure? What will my husband miss? There will be no Thanksgiving, no Christmas, no Valentines Day, no Easter, no birthdays, no holidays. My husband will miss a year of the life of his 2 year old daughter and 4 year old step-daughter. He will miss his step-daughter’s first day of Kindergarten. He will also miss our first wedding anniversary. Politicians can talk on the importance of the “War on Terror”, but I see the emptiness that this war has caused in my home. War divides families. War destroys homes. War has no meaning.



Melissa Halsey and her husband

Melissa Halsey
Wife of a U.S. Army Soldier

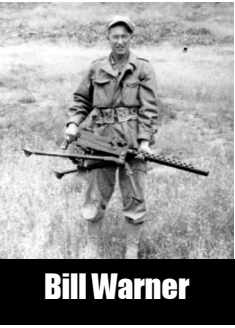
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A New Holiday?

I grew up celebrating Nov. 11 as “Armistice Day”, celebrating the end of “the War to End All Wars.” Then we came to the realization that someone was just pulling our leg about that, and renamed it “Veterans’ Day.” As we already have Memorial Day and the Fourth of July when we wave the flag for our veterans, perhaps we could come up with a new holiday. How about, “Victim’s Day?”

It would be an annual day of mourning for all of the

native peoples killed making the world safe for U.S. business interests. Participation in a prayer would be required of all schoolchildren, recited by the teacher in Korean, Mon-Khmer, Tagalog, Teribe, Yoruba, Quechua, Sakapulteko, Arabic, Hazaragi, Navajo, etc. Example: “Our Father, who art on Wall Street, we thank thee for all of the blessings we enjoy at the expense of the Third World. May their starving children rest in peace. Amen.”



Bill Warner

“Victims Day” (alternatively known as “Cops of the World Day”) might also have a touching closing ceremony; burning a huge oil derrick topped by a cross on the White House lawn, as the Marine Corps Band plays catchy tunes like “It’s a Small World”, “Semper Fidelis”, and “Die Fahne Hoch.”

Uncle Bill (former S/Sgt USMC 1950-1954)

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Uncle Johnnie was on Saipan. He never recovered from “shell shock.” He would sit in rocker with a wavy smile. He never drove a car after Saipan. Uncle Chuck was a B-17 pilot. He parachuted out of flaming bomber at 10,000 feet. He was a P.O.W. for 3 years. He recovered.

I despised tyranny. With the defeat of Fascists, Commies were next.

When I graduated from college I received my “greetings” by special delivery. I promptly got drunk & had a motorcycle wreck which gave a 6 month reprieve. I had my misgivings about Johnson’s war...but I had a plan. I would be a Quartermaster Officer. “In the rear with the gear.”

I volunteered for Vietnam at the urging of my C.O. When I arrived in ‘Nam, a southern Major asked, “Whar yew frum?” “Sir,I’m from San Francisco.” The whole room went quiet. I was sent quickly up to the front.

G-5 was Psyops & Civil Affairs. I carried a card giving me free access to anywhere. My job was winning the hearts & minds of the civilian population. Families scuttling from the destruction of their villages sobered me up. I convoyed food to “Relocated Strategic Hamlets.” I supervised rebuilding of our destruction. VC gave a me a pass because I was bringing cement for their tunnels. My saddest job was 101st Div. Solation Payments Officer. I would pay worthless Vietnamese money to families who had suffered at the hands of American troops. Empathy for the common Vietnamese people grew within me. I waded through the misery of innocents for 1 year.

I still despise tyranny. Only now I don’t have to drive as far. I’m proud to be a Green, as are my sons.

Dirk Van Gelder

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This Veterans Day we must never forget that all wars and all killings are a sign of the failure of the human race to communicate effectively with each other and to resolve problems without death and destruction. My seven years in the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force taught me that when nations prepare for war they will eventually use their military skills and equipment against other and generally weaker nations. In the twenty-first century war is an outdated tool for resolving peoples/nations differences. It might be argued that prior to the atomic age war for the most part only killed the two

combatants. This is no longer true. Modern war has the capability to destroy all life as we know it on earth today We must, specifically the United State and the European Union and the United Nations work towards a world in which full employment becomes the law within each nation’s boundaries. Labor unions and peace and social justice groups must work for full employment - that is the passage of a law which will never permit unemployment to rise above two and a quarter percent. Nations must lower the work week to 24 hours a week and train people how to effectively spend their leisure time. Millions of jobs can be created within nations if people are educated on how to spend leisure time. Most people will not want to join armies if they have a decent job. That is why, for the most part, I joined the U.S military fifty years ago - to get and earn a paycheck. Who is the “we” I refer to - it is “we the people”. In peace and friendship.



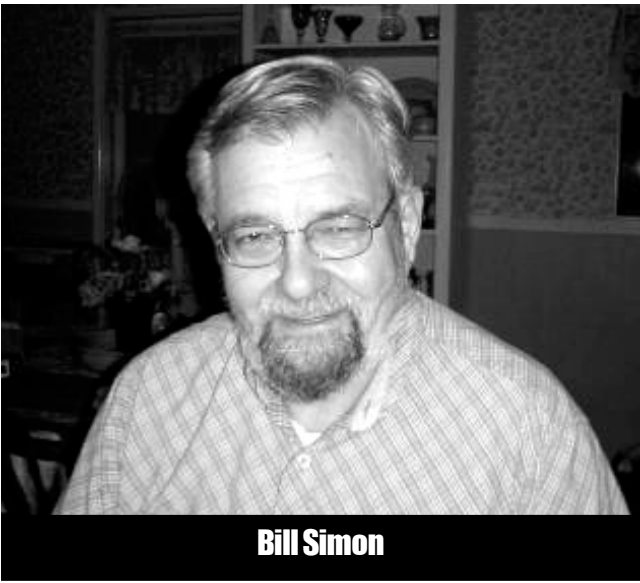
Vince Lavery

Vincent Lavery

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Every year when Veteran’s Day rolls around, I remember the year (1968-1969) I spent working with the homeless on Skid Row in Chicago. It seemed like nearly every one of those homeless alcoholics was a veteran, at that time mostly of the Korean War. I always wondered how many of those men would have been alcoholics anyway and how many just had not been able to readjust to society after military service. Even then, the VA was cutting back on their service to homeless veterans. It seems like our support of our veterans is scandalously non-existent. We send them to fight in questionable wars, Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan/Iraq, and offer so little support when they return. Our support for our troops consists mainly in declaring an annual Veteran’s Day so the rest of us can have a day off work or school while we turn a blind eye to those veterans who are suffering from military service, from agent orange, and from depleted uranium. It is time to support our troops by realizing that war is always wrong and never achieves peace.

Bill Simon
President, Peace Fresno



Bill Simon



“I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested.”

Smedley Darlington Butler
(July 30, 1881 – June 21, 1940), nicknamed “The Fighting Quaker” and “Old Gimlet Eye,” was a Major General in the U.S. Marine Corps and, at the time of his death, the most decorated Marine in U.S. history. Butler was awarded the Medal of Honor twice during his career, one of only 19 people to be awarded the medal twice.

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NOVEMBER 2006 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Local Think Tank Presents Series of Articles in the Community Alliance

Some of our region’s best analysts are fellows of the Central California Institute, our local progressive think tank. To provide a forum for the work of our fellows and kindred spirits, we have contracted with the Community Alliance for a series of five articles on subjects of local importance. The continuation of the Institute depends on the interest and support of the community. To utilize the expertise of the fellows, to comment on the work of the Institute, or to provide financial underwriting, contact CCI at FCNV, 1584 N Van Ness, Fresno 93728 or call Ray Ensher at 439-8140.

Reproductive Justice – Moving Beyond the Abortion Debate

By Patsy Montgomery

For too long the pro-choice movement has been defined by the singular issue of abortion. While indeed working to protect access to abortion services, pro-choice activists have also been working to increase access to a full range of reproductive health care & contraceptive options. The right of the individual woman to have a child or not have a child, the right to parent children, and the right to control their bodies have been central to the work of the movement. Recently an entirely new framework has been articulated to reflect the goals of protecting the overall health and wellbeing of women and communities. The Reproductive Justice movement recognizes that the “ability of any woman to determine her own reproductive destiny is directly linked to the conditions in her community and these conditions are not just a matter of individual choice and access. Reproductive Justice is an intentional impulse to shape the competing ideals of equality and the

social reality of inequality. Reproductive Justice points out the inequality of opportunity in controlling our reproductive destiny.” (Understanding Reproductive Justice, SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, Loretta J. Ross, May 2006)

At the 1994 International Conference on Population & Development in Cairo, women of color began to talk about the connections between class, race and gender issues in reproductive politics. Later that same year a group of African-American women organized the Black Women’s Caucus at a national pro-choice conference and created the term “Reproductive Justice” defined as reproductive health integrated into social justice.

In 2005, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ) identified three main frameworks for fighting reproductive oppression as a way to strengthen and consolidate the movement. These frameworks are: 1) Reproductive Health, 2) Reproductive Rights, and 3) Reproductive Justice.

Reproductive Health places an emphasis on necessary reproductive health services that women need to stay healthy. Reproductive Rights is based on universal legal protections for women and sees these protections as basic rights. Reproductive Justice identifies reproductive oppression as a result of the intersections of multiple oppressions and inherently linked to the struggle for social justice and human rights. The ACRJ stated that while each of the frameworks is “imperative; by itself, a single one cannot achieve the goal of ending reproductive oppression. Ultimately, as in any movement, all three components representing service, advocacy and organizing are crucial to advancing the movement.” (ACRJ, A New Vision for advancing our movement for reproductive health, reproductive rights and reproductive justice. 2005)

Communities of color have led the Reproductive Justice movement. They recognized long ago that narrowly focusing on protecting the legal right to abortion neglects community-wide issues that directly affecting a woman’s decision making process. They understood that working within a Reproductive Justice framework empowers women and girls to challenge the multiple systems that contribute to reproductive oppression. The more inclusive framework brings focus on the outcome ultimately aimed at: better lives for women, healthier families and sustainable communities.

pregnancy. The Central Valley has some of the highest rates of teen-births and sexually transmitted diseases in the state, yet most public schools continue, illegally, to teach abstinence until marriage curricula rather than state mandated comprehensive sex education programs.

In this November’s election, Proposition 85 would disproportionately affect vulnerable disenfranchised teens, especially those living in rural communities. A girl afraid to tell her parents about a pregnancy isn’t going to march up to a judge in a strange courthouse, especially if she is being abused or is undocumented. She doesn’t need a judge – she needs a counselor and a doctor as soon as possible. Currently 35 states have laws similar to Prop 85. The result has been an increase in the number of second trimester abortions and dangerous self-induced or back-alley procedures.


The influence of conservative religious ideologues in public policy decisions at local governmental and school levels should be of great concern to all individuals and groups working towards reproductive justice & healthier communities. As November 7th approaches, we all need to be vigilant in questioning our local, state & national elected leaders. We need to look at the voting records of those who are asking to be re-elected. Where do they stand on these issues? We need to better educate ourselves and our families, friends and co-workers about how working for Reproductive Justice can improve the quality of all of our lives. In the words of Dolores Huerta, “The most important day of the year and your life is Election Day.” Remember the importance of reproductive justice when you vote.

For more information on Reproductive Justice and how you can get involved check out these websites: www.sistersong.net, www.reproductivejustice.org, and www.plannedparenthood.org

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Patsy Montgomery is the Regional Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood Mar Monte. She has lived in Fresno since 1969 and has been an advocate for women’s issues since the early 1980’s. She is committed to social, reproductive & environmental justice causes and is a mentor for the Imagine Change Coalition www.imaginechangecoalition.com Most recently, Patsy was instrumental in bringing 180 college & high school campus organizers reflecting the social justice, reproductive justice and environmental justice movements to Fresno for a two day conference.

Protect Choice:
Vote No on Prop 85
This November



Last November, California voters defeated Prop 73, a proposed amendment to the California Constitution that would have required doctors to notify parents 48 hours before terminating the pregnancy of an unwed minor.

But now the measure is back.

In November, Californians will vote on Prop 85—a nearly identical parental notification initiative that threatens the health and safety of our teens.

California voters got it right the first time. But one wealthy, fervently anti-choice man—the proponent of Prop 73—has spent more than \$2 million to put his attack on teen safety back on the ballot.

Supporters of Prop 85—including the Traditional Values Coalition, Evangelicals for Social Action and Right to Life of Central California—are the same people who want to overturn Roe v. Wade and ban all abortions.

We must defeat this measure — again.

HOWARD’S HOPEFULS Here are my voting recommendations for the November 7, 2006 general election. Most are clear choices, some are close calls. I hope you find this list helpful. Thank you and please vote. Howard K. Watkins			
FEDERAL/ STATE/ LOCAL RACES		STATE PROPS.	
U.S. SENATE	FEINSTEIN	1A	YES
18 TH CONGRESS	CARDOZA	1B	YES
19 TH CONGRESS	COX	1C	YES
20 TH CONGRESS	COSTA	1D	YES
21 ST CONGRESS	HAZE	1E	YES
GOVERNOR	ANGELIDES	83	NO
LT. GOVERNOR	GARAMENDI	84	YES
SEC. of STATE	BOWEN	85	NO
CONTROLLER	CHIANG	86	YES
TREASURER	LOCKYER	87	YES
ATTORNEY GEN.	BROWN	88	YES
INS. COMM.	BUSTAMANTE	89	YES
ST.BD.EQUAL.#2	RABOY	90	NO
CAL.SUP.COURT: CORRIGAN & KENNARD		YES	
COURT of APPEAL: HARRIS, WISEMAN, DAWSON, KANE, & HILL		YES	
STATE SENATE 12 th		NICKEL	
STATE SENATE 14 th [write-in]		VICKIE FOUTS	
STATE SENATE 16 th		FLOREZ	
STATE ASSEMBLY 29 th		CROCKFORD	
STATE ASSEMBLY 30 th		PARRA	
STATE ASSEMBLY 31 st		ARAMBULA	
SHERIFF		MIMS	
COUNTY BD. of ED. #1		HARRIS	
SCCCS #4		THONESEN	
SCCCS #5		SMITH	
FRESNO CO. MEASURE B		YES	
FRESNO CO. MEASURE C		YES	
FRESNO CITY COUNCIL #1		XIONG	
FRESNO UNIFIED SD #1		MEDINA	
FRESNO UNIFIED SD #3		DAVIS	
FRESNO UNIFIED SD #4		HORNBACK	
FRESNO UNIFIED SD #7		PAT BARR	
FRESNO IRR. DISTR. #4		METZLER	
NORTH CENTRAL FPD		BELLUOMINI	
NORTH CENTRAL FPD		NONINI	

This is a paid political ad

The Community Alliance Political Endorsement Grid • November 2006									
Offices	Fresno County Democratic Party	Fresno County Peace and Freedom Party	Planned Parenthood	Green Party	Central Valley Progressive PAC	Fresno Teachers Association	SEIU-UHW	League of Women Voters	Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare Central Labor Council
Governor	Phil Angelides		Phil Angelides	Peter Miguel Camejo			Phil Angelides		Phil Angelides
Lt. Governor	John Garamendi		John Garamendi	Donna Warren			John Garamendi		John Garamendi
Sec. of State	Debra Bowen		Debra Bowen	Forrest Hill			Debra Bowen		Debra Bowen
Controller	John Chiang		John Chiang	Laura Wells			John Chiang		John Chiang
Treasurer	Bill Lockyer		Bill Lockyer	Mehul Thakker			Bill Lockyer		Bill Lockyer
Attorney General	Jerry Brown		Jerry Brown	Mike Wyman			Jerry Brown		Jerry Brown
Insurance Commissioner	Cruz Bustamante		Cruz Bustamante	Larry Cafiero			Cruz Bustamante		Cruz Bustamante
US Senate	Diane Feinstein		Dianne Feinstein	Todd Chretien					Diane Feinstein
House of Representatives, District 19	T. J. Cox		T. J. Cox						
House of Representatives, District 21	Steve Haze		Steve Haze	John Miller					
House of Representatives, District 34									
State Assembly, District 34				David Minton Silva					
Fresno County									
Sheriff	Margaret Mims		Margaret Mims		Margaret Mims		Cal Minor		Cal Minor
City Council District 1			Blong Xiong		Blong Xiong		Blong Xiong		Blong Xiong
Fresno County Board of Education		Floyd Harris			Floyd Harris				
State Community College District #4									Leslie W. Thonesen
State Community College District #5			Dorothy Smith		Dorothy Smith				Dorothy Smith
Fresno Unified School Districts									
District 1						Cal Johnson	Cal Johnson		Cal Johnson
District 3					Valerie Davis	Valerie Davis	Valerie Davis		
District 4					Tony Vang	Tony Vang	Tony Vang		Tony Vang
District 5						Michelle Arax-Asadoorian	Michelle Arax-Asadoorian		Michelle Arax-Asadoorian
Fresno County Measures									
C	YES	NO			YES		YES		YES
State Propositions									
1A	YES	NO		YES	YES				YES
1B	YES	NO		No				YES	YES
1C	YES	NO		NO				YES	YES
1D	YES	NO		YES	YES			YES	YES
1E	YES	NO		NO				YES	YES
83	YES	NO	YES	NO					
84	YES	NO		NO	YES			YES	YES
85	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO		NO	NO	NO
86	YES	NO	YES	NO			YES	YES	YES
87	YES	YES		YES	YES		YES		YES
88	NO	NO			YES		NO	NO	NO
89	YES	YES		YES	YES		YES	YES	
90	NO	NO		NO	NO		NO	NO	NO

5 COMMUNITY ALLIANCE NOVEMBER 2006



VOTE
BLONG XIONG FOR FRESNO CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1

An independent Councilman for all of Fresno and a candidate you can trust!

S U P P O R T E D & E N D O R S E D B Y

Congressman Jim Costa

Fresno County Board of Supervisors
Susan Anderson

Assemblymembers Juan Arambula
and Nicole Parra

Fresno Bee

Central Labor Council of Fresno
& Madera Counties

Plumbers and Steamfitters
Local Union 246

United Food & Commercial
Workers Union Local 8

SEIU United Healthcare
Workers-West

Service Employees International
Union Local 535

SEIU Local 1000

Fresno Firefighters Local No 753

The Black Political Council

James & Coke Hallowell

Asian Village

Kings Winery Medical Center



Vote No on Measure C

Dallas Blanchard

Portland or LA? Where would you rather live? How about when it comes to transportation and air pollution? If you said LA I am sure you are among a tiny minority of Fresnoans. But you would be among an apparent majority of liberals, “progressives,” conservatives, Republicans, developers, building and trucking industry officials, Fresno Bee writers, and politicians who all support Measure C, a sales tax measure that will surely propel our community toward LA style sprawl and air pollution.

A full two thirds of Measure C expenditures will go to new highway and road projects. Supporters claim that this will help clear the air by reducing congestion. If building more roads and freeways is the answer to air pollution, Los Angeles and Houston should have the cleanest air in the nation. Sadly, Measure C will take us

in the direction of these clear failures in land use, transportation, and community planning. More people in more cars traveling more miles means one thing, more air pollution.

Worse, a significant portion of the regional transportation spending goes to new freeway construction of hwy 180 west to I5 and east to the foothills. These new freeways are magnets for suburban sprawl and air pollution. Imagine Fresno/Clovis/Sanger/Reedley/ Orange Cove/Selma/Kerman as one gigantic LA style megalopolis. Measure C takes us decisively in that direction. And you might ask yourself where Caltrans is planning to get the massive amounts of aggregate to pull off these mega-highway projects. Will it come from the proposed gravel mine on Jesse Morrow Mountain? From our river beds? From some new foothill mine like the one that Madera residents fought so hard to stop?

Misappropriating previous Measure C funds to build projects not specified in the original proposal—freeways 168 and 41—has made suburban sprawl bad enough.

Twenty more years of freeways will seal our fate. Some say Fresno is too spread out for real clean air options like light rail. It isn’t, yet. But it’s ironic that Measure C includes money for a “plan” for future public transit alternatives while basically eliminating the possibility of building those alternatives. The time for studies is over. Real, attractive, efficient clean air alternatives to the automobile should already be under construction. A proper Measure C would reverse the ratios giving two thirds for clean air alternatives like light rail and inter-city rail and one third for street repairs. Measure C includes zero funding for effective clean air alternatives.

Backers also claim that, with improvements, people will take the bus. We need evidence of this. Even with more frequently occurring buses on major routes, how many people will actually leave their cars to take the bus? Taking polluting school buses off the road is legitimate. But that is a responsibility of school districts. Plus, any gains made there will be more than offset by losses due to further suburban sprawl on new and

existing freeways.

A sales tax is a regressive tax; it disproportionately hurts those who can least afford it by placing a flat tax on every item purchased in the county. Those most negatively affected by Measure C are served poorly by it. They will not be using the freeways as many of them do not own automobiles. They will not be benefitting from local road projects, nearly all of which are for road widening in the new areas of town where poor people are unlikely to be moving. In fact, such road widening is the responsibility of developers, and Measure C funds will wind up being used to underwrite developers of new housing projects. Trail improvements and bike lanes are also developers’ responsibilities. Again, we should be using these funds to help the poorest members of our community with transportation not the wealthiest and most politically connected special interests in Fresno.

Privately, the stakeholders who were to represent the public interest in planning Measure C admit that they do not like it. Apparently, they were afraid that if they didn’t go along with the current proposal, which is heavily imbalanced toward developer and other business interests, they would be portrayed by those same interests as obstructionist and extremist. They gave way figuring that the spending for buses and bikes is the best that they could get. And this is what it all really comes down to: neither road and freeway building or even rapid growth, for that matter, is inevitable. On the contrary, these are basic political questions. Our quality of life will depend upon slower growth and sensible transportation and land use planning. The proposed Measure C extension would take us in exactly the opposite direction. It is time to take a different direction. We can do better. Vote No on Measure C.

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Only One Thing Stands Between a Meth Addict and You...

And It's Not Your Door.

Meth is a weapon of mass destruction. This powerful, inexpensive and easily manufactured drug is tied to most crimes committed in Fresno County – including spousal and child abuse, violent burglaries, identity theft, crimes against the elderly and our hard working farmers. Only one candidate recognizes this enormous issue as a priority. Vote for Assistant Sheriff Margaret Mims for Fresno County Sheriff .



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***“The battle against meth
MUST be fought more aggressively and MUST be won. Nothing
less than the future of our children is at stake.***

***As Sheriff I'll fight that battle head on, because
losing is not an option.”***



Homeless Women Speak Out

The statements below are from two of the women who are a part of the lawsuit (see page 1) to stop the City of Fresno from taking and immediately destroying their possessions. These are the declarations, in their own words, they gave to the attorneys working on the case. For more information about this lawsuit, and other statements by the participants, see www.aclunc.org.

Charlene Clay

I am 48 years old and I currently live in Fresno, California. I have lived in Fresno for 15 years. My husband and I have been homeless for approximately six months. We had to leave our last apartment because the rent was \$850 per month and this was more than we could afford to pay. We do not have enough money for an up-front deposit and first and last month's rent to be able to rent an apartment. I would really like to have housing, because I want my grandchildren to be able to visit me. During the time that we have been homeless, I stayed for a little while at the Naomi House for women, but this meant that I could not live with my husband. I have been in several abusive relationships in the past. One of my previous abusers knocked my teeth out. My current husband is not abusive and it is important for us to stay together. Because my husband and I cannot stay together in shelters, and because space is limited there, we sleep outside in tents.

Sometime during the first two weeks of April, 2006, the City of Fresno took almost all of my personal belongings. I do not recall the exact date, but I remember the events well. We were camped on a hill off of G Street. My husband and I were at the Poverello House when we heard that the City was taking people's property. We initially thought that the City was only taking belongings from in front of the Poverello House, but then someone told us the City was going up to the hill where our belongings were. I walked as fast as I could to get there, but I do not walk very fast because I need surgery on my foot, and I have high blood pressure and asthma. By the time I arrived at the site, it was empty, except for the crumpled shell of our tent and a few other stray items. All the tents and items belonging to the Mexican workers we shared the site with were also gone. I could see the tracks in the dirt from where the dump truck had driven.

The City did not give us any notice that it was going to take and destroy our belongings. My husband and I lost almost everything we owned, including: my teeth, my medications, a small TV, a laptop computer, a bike, our dog food, the blankets, sleeping bags, my husband's weights for lifting, and our clothes, including a new pair of shoes I had and my personal papers. I was extremely upset.

The City came again to our campsite on October 8, 2006. We were camped in a new spot, under the bridge at San Benito and H Street. At 8:30 in the morning, the police came without any warning and started taking shopping carts from people. The police threw everyone's possessions on the ground and then took all the carts and threw them onto a truck. After taking the carts, the police said they would be back for all the rest of our



Charlene Clay and her dog Chica at City Hall during the sleep in held to bring attention to the homeless issue.

belongings, at 12:00 that day, but they have not come yet. I do not know where I could go to be safe from these property seizures.

Based upon my experience, wherever I go as a homeless person in the City of Fresno, the City of Fresno workers, accompanied by the Fresno Police Department, will come to take and destroy my personal possessions. This has happened to me twice already and I believe it will happen again. The City of Fresno has made it clear to me by destroying my property twice and by the way in which they did that, that because I am a homeless person, I will always be vulnerable to having my property taken and destroyed by City of Fresno workers and police.

Pamela Kincaid

For the last 5 or 6 years, I have lived in the area just south of downtown Fresno. I make a little money from recycling and selling crafts, but not enough to afford an apartment or other housing. I have occasionally stayed at the Naomi House, which is the one women's shelter in town. However, I am claustrophobic and have had panic attacks when I have stayed there before, so I have not done that for the last 2 years. Also, I have a dog who stays with me for protection and for company, and he cannot stay with me if I am in a shelter. So most of the time, I live outside.

Approximately one year ago, I had set up a makeshift tent by the railroad tracks, just south of the downtown area of Fresno. I believe that this is the railroad's property. A man who works for the railroad comes through the area every month or so, basically to check on things. He asks for people's names, but has never asked me to leave, and I have not heard him ask anyone else to leave. Except for a dock in the back of Wilson's Motorcycle Warehouse, I have never seen any signs in that area telling people they can't be there.

I had also seen Fresno police and sanitation workers come through the area every month or so, taking homeless people's property. I was usually able to keep my belongings from being taken by moving them when the workers came through. Unfortunately, this one time approximately one year ago, I left my property unattended, and when I came back, it was all gone.

Almost all of my possessions were taken, including important documents like my identification, my birth certificate, and my telephone/ address book, which had important contact information for people I want to keep in touch with. Worst of all, I lost family photos, including the only pictures I had of my sister, my daughter, and my deceased mother. Those photos can never be replaced.

No one, either from the City or from anywhere else, told me beforehand that City workers were going to come through that day and take homeless people's property. No one told me any way to get my property back once it was taken. Having previously seen City workers just throw away other people's belongings into a dump truck as if it were trash, I have no doubt that this is what was done to my belongings that day.

Approximately 2 months ago, I was again staying near the railroad tracks, just south of downtown. Since the previous time that my property was destroyed, I had managed to accumulate a few things that I was keeping with me. I had many of my belongings in a shopping cart, covered by a tarp. This was an old, outdated cart that had been abandoned and I was using it to store my possessions. This is one of the ways I could move my possessions. I left for an hour or two in the middle of the day, and when I returned, the cart had been taken. Items that had been stored in the cart had been dumped onto the ground. Some items, such as clothing, were still there. However, other important items had been taken. These included a toolbox and various tools (screwdriver, wire strippers, flashlight). Those tools were very important to me because I used them to make a little income. For example, I used the wire strippers to take wire off of metal items so they can be recycled. I used my other tools to take apart metal items to sell for scrap. Also, I used these tools to make crafts, such as jewelry and "dreamcatchers," which I was able to sell to make a little bit of money.

Since I knew that City workers often came through the area and took homeless people's belongings, I was sure that this is what had happened that day. I later confirmed with other homeless people in the area that City workers had been in the area that day, and that the workers had been particularly focused on taking shopping carts. I never received any notice from the City or from anyone else that people from the City were going to be coming through the area taking carts or anything else, and I was not given any way to get my belongings back after the fact.

I have also personally observed other raids, including one that happened approximately 4 ½ months ago. In that raid, I saw City workers destroy homeless people's property, even though it was clearly owned. For example, I saw City workers use a bulldozer-type machine with "claws" to scoop up and destroy an eight-man tent that was set up near the railroad tracks. That tent belonged to a homeless man I knew from the area, who was living in the tent but who just happened to be gone when the City people came by. He also had some cats staying with him. I think the cats may have been inside the tent at the time it was destroyed; at any rate, I never saw them again after that. I saw a very similar raid about a month earlier. One of the City workers told me at that time that they were doing these raids because local politicians were upset about having seen stories on the news about how homeless people were living on the streets of Fresno.

Before I became homeless, I used to have a house and a job. I lost both when I developed injuries at work that made it impossible for me to keep my job. I hope that someday I will be able to get off the streets and into permanent housing. But the fact that the City keeps taking and destroying my property makes that goal seem that much harder to achieve. I always live with the fear that the City will come and take what few possessions I have left.



Pam Kincaid tells her story at the press conference announcing the lawsuit to protect homeless people's constitutional rights.