

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

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EN ESPAÑOL  
PÁGINAS 21-24

## Protests Continue as Netanyahu Addresses Congress

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

On July 24, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a joint session of Congress. It sparked protests around the United States and a local protest in Fresno. More than 100 members of Congress refused to attend the session.

Netanyahu told Congress, "My friends, I came to assure you today of one thing, we will win. Like Dec. 7, 1941, and Sept. 11, 2001," he said, "Oct. 7 is a day that will forever live in infamy."

He continued, "For the forces of civilization to triumph, America and Israel must stand together."

Netanyahu also directly addressed the protests against the genocide in Gaza, both on college campuses and outside the Capitol.

"Incredibly, many anti-Israel protesters, many choose to stand with evil. They stand with Hamas. They stand with rapists and murderers," he said. (It

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About 60 people came to the Federal Building in Fresno on July 24 to protest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking to Congress in Washington, D.C. The event was organized by Raza Against War, which holds protests weekly at the Federal Building. Photo by Peter Maiden

## Harris Candidacy Invigorates Locals

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

President Joe Biden ended his reelection campaign on July 21 and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to succeed him as the Democratic candidate. Biden, 81, was under pressure after his incoherent debate performance against Donald Trump on June 27. He was openly criticized by the

corporate media because of his age, even though his then opponent, Republican Donald Trump, at 78 years old, is only three years younger.

Another concern about Biden's chances of reelection in November of this year was his disconnect with young voters due to his support for Israel and his lack of appeal to them.

Harris, 59, didn't waste any time, jumping decidedly into her campaign, giving the image of an energetic and sharp candidate. She has made clear the main points of her agenda with women's rights—including reproductive rights—being a priority.

Voter registration spiked right after Biden endorsed her. According to the nonpartisan site Vote.org, almost 40,000

people registered to vote following Harris's entry into the presidential race.

"That's the largest number of new voters registered over a 48-hour period we've seen this entire cycle," Andrea Hailey, CEO of Vote.org, posted on X (formerly Twitter). The largest demographic signing up was people aged 18 to 34.

There is much speculation about who Harris will name as her running mate, which had not been announced before our press deadline. The Democratic National Convention will be held in Chicago August 19-22.

A sampling of local reactions follows:

### Minerva Mendoza (Madera)

As a potential presidential candidate, Vice President Harris has rekindled my excitement for the upcoming presidential election in the United States. The possibility of a female president and daughter of immigrants ascending to the presidency is truly inspiring.

She brings both experience and a fresh perspective. Her understanding of such important issues as affirmative action, abortion rights, gun control and immigration resonates with me.

While I recognize her mixed legacy and impact on communities of color, she deserves a chance, and we as a nation deserve one. I am cautiously supporting her, as we have been in similar situations before where we believed a president could change things for our community, only to be left disappointed.

### Francisco Duarte (Fresno)

Regarding Kamala Harris as a candidate...some communities of color, or feminist groups, would hope that a person of color, in addition to being a female, could mean some benefit to them, which, while this is a possibility, it is not guaranteed. Look at [Florida Republican Senator] Marco Rubio or [Texas Republican Senator] Ted Cruz; how good is it for immigrants [that] they are in Congress?

Many activists who want to have a real progressive option—say, like Bernie Sanders—are forced instead to choose the lesser of two evils in the race: the Democratic Party, even knowing that the two dominant parties respond to similar political-economic interests. Others will choose not to participate in the process and wait for real changes.

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Kamala Harris's candidacy brings new energy to the White House race. Photo taken at the California Democratic Party Convention in San Francisco on June 1, 2019. Photo by Peter Maiden

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# Protests Continue as Netanyahu Addresses Congress

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must be noted that Netanyahu's allegations of rape have been refuted.)

Netanyahu incredibly claimed, against all evidence and assessments by the Biden administration, that Israel has not blocked humanitarian aid from entering Gaza. He also claimed that "Israel's military has caused very few civilian casualties by taking unprecedented steps to protect those trapped in the crossfire." (To date, more than 39,000 civilians have been killed, 15,000 of them children, as reported in Al Jazeera News.)

In Fresno, a coalition of organizations held a protest in front of the Federal Building on Tulare Street and made the following statement:

"We condemn the address of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to a joint session of Congress as highly inappropriate at a time when he is using U.S. weapons against Palestinian civilians without regard to the sanctity of their lives.

"We also want to inform Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Jim Costa that we are opposed to the continued provision of weapons to the Israeli Defense Forces and Israeli Government. We seek application of the Leahy Law, the Foreign Assistance Act and other appropriate laws and protocols regarding the use of weapons against civilian populations and the blockage or restriction of humanitarian aid."

The coalition is composed of Raza Against War, the Palestine Liberation Group, Fresno for Palestine, Veterans for Peace, Peace Fresno, the Fresno Center for Nonviolence and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

As the vocal crowd of about 60 people gathered in the Fresno heat, Stan Santos from Raza Against War spoke. "We have to remember that large numbers of the dead are



Juhayna, 10 years old, speaks to the media at a press conference and protest against Benjamin Netanyahu on July 24. In the background is Stan Santos of Raza Against War. Photo by Peter Maiden

children; 15,000 children in Gaza have been killed since the war began on Oct. 7 according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner, who stated on June 24 [that] 'Gaza has become a graveyard for children with thousands of others missing, their fates unknown.'"

Santos continued, "The other part of our mission today is to engage with our elected representatives in Congress

again to halt the weapons shipments and the mass slaughter of Palestinian civilians. These are violations of numerous international treaties and considered acts of genocide."

Josh Shurley of Veterans for Peace addressed the crowd. "Our organization of military veterans and allies dedicated to exposing the true cost of war and militarism is seeking justice for the many victims of war.

"Today, friends, there is a great injustice. There is a crime of historic proportions. What's unfolding in Palestine is led by a monster named Benjamin Netanyahu, who is visiting our nation's capital to meet with his minions in the U.S. Congress, some of whom represent us right here in California's 21st district.

"It comes down to this: One day, we will be asked what did you do to help stop the Palestinian genocide? What did you do when Netanyahu came to the halls of Congress gloating about the American lawmakers that he had bought off?

"What we are seeing is large-scale corrupt political influence around the issue of enabling Israel's crimes. What we see locally are Islamophobic hate crimes happening right here in Fresno. We have to open our minds that we're connected, from Fresno to Palestine, from Raza to Gaza."

Among the speakers were Hayat and her 10-year-old daughter Juhayna, who said, "We all pay taxes; my parents pay a lot of taxes. Our taxes fund genocide. Why would America want to fund genocide? Why would we support the killing of innocent people?"

"Why don't we use this money to make America a better place? Why are there so many homeless people on the streets? No homes, no air conditioning, no access to cold water or showers, and everyone is okay with that?"

"This is not the America I want to grow up in. I want an America that supports peace, not genocide; that is fair. An America that provides housing for the homeless and not killing."

There was also an open mic, and many Fresnans spoke up for an immediate ceasefire and massive humanitarian aid shipments to Gaza. It was an energetic day of support for Palestine and a sharp rebuke to Netanyahu.

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Bob McCloskey is an activist and reporter with the Community Alliance. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

# Harris Candidacy Invigorates Locals

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## Nayamin Martinez (Fresno)

I believe that Kamala, being a woman of color, can appeal to other women of color, mainly immigrants or descendants of immigrants who did not feel represented by an elderly white man. I will vote for her if she is the nominee. I hope she adopts a more liberal agenda, in terms of reproductive rights [and] immigration policies.

If Mexico has already elected a woman as president, it would be good for me to see this phenomenon repeated in the United States. I hope they close ranks and support Kamala, who can save us from the abyss called Trump.

## Johanna Torres (Madera)

I think that someone who is not a bigot is good for society as a whole. I would vote for her.

## Sandra Iyall (Fresno)

I am voting for Kamala Harris for president and have already donated to her campaign and ordered a Harris 2024 t-shirt. I am grateful the media has something to talk about other than Biden's showing at the debate. I will never support a Republican candidate, and now the Democrats have a candidate that people are being excited to support.

As a Cowlitz woman, I trust Kamala to understand the importance of protecting women's rights and civil rights. I was encouraged by Biden's choice for Interior Secretary when he chose Deb Haaland, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna and a 35th-generation New Mexican, and I have every reason to believe President Harris will continue the legacy.

It will be up to all of us to apply [the] pressure needed to our elected representatives to demand a ceasefire in Gaza, fund higher education for our youth, promote the rights of workers to unionize, protect our environment and have peace with justice.

## Oralia Maceda (Fresno)

I think that the fact that Kamala Harris, being a woman of color, is running as a candidate, is a good thing. However, I don't think the policies she will implement will be any different from those we have experienced. In the end, she has to follow the direction of her party.

Nevertheless, her speeches are less aggressive than Trump's. It is a lot to think that she will stop supporting economically and morally the countries that are causing deaths and wars.

## Lourdes Oliva (Fresno)

I feel confident about Kamala Harris being our next President. Being a woman is important and essential to start listening to the majority of registered voters and the current workforce, and families. Her immigrant story and her mother's is one that we can identify with.

I'm very proud of President Biden endorsing and passing the baton to Kamala. We need to see all the benefits of her leadership and our investments as voters and donors of her campaign and race. I had the opportunity to meet her when she attended Fresno prior to her first run for President.

I was skeptical before I met her because [of what] others in the mostly white community were sharing about her politics. However, when BWOPA invited her to come to Fresno she did and seeing her in person inspired me.

I think that she will need all our support because she will be the first female leader of the nation. This is a great opportunity to inspire all our Gen Z and millennials and our youth and, why not, my two-year-old granddaughter.

## Teresa Castillo (Fresno)

A friend told me that voter registration in the 18-35 age range is way up again, after Biden stepped out and nominated Harris. I don't know her source, but this follows my initial feeling of hope.

I have felt that Biden is out of touch with what most Americans need and want (most career politicians also are out of touch). I had little faith in his ability to win reelection. I'm horrified to see what Trump and his people would do to our country, and I don't see a strong enough platform for any third party to win, so Kamala Harris brings me hope.

I really would love to see our country turned upside down with a progressive, fair leader committed to enforcing human rights and equity for all. I don't see Harris as that leader, but as a woman of color who is strong in her ability to lead and who can speak with conviction, she is a start.

My problems come in not knowing where she really stands on several issues, mainly Israel. I don't think we've seen her true side yet, and if it aligns with a hard policy against Israel's genocide and apartheid human rights abuses, will she really be able to rein in the staunch supporters of Israel and stand against that lobby?

Still, I have hope that she will bring us better, to help our country be more united for good and focus on building up at home instead of the constant destruction of countries abroad.

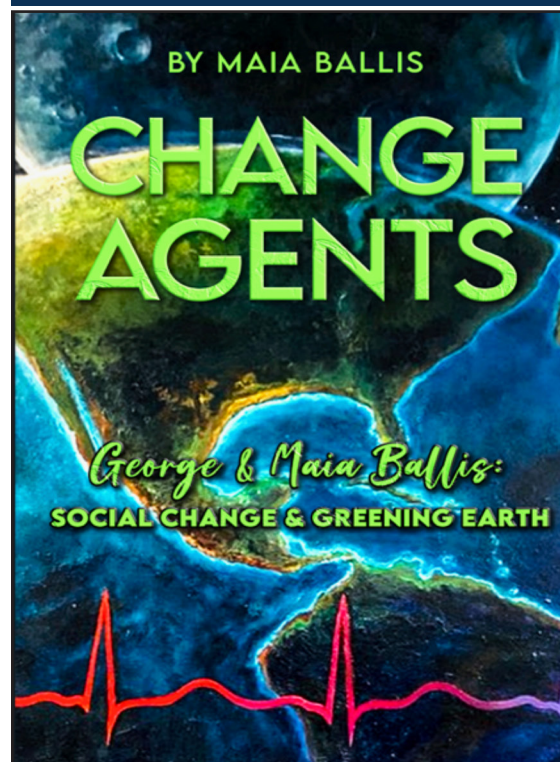
As a woman of color, she has personally experienced some discrimination and dismissal that others have, so she will always have that in her pocket. She, however, also has a level of privilege above many women of color in middle America so I hope she can have empathy and reach those who could benefit from her life experience.

Overall though, representation matters, so I feel that her presence alone could inspire so many to be uplifted and vote and be renewed in the political process.

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Eduardo Stanley is the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at editor@fresnoalliance.com.

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## CHANGE AGENTS George & Maia Ballis: Social Change & Greening Earth

I include George's historic photos of civil rights, UFW farm worker unionizing and Brown & Black Power Movements in this history of our art, media and community organizing work with many other change agents on water, land, food, and every local socio-economic-environmental justice and peace issue; plus our work legalizing solar electric power use in Fresno at our SunMt Research Center.

Learn about our organization's exciting new work on sustainable green technologies to create local resilient bioeconomies, energy self-sufficiency, and nutrient rich food for a healthier populace and a greener planet.

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Kamala Harris's candidacy for the White House is refreshing because she is bringing energy, enthusiasm and hope to the process.

Joe Biden did a good job in his four-year term. Let's remember that he kept the economy at a "normal" pace and controlled inflation. And he helped to control the Covid pandemic. You might remember that during Trump's presidency, he did almost nothing to confront the pandemic—and even suggested that people could drink Clorox to avoid the effects of the Covid virus.

It's difficult to believe that Trump, a felon, is a presidential candidate. Something is wrong with our society, particularly with our legal system. Furthermore, the Republican candidate is violent, misogynist, a sex abuser, vulgar and more (the list goes on). We need not only to choose the best candidate because of his/her agenda but also to keep civility and an educated populace.

Yes, this is a two-party system and the options are limited. A deep, radical change is needed. An age limit for candidates is important. And most important is to limit the power of the Supreme Court. It's surreal that 5–6 conservative judges in a blink erased women's reproductive rights and gave Trump partial immunity.

The November election is crucial. It's not the lesser of two evils we are going to choose; it's about stopping the barbaric gang led by Trump that wants to seize power for its own benefit and implement medieval policies.

There is hope. That is the momentum to motivate young people to get involved, to understand what is at stake. We need to educate ourselves and our neighbors.

Till next month.



Since 1996, the *Community Alliance* has been an independent progressive voice for the Central San Joaquin Valley. The *Community Alliance* advocates for

- Racial, social, environmental and economic justice
- Equal rights for all, including immigrants, the unhoused and the LGBTQ+ community
- Access to a free quality public education for all
- Access to healthcare for all
- A living wage for all working people

Our goal is to expose racial, social, environmental, economic and political injustices. We will help to build a powerful progressive movement that will make all our communities safer, healthier, more equitable and more livable.

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Articles 800–1,200 words.  
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Up to 200 words.

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## Intro to Arts and Culture Section

BY NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

Amid Fresno's artistic pulse lies a community often unseen and uncelebrated. Talented artists and dedicated organizers pour their heart and soul into their work, only to struggle with promotion and visibility. The *Community*

*Alliance's* Arts and Culture section aims to change that, bridging the gap between artist and art lovers, ensuring that Fresno's vibrant arts scene receives the recognition it deserves.

The Arts and Culture section spotlights upcoming art events and features local artists each month. This platform is open to all activities that fall under the broad umbrella of "art events"—from traditional showcases of painting, multimedia and sculpture to music, cultural practices and other forms of self-expression.

Art in Fresno is diverse and evolving, reflecting a vibrant bricolage of cultures and styles. We are home to a wide array of artists,

each contributing uniquely to our cultural canvas. The *Community Alliance* hopes to provide a much-needed stage for these voices, ensuring that no masterpiece goes unnoticed.

The Arts and Culture section will be in both English and Spanish and is funded by a grant from the Fresno Arts Council.

Submit events for the Arts and Culture calendar to calendar@fresnoalliance.com.

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*Noah Deeds Ortiz is a student at Fresno State majoring in psychology. He coordinates the Community Alliance's Arts & Culture section along with his wife, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. He hosted the "Queer Goggles" podcast.*

## Rural Communities Demand More Pesticide Controls

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

On July 12, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation conducted a public hearing in Turlock on the notification of the exact locations of pesticide use.

Dozens of people attended from throughout Central California: Fresno, Visalia, Porterville, Greenfield, Monterey, Watsonville and more. The attendees are pushing for regulations to provide public access to pesticide information prior to application.

"Before the hearing, we called a press conference to explain our concerns and goals," said Cristina Gutierrez, a member of Californians for Pesticide Reform of Fresno. "It was a very hot day, but we all were there for our rural communities."



Attendees at a public hearing in Turlock demanded notification of the exact locations of pesticide use. Photo courtesy of Cristina Gutierrez

Speakers at the press conference included Bianca Lopez, co-founder of Valley Improvement Projects; Francisco Diaz with the League of Latin American Citizens; Mechelle Perea-Ryan, a family nurse practitioner; and Yanely Martinez, Central Coast organizing coordinator for Californians for Pesticide Reform and community leader of the Safe Ag Safe Schools coalition.

The speakers pointed out the importance of knowing beforehand what, when and where hazardous pesticides will be applied. They want to be able to take safety precautions against exposure to drifting pesticides. Currently, state and county regulators only reveal pesticide information after they've already been applied.

Organizers expressed serious concerns about chemicals being applied close to schools when children are present or close to public gatherings without any warning.

There were 40 testimonies asking to know the "exact location" of pesticide applications in their communities; among the speakers was four-year-old Elena Flores-Gutierrez and other young people. Only three people spoke against the petition to know the "exact location" of pesticide applications.

Some participants expressed the importance of getting information in languages other than English and Spanish.

On July 15, there was a virtual hearing in which 70 people spoke on behalf of implementing more controls for pesticide applications. Other hearings are also being held in the Central Valley.



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# Bitwise: A Dream Dies Hard

BY PETER MAIDEN AND I. SMILEY G. CALDERÓN

Irma Olguin Jr. wore a black top with a white dress jacket and gray slacks. Her co-defendant, Jake Soberal, wore a dark blue suit. In federal court in Fresno on July 17 they looked calm and confident, although one thing they knew for sure was that they were both going to prison.

The pair were the now-infamous co-CEOs of Fresno's Bitwise Industries. They swindled \$115 million in loans and investments, they say, in order to keep their corporate experiment in worker training and small business tech consulting alive once it hit hard times.

They both pled guilty, standing before Judge Dale Drozd, to one count of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Each of the two counts carries a possible sentence of 20 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. According to sentencing guidelines, their minimum sentence would be five years.

Judge Drozd asked Olguin and Soberal a series of questions under oath, mostly to ascertain that the meaning of their guilty pleas was clear, and that the pleas were authentic. Ending speculation that Olguin was herself conned by a more culpable Soberal, they took equal responsibility and affirmed that they had not been pressured to plead guilty by their co-defendant.

At one point, the judge mentioned by way of evidence that a payment of around \$18.5 million, acquired by fraudulent means, was wired from a party in New York to a Bitwise bank account in California. Although there were many such payments uncovered by the FBI, just that one satisfies the charge of wire fraud.

An electric moment was when the defendants were asked if they practiced a "scheme or artifice to defraud." They both answered "Yes, your honor."

Curiously, it was mentioned in the proceedings that the defendants would make restitution for the losses suffered by their victims. It is not known what funds they possess to make any such restitution.

The day following their court date, Olguin and Soberal released a two-page letter addressed to "Former Teammates, Investors, Lenders and your respective families." The letter was published in its entirety in the *Fresno Bee*, on yourcentralvalley.com and by GV Wire.

It read, in part, "We wanted so badly to see Bitwise succeed, to see Fresno succeed, and to see our teammates succeed. That gave rise to the false belief that those things were only possible if Bitwise kept going. Over a critical period of time with much on the line, we absolutely, unequivocally, and irreversibly chose the wrong way.

"We are deeply sorry."

"Probably our most burning desire," they wrote, "is to talk about how our mistakes don't diminish what so many of you were working on so tirelessly at Bitwise. The idea that a company, an industry, and a city can be different and better—that was real, and you did so much good. Our poor decisions trying to save the company shouldn't erase your ten years of authentic impact."



The Bitwise South Stadium Building a few weeks after the company imploded in 2023. Photo by Peter Maiden

They went on to say that they want a dialogue about what happened in the implosion of Bitwise: "The next thing is that we will each almost certainly be sentenced to serve time in federal prison. We don't know for how long, or where. That part will come soon enough. Until then, we are both here. Here to listen and make space to honor your feelings. If information can help create clarity, and clarity can help create peace, sign us up for that."

Of course, real, tangible damage was done because of this Olguin and Soberal "dynamic duo of destruction." Investors lost millions and employees lost wages that they might never recoup—so merely honoring "feelings" is not exactly making things right.

Throughout this whole ordeal, Olguin and Soberal have demonstrated that they're smooth and sweet talkers. They sweet-talked investors, employees and their own board for years until they got caught. And, after making a deal with the Feds, they are back at it with this letter—which seems to be a bid to both establish their remorse with the court and win forgiveness.

Olguin and Soberal will be sentenced on Nov. 6.

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Peter Maiden is the photo editor of the Community Alliance newspaper.

I smiley G. Calderón is a Gen X Chicano and lifelong educator who spent a career in academia in Southern California but is most proud of being a father.

## CENTRAL VALLEY BRIEFS

### Lay of the Land

Central Valley Matters directly funds several grassroots groups that are active in the Central Valley's Congressional District 22. All the groups have been vetted for their work in Central Valley communities to improve the lives of hardworking but marginalized people. Here are updates on these groups:

**Delano Guardians.** While engaging with people in the community, the group is hearing about hardships from rent increases and higher water bills. Organizer Lupe Martinez says these stories show residents feel their voices are not being heard and that the Delano Guardians work to help residents realize they do have power and their voices and votes do matter.

**Community Water Center Action Fund.** While canvassing and phone banking in Tulare, Kings and Kern counties, the group is hearing that residents face problems with water quality and affordability. "Something so necessary to living has become so expensive," said Imelda Ramirez, field director for the group. "This is especially hard in high temperatures when drinking water is essential."

**Valley Voices.** Valley Voices has doubled down on outreach in Kings County doing "community canvassing" and focusing on Latino voters. The group has found that misinformation and disinformation are rampant but accepted as fact, and its canvassers are working to replace that deceit with true and compelling information. With a track record of helping communities, the group is effective as a trusted messenger.

**Dolores Huerta Foundation (DHF).** Working primarily in Tulare and Kern counties, DHF uses a multigenerational approach to ensure that every impacted generation of people in the Central Valley is activated, informed, inspired and supported to create tangible local change. Its voter, civic and local government education programs not only make residents aware of their power of voting together but also lead to increased representation by leaders who prioritize their issues.

**Loud for Tomorrow Action Fund.** Based in Kern County, the group is dedicated to the belief that the future of the Central Valley depends on the leadership development and political education of young people—building youth power through civic engagement, advocacy and justice. Loud for Tomorrow trains young activists to lead local issue campaigns with an environmental and electoral justice lens.

### Most Cuts Averted in State Budget

Governor Newsom and the California State Legislature passed a budget that protects the core services that older adults and people with disabilities rely on. Despite this year's fiscal downturn, the 2024-25 state budget maintains vital health, human services and economic security programs that millions of older Californians rely on.

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) notes that the final budget maintains in-home supportive services (IHSS) for undocumented Californians in the Medi-Cal program and the IHSS backup provider system, senior nutrition programs, HomeSafe, Adult Protective Services and CalFresh.

"While this budget maintains core programs for older adults and people with disabilities, we are extremely disappointed that Medi-Cal share-of-cost reform implementation was excluded from the final budget," reports CARA.

"In addition, we are disappointed at the continued lack of state investment in preventing and ending older adult homelessness. Older adults [account for] nearly half of homeless Californian adults and are the fastest growing age group of people experiencing homelessness."

### Sikh Appointed to Superior Court Bench

Raj Singh Badhessa's appointment to the Fresno County Superior Court Bench represents the culmination of decades of perseverance and dedication by Sikhs in America. He is the first Sikh to wear a judge's robe in Fresno County. Moreover, he is the first *Amritdhari* (fully initiated) Sikh judge in the United States who wears the *dastar* (Sikh turban) or *pagri*.

In response to his appointment, Badhessa remarked, "It is my hope moving forward that Sikh youth know that they

can use this example and aspire to serve this county, this state and this nation in any position they wish to pursue."

"As I step into this new phase of service, I am aware of the great weight of the responsibilities bestowed upon me," says Badhessa. "I will strive to do my best each and every day, act impartially, honorably and with the utmost integrity."

The Sikh community has deep roots in the Central Valley, with Sikh farmers and laborers having settled in the region more than a century ago. Their contributions to agriculture and local industry have been invaluable, and their cultural influence is woven into the fabric of the region.

Badhessa's appointment "is a groundbreaking moment for Sikhs in America," notes Naindeep Singh, executive director of the Jakara Movement. "It reflects our community's resilience and our contributions to the broader society."



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# Fresno's Guaranteed Basic Income Program

BY JAMES MENDEZ

The Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) will administer a \$1 million pilot anti-poverty program by providing 150 qualifying families (75 from Huron and 75 from the city of Fresno) \$500 per month for 12 months. This local guaranteed basic income (GBI) program is called Advancing Fresno County Guaranteed Income.

In March 2024, the EOC began accepting applications to the program. After reviewing about 10,000 applications, the EOC selected 150 families and began sending checks to those families in July.

Over the years, many governmental and nongovernmental programs have addressed poverty. Some of the complaints regarding poverty programs from lawmakers and recipients relate to the bureaucracy, the qualifications needed to receive benefits, stipulations around the use of the funds, program inefficiencies and the lack of demonstrable long-term benefit.

Public criticism of such programs is even more pronounced as seen in recent comments following *Fresno Bee* and *Fresnoland* coverage of Fresno County's GBI program: taxes should not be used to help people in poverty, people in poverty deserve to be in poverty, people in poverty do not deserve any help from the government, poor people do not know how to properly manage their money and such money would only be spent on alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

The reality of GBI programs is substantially different.

## Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI)

GBI is an attempt to alleviate poverty and replace other needs-based social programs with a program that requires less bureaucratic involvement and oversight. GBI provides unconditional, regular, fixed amounts of cash to people in poverty. The money supplements the participants' current income. There are no restrictions on use of the money.

From 2017 through May 2024, 150–200 guaranteed income pilot programs were launched throughout the United States. These pilot programs have lasted 12–24 months.

In February 2019, then Stockton mayor Michael D. Tubbs helped initiate the nation's first mayor-led guaranteed income pilot program, the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED). SEED gave 125 randomly selected residents \$500 per month for 24 months. SEED was funded by philanthropies, primarily the Economic Security Project.

## Benefits of GBI

When people are subjected to poverty they cannot meet their basic human needs. They often have to decide what they will go without. People living in poverty have to ask, "Do I spend money on rent, housing, food, clothes, medicine or repairing the car?" The stress from financial struggles often prevents them from embarking on education that might result in getting a job or a better job.

The results of the SEED program and other guaranteed income pilot programs universally find that people spend the money on basic necessities—housing, food, merchandise (e.g., hygiene products, shoes, clothes) and transportation. Only 1%–2% (depending on the program) of the tracked stipends were spent on alcohol or tobacco products.

The health and well-being of the recipients improved with these programs. The numbers and percentages of people working full-time increased for recipients of the programs. In addition, the participants remained employed after the programs ended.

After the period of extra income allowed the recipients to "catch up," they continued to experience benefits even without the supplemental income. They continued to have ongoing employment, income stability, food security, housing, education, mental and physical health, and healthcare access.

## California Guaranteed Income Pilot Programs

In fiscal 2021–22, the California budget had a large surplus. Given the success of the SEED program and other guaranteed income programs, Governor Newsom and the State Legislature allocated \$35 million (0.01% of the \$307.9 billion budget) to local government entities to start their own "universal basic income pilot programs." Entities were asked to submit bids for the grants.

In November 2022, the state announced the seven entities that would receive the awards for five years and distribute the funds under the GBI pilot projects they developed. The California Department of Social Services would oversee these seven pilot programs for fiscal 2022–23 through fiscal 2025–26. The Fresno County EOC applied for the grant funds but was not among the entities chosen.

Studies show that guaranteed income programs are more efficient and more effective than traditional government programs in relieving the poverty of recipients. Unrestricted guaranteed income programs "assume recipients can better choose how to allocate resources than government programs can—an assumption that rigorous research has proven accurate."

## EOC Program Does Not Involve Taxpayer Funds

Having failed to receive one of California's guaranteed income grants, the Fresno County EOC sought outside funding for its GBI program. Half of the project's funds came from

the California Wellness Foundation, one of California's largest public health philanthropic institutions. Other contributors include the following:

- The California Endowment
- Central Valley Community Foundation
- Delta Dental Community Care Foundation
- James Irvine Foundation
- The Kresge Foundation
- Sierra Health Foundation
- Mayors for a Guaranteed Income

(Tubbs, then mayor of Stockton, founded Mayors for a Guaranteed Income in June 2020. Since then, the group has grown from 11 to 125 U.S. mayors. Central Valley mayors participating include Huron's Rey Leon, Lindsay's Hipolito Angel Cerros and Delano's Bryan Osorio, but not Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer.)

U.S. Census data for 2022 show that Fresno County has some of the highest poverty rates in the nation with 22% of city of Fresno residents living below the poverty line. The national average for people living in poverty is 12.5%.

To qualify for the EOC's GBI program, families had to have children under the age of five and income 80% or below the median income for their respective zip code. The families came from some of the area's highest levels of concentrated poverty. Seventy-five families came from the 93706 zip code in southwest Fresno, and 75 families came from the 93234 zip code in the rural community of Huron. The program allows the families to spend the money in whatever fashion they desire.

## Some States Ban GBI

Numerous studies have shown GBI programs to be successful in alleviating poverty, improving health, well-being and employment. Even so, several states (Arkansas, South Dakota, Idaho and Iowa) have recently passed legislation to ban guaranteed basic income. Other states (Arizona, Wisconsin, West Virginia and Mississippi) have tried or are trying to ban GBI programs.

In February 2024, Houston launched Uplift Harris, a pilot guaranteed income program similar to a program in Austin, Texas, that ran from May 2022 to August 2023. Uplift Harris would give monthly payments of \$500 for 18 months to about 1,900 low-income families. Funding of Uplift Harris included \$20.5 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act.


Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton sued Harris County, which includes Houston, arguing that a guaranteed income program violated the state's constitution ban on "gratuitous payments to individuals." After losing in several lower courts, Paxton appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, which ordered Harris County to pause payments until litigation is resolved.

While Texas was trying to block Houston from providing financial help to poor people, the Fresno County EOC started sending out its first \$500 checks on July 17. The EOC will provide financial and administrative support. The Center for Community Voices at Fresno State will evaluate the impact and potential benefits of the guaranteed income program.

The co-directors of the Center for Community Voices are Andy Levine, who is a Fresno Unified School District Board trustee, and Amber Crowell, an associate professor of sociology. The Center's evaluation will determine if Fresno residents benefit from a guaranteed income program as much as residents in other parts of the country.

\*\*\*\*\*

*James Mendez came to Fresno in 1977 for his medical residency training at what was then called the Valley Medical Center. He stayed to practice medicine and raise a family. He is now a retired physician and a community activist.*



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**HRCCV's Commemoration of the 79th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Aug 6<sup>th</sup> 8:00am, Fresno State Peace Garden and Aug 9<sup>th</sup> 10:30am, Shinzen Friendship Garden**



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# All But Invisible: Food Crisis

BY STEVEN ROESCH

Food insecurity. The phrase is so compact that you might think it has to do with something relatively small.

But the crisis it's referring to is massive, something that really hit home when Kym Dildine, co-CEO at the Central California Food Bank (CCFB), offered a recent tour of the CCFB's Fresno facility.

The entrance to the front office is modest, and when you step inside it still seems like a fairly low-key operation. It's only when you go back into the warehouse area that you realize how vast the site actually is—and, by extension, how urgent the need for food is in our area.

The CCFB ([ccfoodbank.org/](http://ccfoodbank.org/)) is the largest operation of its kind in central California. The site has 140,000 square feet under roofing. Its refrigerated section, which stores such produce as corn, apples, squash, nectarines, oat milk and peaches, comprises 10,000 square feet.

More than half of what the CCFB provides is fresh fruit and vegetables. Since 2017, it has rescued millions of pounds of food from the landfill. Produce that didn't meet the standards for retail outlets—for example, onions deemed "too large"—were distributed here.

The CCFB's staff includes 7,000 volunteers. It presides over a vast network of food assistance, with 500 programs that span several counties. They help to supply 220 member pantries, housed in places such as community centers and churches.

In addition, the CCFB offers an onsite Groceries to Go service. Clients can register for an appointment online and then drive to the site. A staff member will bring out their food allotment on a cart. At present, the program supports a hundred households.

With the help of a state grant, the Fresno site also runs a diaper bank for local families, handing out 600,000 diapers each month. Given the state's budgetary woes, however, that program is set to expire in September.

The CCFB has been at its location on Amendola Drive since 2018. Substantially larger than its previous site, the new space proved beneficial in meeting the rising needs during the pandemic.

These days, however, as many people are being served as during the onslaught of Covid. The CCFB was serving 340,000–350,000 each month during the pandemic and currently serves that many as well. And that number is rising.

The CCFB management is now making plans to expand their facility. At present, they're seeking permits from the City of Fresno so that they can proceed.

Even an operation of this scale, though, falls far short of Central California's food needs. Dildine estimates that food banks are currently meeting 65% of the need for food assistance in the area.

At this point, the CCFB is taking in about 20% less in donations than during the pandemic. The decline has been especially noticeable the past six months.

What sorts of individuals avail themselves of the food bank's programs? Most of the households that it serves have at least one person working. Lots of college students



The Central California Food Bank assists about 340,000 people per month. Because of the increasing food insecurity in the country, the importance of food banks is becoming more prominent. In this image, a food bank in Cleveland, Tenn. Photo courtesy of The Commons

require food assistance, and all colleges and universities in Central California have food pantries.

On the other hand—and contrary to what many might assume—less than 1% of those served by the CCFB are homeless.

Native Americans suffer most from food insecurity, according to demographic data that the food bank has gathered.

Part of the increase in the need for food assistance has to do with the sharp rise of food prices, Dildine notes.

And what's happening locally is going on across the country.

Robert Reich, a former U.S. Secretary of Labor, echoes Dildine's comments about the dire consequences of inflation in one of his recent columns called "A Tale of Two Consumers."

Reich reports that lower-income consumers receive hourly wages that, when inflation is taken into account, have stayed frozen for years. Lower-income consumers have used up their pandemic savings and are now relying more heavily on credit cards.

According to Reich's findings, "the average American household now owes \$7,951 in credit card debt"—and this at a time when those cards carry an average interest rate of more than 20%.

A recent article by Carla Ventura in the *Progressive Populist* also discusses the issue.

"Food insecurity fell to a record low of 10.2% in 2021—in the middle of the pandemic—due to the pandemic-era boost in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits." Such support has been eliminated, though, and

now almost 13% of our country's population suffer from food insecurity.

Her plea: The minimum wage needs to be raised. Someone earning that amount can't afford the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the country.

Despite these striking figures, the food crisis has been under the radar for many people. During this election year, for example, it's rarely present in candidates' stump speeches or position statements.

That became evident during the CNN debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump in late June. At no time in that encounter did either candidate mention food insecurity, and neither of the moderators raised the issue. At that time, the official Trump and Biden campaign websites revealed the same glaring absence.

Dildine argues that this is a problem that can be solved. After all, we as a country have the resources at our disposal so that it can happen.

Political realities will make it an arduous uphill struggle, though.

SNAP "reduces hunger by about 30%," Ventura points out, and more than 44 million people in the United States currently depend on it.

Still, some legislators in Congress have proposed slashing the program by \$30 billion over the coming decade.

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*Steven Roesch is a retired German and English teacher who taught in the Fresno Unified School District for 30 years. Contact him at [stevencroesch12@comcast.net](mailto:stevencroesch12@comcast.net).*

# Backward Christian Soldiers

BY KEVIN HALL

Worried about a Christian Nationalist takeover of the federal government? Good. You should be. Feeling helpless to block Project 2025 and Agenda 47, Trump's Cliff Notes version of it, because you live in the Democratic Party-dominated "safe state" of California? Not so fast.

The outcome of this November's presidential election is not likely to be decided by voters or the Electoral College. The heretics leading the unfolding coup want our next president to be selected by a Republican-controlled House of Representatives, and they're far more organized and better funded than last time around.

Rather than waiting for Jan. 6, 2025, they plan to disrupt the democratic process statehouse by statehouse, swing state by swing state. What's a San Joaquin Valley voter to do? That's easy. Hold your nose and go to work for Congressional candidates Rudy Salas (D-Bakersfield) or Adam Gray (D-Merced), both of whom are seeking to unseat incumbent Republicans. Yes, Big Ag and Big Oil will win bigly with either of them, but it's our most direct opportunity to stave off the MAGA takeover.

If your objections to the U.S.-funded genocide in Gaza prevent you from working to reelect President Joe Biden (or his replacement candidate), then don't. Work instead to restore, expand and protect women's rights, immigrant rights, LGBTQIA+ rights. Ignore the top of the ticket and focus on Congress.



Politicians, preachers, priests and Republicans rallied in front of City Hall in 2022 to oppose a resolution in support of reproductive freedom, testing local Democrats' mettle. Photo by Kevin Hall

*Continues on page 13*

# Never Stop Protesting!

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

As of June 19, more than 37,000 people had been killed in the Gaza Strip since the attack by Hamas and the Israeli invasion in October 2023, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

An article published in *Lancet* magazine on July 5 written by Rasha Khatib, Martin McKee and Salim Yusuf describes how war has indirect health implications beyond the direct harm from violence.

The authors state that “even if the conflict ends immediately, there will continue to be many indirect deaths in the coming months and years from causes such as reproductive, communicable and non-communicable diseases.

“The total death toll is expected to be large given the intensity of this conflict; destroyed health-care infrastructure; severe shortages of food, water and shelter; the population’s inability to flee to safe places; and the loss of funding to [the] UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency), one of the very few humanitarian organizations still in Gaza.

“It is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza. Using the 2022 Gaza Strip population estimate of 2,375,259, this would translate to 7.9% of the total population in the Gaza Strip.”

This number of predictable casualties does not take into account the many thousands buried under the rubble that the United Nations estimates to be at least 10,000 people.

As the U.S.-funded carnage continues, protests continue locally, nationally and worldwide. This large protest movement is led primarily by the youth. On July 4, there was a march and demonstration in Fresno that began and ended in front of the Fresno Police Department. The protest was organized by PaliRev and the Fresno Brown Berets. While the focus was on Palestine, the organizers appropriately raised other important struggles.

A statement from the organizers reads: “We host this march to condemn the atrocities done by the US, the genocide in Palestine, Kenya, Congo, Sudan, Haiti, Hawaii, etc., have no business being celebrated by this 4th of July, 2024.



Never stop protesting, even if it's hot! Photo by Bob McCloskey

“We do not believe in celebrating the ‘Independence’ of the United States, since we acknowledge this is indigenous land that was brutally colonized and occupied by settlers, the same way ‘Israeli’ settlers have occupied and colonized the land of Palestine...[and] that indigenous people have the right of return, to self-determine, and govern their homelands globally.”

After several hours of marching through the streets of downtown Fresno to raise awareness about the genocide, the group returned to the starting point. Fig, a spokesperson for PaliRev, said, “We decided to take this action on the 4th of July specifically after almost a year of the Palestinian genocide to make it well-known that we stand against imperialism and the U.S. as an empire.

“The future for us and the whole world can only exist with a free Palestine. That’s the driving force for why so many of us continuously come out, like in this 100-degree heat today.

“You have to recognize that our politicians are way too comfortable gaining the benefits of war and not representing us because they contribute to these foreign causes such as the Palestinian genocide. They benefit from it ultimately, so war and militarism are increasing all the time.

“And they’re not addressing climate change or the threat of nuclear war. I think every day we get closer to extinction, so we need to link all these issues. They are connected, and we recognize that.

“I strongly do believe that this movement is growing because this issue is so undeniably connected with class consciousness. I mean, you see it when you talk to your neighbors, when you talk to your co-workers; there has been a shift in us recognizing that we are one class.”

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Bob McCloskey is an activist and a Community Alliance reporter. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

## Take Action!

### Weekly Protest

Sponsored by Raza Against War and Peace Fresno, protesters meet every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in front of the offices of Rep. Jim Costa (D–Fresno) and U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D–Calif.) at 2500 Tulare Street in downtown Fresno.

### Forum/Teach-in

There will be a forum and teach-in on Palestine on Aug. 31. A coalition composed of Raza Against War, Peace Fresno, the Palestine Liberation Group, Veterans for Peace, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and The Lamp Has Been Lit is hosting an event to increase awareness of the historical context that preceded the current crisis in Palestine.

In a statement, the coalition said that “there is a need to drive home the message that an informed citizenry has a moral obligation to halt the flow of U.S. weapons and military assistance to Israel.

“The call for a halt to weapons shipments has clear precedent in established law. It is a violation of the Leahy Law, and Section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) and other U.S. laws and protocols.

“We hope that an informational forum on Aug. 31 would plant the seeds that would inform civic action to demand passage of resolutions invoking Leahy and the FAA in Congress.”

The Aug. 31 event will be held in the Sanctuary of the Big Red Church (2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.) from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Contact 559-908-6701 for more information.

## Looking for Every Opportunity to Do Evil: H.R. 8771

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

Something impressive about the U.S. ultra-right is the apparent ability to do a huge number of bad things simultaneously.

An example is the State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, H.R. 8771 (SFO Appropriations Bill), which all sounds wonky. But that’s the trick—make it sound tediously boring and “Oh why bother” and then slip in provisions to wreck lives. This bill was passed by the House of Representatives on June 26 and will be going to the Senate.

It must be seriously cleaned up before it becomes law because bad laws harm and kill people. Tell your senators to get all the destructive language out of the Senate version of this bill before it becomes law.

Some of the more objectionable provisions are addressed herein.

### Cuba

The SFO Appropriations Bill attempts to stop the State Department from ever taking Cuba off the State Sponsors of Terrorism List maintained by the United States. Since it was the State Department (under Trump) that put Cuba on the list and it is the State Department’s list, that doesn’t make a lot of sense. But neither does the presence of Cuba on this list.

Cuba doesn’t sponsor terrorism and even the U.S. government cannot claim that it does, so the only reason given is “Cuba also continues to harbor several U.S. fugitives from justice wanted on charges related to political violence, many of whom have resided in Cuba for decades.” They might as well just write “Surrender Dorothy—ah, Assata.” Ridiculous, but the consequences are real.

With Cuba on this State Sponsors of Terrorism List, banks won’t handle Cuban financial transactions, even for food and medicine. The list signals to anyone that does business with Cuba that the U.S. government might try to retaliate against them. Being on this list is causing terrible harm to Cuba.

There’s another ridiculous allegation about Cuba embedded in this document and another attempt to cripple the Cuban economy. The SFO Appropriations Bill demands that the Secretary of State make a list of all countries receiving help from Cuban health workers. As you might know, although Cuba supplies medical brigades for free to countries that cannot afford to pay, other countries contract and pay for Cuban health professionals to work in areas where there are doctor shortages and conditions are difficult.

The United States has decided to declare that Cuban health professionals overseas are trafficked labor despite abundant evidence that this is not true. Then the SFO Appropriations Bill says that no funds can go to any government of a country or organization that has Cuban medical professionals working there.

The bill also prohibits health and medical research cooperation. Just too bad for diabetic people in the United States who might be able to avoid amputations with the Cuban medication Heberprot-P.

### Reproductive Health Rights

Another huge target for harm included in the SFO Appropriations Bill is reproductive health.

It prohibits funds to any government or nongovernmental organization (NGO) that “promotes or performs abortion, except in cases of rape or incest or when the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term.” This has been an executive branch policy under Republican administrations, but this bill would make it law. Because it applies to all health assistance worldwide, funding to NGOs delivering services to improve maternal and child health and nutrition and combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious diseases would be affected.

Health in general is also under attack. No funds for the World Health Organization, for example.

### Human Rights and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Human rights are a definite target.

This bill prohibits funding for gender-affirming care, accurate information about gender, and even drag shows and flying Pride flags.

“None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, training, programs, offices, officers, policies or other executive agency functions.”

No funds for the UN Human Rights Council (unless it stops criticizing Israeli human rights violations).

### Climate

There is also language in this bill that cuts off funding to combat climate change:

(a) Green Climate Fund—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available as a contribution, grant, or any other payment to the Green Climate Fund.

(b) Clean Technology Fund—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available as a contribution, grant, or any other payment to the Clean Technology Fund.

(c) Climate Damages—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available for the Loss and Damage Fund or to pay compensation to any country, organization, or individual for loss and damages attributed to climate change...

(f) United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change—None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement the decision by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’s 21st Conference of Parties in Paris, France, adopted December 12, 2015, commonly known as the “Paris Agreement.”

Continues on page 17



**WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM**  
WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**Israel Bombed a Safe Zone of Displaced Palestinians AGAIN  
The United States Must STOP Arming Israel!**

"They bombed us while praying, they bombed us while eating, they bombed us while fetching water, They bombed us while waiting in line For the bathroom, they bombed us while fleeing, they bombed us while seeking shade from the sun, and They bombed us while searching for a bag of flour. They keep bombing us, over and over again; and each time they do, the world gets more accustomed to the idea of our death, and we become as though we are 'nothing'."

—A Palestinian from Gaza

As we begin the 10th month, 280 days, of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, two more "humanitarian safe zones" in Gaza were attacked by Israel, dropping 500-pound bombs made in the United States. Then warplanes and armed drones were deployed to shoot journalists, medical teams and rescuers trying to help the wounded.

Again, innocent Palestinian children were killed or forever physically and emotionally destroyed. The targeted children and families were not combatants. They were Palestinians living under Israeli siege.

For (75 years and) 280 horrifying days they have struggled to survive; displaced; escaping the bombs and bullets while starving and sick with disease; living without clean water, food and fuel; living under tarps and without sanitation; surviving while heartbroken from so many family members martyred.

Biden has made a slight change; the bomb size has decreased from 2,000 pounds to 500 pounds, so now you're destroyed if you are within a football field of the bomb instead of two football fields away!

Hospitals have been systematically destroyed, and medical supplies and humanitarian aid blocked from entering Gaza. Medics and aid workers do what they can while the injured suffer unbelievably. International doctors report the conditions and injuries in Gaza as being far worse than any other war zone they've been in.

So, it appears that the innocent civilian Palestinian population is Israel's target. Of course, they use the cover of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack and their goal of killing off Hamas to make Israel safe, but with the superior surveillance and tracking technology that Israel markets and sells to governments and entities worldwide, it seems odd that somehow they cannot pinpoint their targets in Gaza and have to have mass bombings. Well, it seems a clear intent to take the land and destroy or remove all Palestinian inhabitants.

As you read this in the August issue, be mindful that on Aug. 6 and 9, we remember the inhumane U.S. decision to drop two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, destroying 129,000–226,000 Japanese lives as a means to end WWII.

We have not evolved. Our tolerance for death and destruction as a means to resolve political disputes has increased. As a nation, we mourn an old tragedy while we are fully engaged in a new one. When will lessons be learned?

The registered death toll in Gaza by Israeli attacks is nearly 40,000, but a leading medical journal estimates it at 190,000 Palestinians in Gaza in 280 days. A minimum average of 54 Palestinian children have been killed by Israeli forces every day since Oct. 7.

By November, Gaza had been hit with the equivalent of two nuclear bombs (Source: Euromed. Scientists for Global Responsibility). The United States has sent Israel more than 14,000 of the 2,000-pound MK-84 bombs since Oct. 7. Israel has deployed 300 bombardments over Gaza in 280 days.

Israel has escalated its attack on Gaza to unbelievable levels, with impunity violating human rights and international law, disregarding the ICC's ruling that it must stop all genocidal actions. Netanyahu has been found guilty by the ICC of international war crimes and crimes against humanity, but he was still invited to speak to our Congressional representatives in Washington, D.C., on July 24.

We join others who expect better from our country. How can we be a country that boasts of freedoms while we fund and facilitate Israel's genocidal destruction of Palestine? Now is the time to join together and take a stand and be loud! We cannot stay silent watching more horrors unfold. Our representatives need to hear from us constantly to inform them of what we expect: that peace is the right path for a democratic, free nation. It's time to stop being a nation that profits off war, death and destruction!

**SAVE THE DATE! All are welcome.**

Forum for Palestine, Aug. 31  
Hosted by Raza Against War and co-sponsored by the Palestine Liberation Group, WILPF-Fresno, Peace Fresno, Veterans for Peace-Fresno Chapter and the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

—Peace ~ Teresa Castillo, WILPF Fresno Branch Chair

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW! HERE'S HOW**

Send dues to WILPF-Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755. WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20. For questions or information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

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**We need to talk about nuclear war—and this time it's worse!**

A Joint Statement on the Occasion of NATO's 75th Anniversary released on July 8, 2024, states, "When NATO leaders gather in Washington DC on 9 July their agenda will be dominated by next steps in their support for Ukraine in its war with Russia.

"But, as former senior military officers and politicians in NATO state, we believe they also need to reflect long and hard on their approach to nuclear weapons. The risk that nuclear weapons could be used in conflict is the highest it has been since the atomic bombings of 1945 that killed more than 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"Most scenario planning also indicates any use of nuclear weapons is likely to escalate rapidly to a general exchange that would end most life on Earth...In light of the heightened threat of nuclear war, it would be a grave mistake for NATO's leaders to conclude that nuclear weapons are more important than ever for Europe's defence" (emphasis added).

The following day, July 9, 700 scientists from the Union of Concerned Scientists released a letter to Biden and Congress calling on both to cancel land-based nuclear missiles. Their letter begins with, "As scientists and engineers, we are acutely aware of the grave risk of nuclear war. We are particularly concerned about the needless dangers created by the deployment of expensive, dangerous, and unnecessary land-based, intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs)" (emphasis added).

These scientists from around the globe maintain ICBMs are dangerous, expensive and unnecessary. Specifically, when addressing the complete lack of necessity for such weapons, they state, "Unnecessary because the United States deploys an assured ability to retaliate against a nuclear attack without land-based missiles.

"Roughly 1,000 nuclear warheads are deployed on U.S. submarines hidden at sea, essentially invulnerable to attack. Submarine-launched ballistic missiles are as accurate as silo-based missiles, quick to respond, and provide more destructive capability than could ever be employed effectively.

"Specifically, one nuclear detonation can destroy an entire city; hundreds or thousands of detonations would cause millions of immediate deaths, the destruction of critical infrastructure, and potentially catastrophic climate impacts. The U.S. Navy deploys twelve submarines and is working to replace the entire fleet. Silo-based missiles do not provide any important additional capability" (emphasis added).

On July 12, four peace groups in Fresno delivered a letter to both U.S. Senators Laphonza Butler and Alex Padilla expressing disappointment and outrage over a recent vote in Congress regarding H.R. 2670 (now law), which is the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2023–2024. Butler and Padilla were not in the small group of 13 senators who opposed the bill; both California senators voted to approve it.

In this NDAA, Section 229 authorizes the "Air Force Global Strike Command to establish a program for technology transition for the Air Force nuclear enterprise. The U.S. Air Force nuclear enterprise consists of people, processes, procedures, and systems to conduct, execute, and support nuclear weapon systems and operations" (emphasis added).

In Section 1611, this NDAA "prohibits the Department of Defense (DOD) from reducing the number of deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to below 400."

Section 1618 "requires the DOD to establish a nuclear sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N) program."

Did our two senators read the bill before voting to approve? Our job as members of the peace community is not only to let our elected representatives know how we feel but also to inform them, educate them and assist them in any way we can so that these monstrous weapons no longer loom over our heads threatening the existence of those we love and all we care for.

On July 25, this writer presented to the Fresno City Council a proclamation signed by 169 people proclaiming: "We hereby assert that we have the right to live in a peaceful world free from the threat of nuclear war." How is that too much to ask? *It's not!*

You can read the entire Joint Statement here: [icanw.org/true\\_security\\_for\\_nato\\_requires\\_moving\\_away\\_from\\_nuclear\\_weapons](https://icanw.org/true_security_for_nato_requires_moving_away_from_nuclear_weapons)

You can read the entire letter from UCS here: [ucs-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/global-security/Sentinel-Letter-July-8-2024.pdf](https://ucs-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/global-security/Sentinel-Letter-July-8-2024.pdf)

You can read the entire letter to Butler and Padilla at [peacefresno.org](https://peacefresno.org). To access the full text of the NDAA, visit [congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2670](https://congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2670).

—Carol Goiburn, WILPF Disarm Committee Chair

**WILPF MEETING**

Aug. 8 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., via Zoom and usually also at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For info on the in-person option, contact Teresa at [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com).

**STIR IT UP-WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM**

Aug. 28 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

**UNPACKING RACISM**

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. Moving toward community event participation. To join, RSVP with your e-mail address to [drjeankennedy@yahoo.com](mailto:drjeankennedy@yahoo.com) or text 559-270-1023.

**WOMEN IN BLACK**

On heat hiatus.

**JANE ADDAMS BRANCH**

Aug. 21, 5 p.m., via Zoom. Leni Villagomez Reeves will speak about the current situation in Cuba, including challenges and Families Code implementation.





# SIERRA CLUB

## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

### Fracking is Poisoning Our Air and Water Supplies: Impacts From San Joaquin Valley Shale Oil Production

by Gary Lasky, Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter

Hydraulic fracturing — fracking — is the extraction of oil and gas from deep shale rock formations by the injection of pressurized fluids. The risks and harms of fracking for public health and the climate are “real and growing.” Dangers of fracking to human health and the environment have been detailed in published peer-reviewed studies, including toxic air pollution (over 100), the depletion or contamination of water resources (over 200), and a dozen other harms. In California, fracking is primarily conducted in Kern County. Approximately 40% of global warming is attributable to methane (natural gas) emissions from all stages of oil and gas production: at the wellhead, storage tanks and pipelines, and residential gas stoves.

Produced water lies underground in close proximity to oil and gas and is frequently contaminated with toxics such as benzene, toluene and xylene. As documented in more than 120 studies, public health harms linked with drilling, fracking, and associated infrastructure include cancers, asthma, respiratory diseases, skin rashes, heart problems, and mental health problems. More than 17.6 million U.S. residents live within one mile of at least one active oil and gas well, resulting in a public health crisis. Brought up in voluminous quantities in oil production these chemicals need to be disposed of. The preferred method of wastewater disposal is with injection wells.

Fracking consumes *one to ten million* gallons per job. This figure actually understates the problem because wells need to be fracked every 2-3 years due to a sharp dropoff in oil production after the first year. Significantly, fracking and secondary oil recovery with water or steam *destroys* water supplies. Unlike water wasted by farms, fresh water used in oil production is injected deep into the earth and lost from the hydrologic cycle.

Frequently, methane leakage is caused by the failure of well cement jobs., Even capped wells may continue to contaminate drinking water supplies. Data from the State of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection reveals that 50% of wells constructed more than 30 years ago leak methane. An enormous methane plume over the Four Corners region of New Mexico is attributed to leaks from oil and gas wells and coalbed methane. Before it breaks down into carbon dioxide, methane is 86 times as effective as CO2 at trapping heat in the atmosphere in the first 20 years following its release.

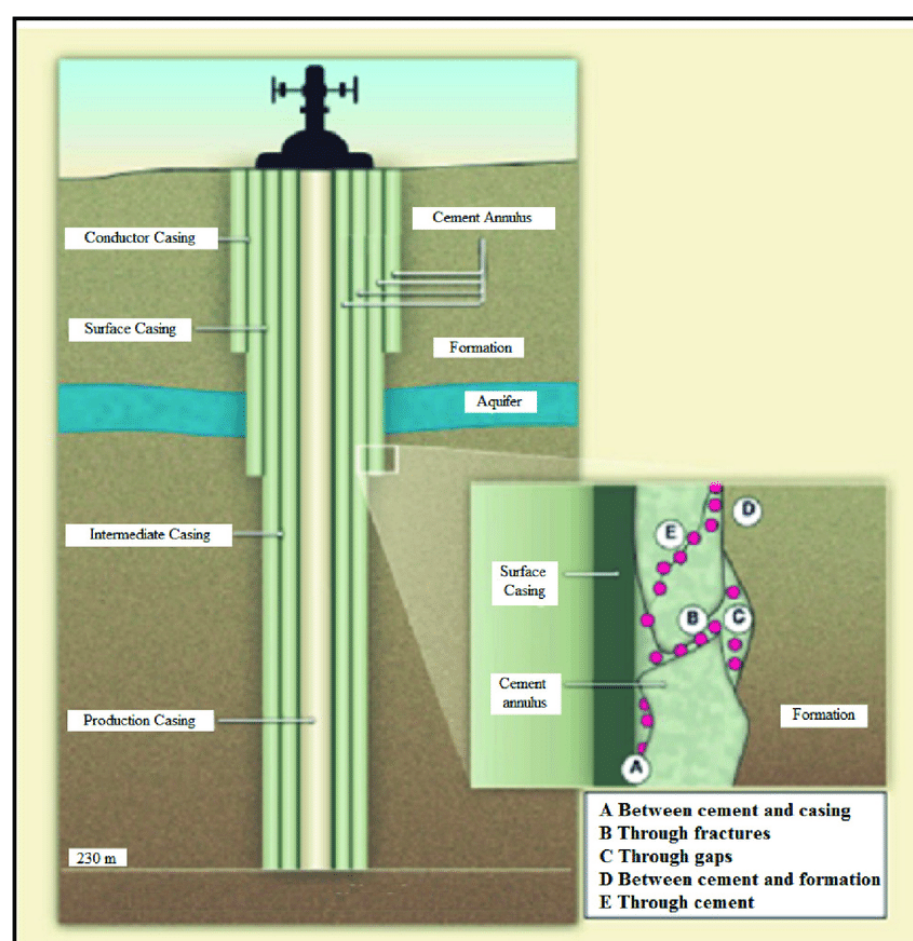
Controversy involving oil drilling on federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands arose in 2014 when an oil and gas lease sale was proposed for more than a dozen BLM parcels. In Monterey and Fresno counties A lawsuit challenging the lease sale was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club, with our Tehipite chapter in a lead role. Plaintiffs argued

that the Environmental Impact Statement failed to evaluate the known environmental impacts of fracking. In a settlement, the BLM agreed to suspend all California lease sales until a comprehensive analysis of these impacts had been completed.

Except for oil and gas production on federal lands, California production is regulated by the Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM). However, chronic underfunding of regulators has led to a situation in which the oil and gas industry regulates itself — contributing to the State’s history of accidents and coverups. In 2011, an engineer at an oil field near Bakersfield was swallowed up by a sinkhole and scalded to death in an area of steam injection. Two state regulators immediately placed a hold on new secondary recovery permits — and they were promptly fired; the oil companies had complained to the governor. Chevron was fined just \$350 for failing to notify workers of the hazard.

A 2022 law, SB 1137, banned new oil wells within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, businesses and other residential areas. The law was challenged by oil industry groups, which filed signatures for a referendum on the November 2024 ballot. However, this past June 27, the California Independent Petroleum Association abruptly dropped its \$20 million campaign and the law went into effect. The Los Angeles Times reported this as “a victory for public health, the environment and Californians, more than 2 million of whom live near drilling operations and are exposed to cancer-causing air pollutants and suffer related health ailments.”

**How you can get involved:** call or text Gary at the Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter in Fresno, at 559-790-3495.



From: Lerner, Michael. (2014). Opportunity, Risk, and Public Acceptability: The Question of Shale Gas Exploitation in Québec. 10.13140/RG.2.1.2878.0967.



Group photo of attendees: Nancy Waidtlow, Patience Milrod, Carole Goldsmith, Cristina Gutierrez, Yesdasi Córdoba, Rachel Carpenter, Gerry Bill, Richard D. Iyall, Margie Delgado, Dee Barnes, Simone Cranston-Rhodes, Pam Whalen, Belinda Guerrero, Janice Walters, Lynn Jacobsson, Loretta Kensinger, Joan Poss, Mike Rhodes, Heather Evans, Jeni Kren, David L Rowell, James Mendez, Paul Pierce, Ron Martin, Eduardo Stanley, Cecilia Castro, Matthew Gillian, Bryce Herrera, Maura Córdoba Castellón, Karen Gillian, Marcella Graves, Kevin Walters and Mattie Thomas.

## Central Valley Progressive PAC Fundraiser a Success

BY MIKE RHODES

The Nov. 5 general election is hurtling toward us. Fresno progressives gathered two days after President Joe Biden's disastrous debate performance, which was the topic of several conversations. The Central Valley Progressive PAC (CVPPAC) held a wine-and-cheese fundraiser, giving attendees an opportunity to socialize, listen to some great music and hear the following:

- Carole Goldsmith, chancellor of the State Center Community College District, gave the featured presentation about her work to increase access to higher education for working-class students.

- Cristina Gutierrez, with Californians for Pesticide Reform, shared the critical lobbying being done to create a buffer zone for pesticides near schools and communities close to Valley farmland.
- Yesdasi Córdoba, an organizer for the United Farm Workers, reported on her participation in organizing a union victory in a sweet potato operation in the Merced area.

Music by Steve Ono wafted through the air as attendees shared thoughts about the upcoming election, caught up with old friends and enjoyed a glass of wine.

The CVPPAC focuses on local elections and sometimes statewide races/propositions. Its endorsement meeting will be held on Sept. 14, and all members are encouraged to attend. Become a member or learn more at [cvppac.org](http://cvppac.org).

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*Mike Rhodes is a writer for the Community Alliance newspaper and author of the book Dispatches from the War Zone, about homelessness in Fresno. Contact him at [mikerhodes@comcast.net](mailto:mikerhodes@comcast.net).*

*Photos by Howard K. Watkins*



Howard K. Watkins, Patience Milrod and Paul Pierce.



Event hosts Heather and Art Evans.



CVPPAC Past President Pam Whalen spoke at the event.



Simone Cranston-Rhodes, president of the CVPPAC.

# Conn “Ringo” Hallinan: He Knew Whose Side He Was On

BY DAVID BACON

I learned a lot from Conn “Ringo” Hallinan, who passed away on June 19. Ringo had a full life as both a writer and political organizer, and ran the journalism program at UC Santa Cruz for 23 years. But that’s not the way I knew him. For me, Ringo was a guide to a path through the hard knocks of labor and radical journalism.

Ringo was foreign editor at the *West Coast People’s World* for many years. I spent a year of apprenticeship there, as it became a national newspaper, the *People’s Daily World (PW)*. Both were publications of the U.S. Communist Party but regularly carried news and analysis that went beyond, and usually in contradiction to, the mainstream media. Ringo’s international columns, especially during the Cold War and the era of national liberation conflicts, were often the issue’s high point.

Ringo was a voracious reader with an encyclopedic knowledge, ranging from defense budget figures to the worldview of anti-apartheid fighters in southern Africa. He carried his “Dispatches from the Edge” into *Foreign Policy in Focus* after he left the paper and got his teaching gig at Santa Cruz.

I had no problems with the idea of being, as we called it at the paper, “profoundly partisan.” I came out of union organizing drives and factory work and became a labor reporter at the *PW* after getting laid off for a time as an organizer. So, while I shared Ringo’s general perspective, I had a lot to learn as a would-be journalist.

The terrible *PW* pay couldn’t sustain my family for more than a year, and I then had to go back to organizing work. But the bug bit me, and eventually I found a way to freelance full-time journalism.

Organizing gives you a good grounding in the lives of working people, but the *PW* job taught me how to put that into a coherent news or feature article. Although no longer at the paper, Ringo would often send me critiques of my articles, and our former editor, Carl Bloice, and the previous labor reporter, Billy Allan, helped me learn as well.

Ringo had a sense of dry humor and irony about the vicious absurdities of capitalism that appealed to me. His last column, written many years after his *PW* days, still could make me laugh.

“But the illusions of the Empire are stubborn,” he wrote. “The US still thinks it can control the world, when every experience for the past 50 years or more suggests it can’t: Vietnam, Somalia, Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq. Indeed, the last war we ‘won’ was Grenada, where the competition was not exactly world class.”

Or giving unwanted advice to the British about independence for Scotland and northern Ireland, or the Spanish about Catalonia: “You can’t force people to be part of your country if they don’t want to be, and trying to make them is like teaching a pig to whistle: can’t be done and annoys the pig.”

I could never imitate that sly style. But what I really learned from Ringo, and what I think he passes on, is his demand that journalists take sides, recognizing our interest in being participants in a broad movement for social justice. That includes his sharp analysis of the relationship between media workers and the people who employ them.

I interviewed Ringo not long after the huge and bitter *Detroit News* strike, which ground on from 1995 to 1997. “The anti-union bias in the industry is very deep,” he said. The strike put that on display, but Ringo warned that the bias went beyond violent efforts by corporate owners to break the Newspaper Guild (as we were then called—the NewsGuild now). That bias is evident in the content of the papers and media, which gives it enormous political power in our world.

“So how is that produced?” he asked. Although corporate class interest certainly leads to overt censorship, media workers themselves share responsibility, he argued.

Thousands of us belong to unions and care a lot about our salaries and working conditions. “And there were real efforts by dedicated newspaper union activists to challenge the suppression of the news from Detroit. But most media workers didn’t feel a strong sense, not just of personal, but of class responsibility to report it.”

Journalists are taught, Ringo observed, both by their education and the rules of the corporate newsroom, that they must not participate in movements for social justice, especially organizations on the left that challenge the established order.

“Many reporters internalize the ban on being participants,” he explained, “and believe it would compromise their supposed neutrality and objectivity. For reporters and editors, if they don’t already know about something, it’s not news.”

“But the neutrality rule says you can’t cover a story if you know about it from your personal experience, because it’s a conflict. And of course, behind this lies the knowledge of what you need to do to please your boss and get ahead.”

“The objective persona is like the tooth fairy—it doesn’t exist,” he added. “It not only makes reporters unwilling to be participants, but it keeps them from being good journalists. Was I.F. Stone neutral on Vietnam and Korea, or Mike Quinn on the San Francisco general strike? The point isn’t to be objective and neutral, but to be fair and accurate. Neutrality destroys independent reporting—no one but reporters believes in it.”



Conn Hallinan speaking at a writers workshop in Fresno on Feb. 13, 2006. Photo by Mike Rhodes

Belonging to the union can provide important job protections for journalists who challenge corporate power. But union membership doesn’t automatically lead to better coverage of workers and communities of color, or international stories where U.S. foreign policy demands agreement.

“For that, unions need to actively educate their members and appeal for loyalty to the labor movement and struggles in working-class communities. Some of the stories most hostile to workers during recent strikes and organizing drives were written or aired by union members,” Ringo charged.

“Look at the class origins of reporters and editors. Seventy-five years ago, they were overwhelmingly working-class people. Today they’re largely middle class.

“Yes, corporations own the newspapers. But if reporters bit and screamed more, they could change a lot. Newspapers have to rely on them to produce the copy. Sure, publishers and editors have a class stance, but so does the average reporter, even if they belong to the Guild.”

Ringo demanded political independence, both to know what side you’re on, but even more important, to give working people what they need to make social change. “We need an analysis of the system in this country that reflects the reality of our lives,” he said.

The media talk about our economic system in black-and-white terms. Communism is dictatorial and repressive. The free enterprise system is the savior of all people. The media says our economic system allows us the freedom to do wonderful things, but there’s no discussion of how this system really works and its true impact on working people.

I took Ringo’s call to heart. When the United States bombed the headquarters of Serbian television during the Yugoslav war, media workers in other countries voiced outrage. But the U.S. journalism profession generally remained silent. I wrote a letter to our union newspaper, the *Guild Reporter*, with his words in my ear.

“We need independent international relationships, based on mutual working-class interests, free from the defense of U.S. foreign policy, which characterized so much of labor during the cold war,” I warned.

The Guild has to find ways to support our right to independence from the bias of the corporations we work for, and the efforts by our own government to enforce political conformity. Independence means a culture of solidarity, identifying our common interests with other journalists and workers internationally and here at home.

The letter stirred up the predictable controversy, and I still remember the “Right On!” note I got from Ringo. We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us and fought the battles that make our own work possible. Ringo’s were pretty broad.

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David Bacon is a California journalist and photographer, and a former union organizer. His latest book is *In the Fields of the North/En los campos del Norte* (University of California/Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2017).

## How Hallinan Shaped the Community Alliance

BY MIKE RHODES

The *Community Alliance* newspaper would not be what it is today without Conn Hallinan. In the early 2000s, he helped guide this paper through trials and tribulation that could have brought an end to this experiment in progressive journalism. Creating and maintaining an independent/progressive publication based in Fresno is not easy. Conn held writer workshops, educated me about the legal rights of journalists and was my mentor.

Conn had a clear vision that helped me understand the value of having a vehicle that gives a voice to those working for social, economic and environmental justice. We provide news and information that highlights the narrative of disenfranchised groups. We are building unity in the community around issues of common interest (e.g., the recent Stop the Hate campaign) and holding the powers that be accountable. That is our mission.

The accompanying article by David Bacon speaks eloquently about Conn “Ringo” Hallinan’s life. Farewell my friend.

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Mike Rhodes is a writer for the *Community Alliance* newspaper and author of the book *Dispatches from the War Zone, about homelessness in Fresno*. Contact him at [mikerhodes@comcast.net](mailto:mikerhodes@comcast.net).

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# Where Is Our Humanity?

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Record-setting 115-degree heat.

It is deadly on the streets of Fresno in the intense heat. It's also deadly because it is City policy to continue encampment sweeps, harass individuals, confiscate survival gear and force people to leave shady areas on a daily basis.

It is deadly because the City has been enforcing an ordinance authored by Council Members Miguel Arias and Garry Bredefeld for more than a year. The ordinance specifically bars unhoused residents from being near both shelters and cooling/warming centers (the City is operating only three cooling centers this summer).

The ordinance bans people from being near intake facilities, where unhoused people must go to seek services and housing. The ordinance bans unhoused residents from nearly all places in Fresno.

It prohibits sitting, standing, lying down, sleeping and having any possessions within 500 feet of schools, childcare facilities, parks, libraries, warming and cooling centers, shelters, even navigation centers (like the Poverello House), freeway ramps, tunnels, under bridges, pedestrian bridges, active railways, alleys, sidewalks and many other places.

In the triple-digit heat on the streets of Fresno, unhoused residents will die from heatstroke because areas of shade, such as freeway underpasses, will be unavailable because of the ordinance.

## Safe Camps and Safe Lots Now

It is also deadly because of the City's refusal to support safe camps and safe lots. Women, the elderly, the disabled and other vulnerable human beings are being forced to scatter around the city on a regular basis, leaving them on their own and subject to attack, accidents and exposure to the searing heat of the Fresno streets.

Heat is the top cause of weather-related fatalities nationwide. However, because investigations of suspected heat deaths can take months, and different methods are used by municipalities to count them, it is unknown exactly how many people died in the United States in the recent heat wave beginning July 1 and it is unknown how many in Fresno have died.

Incredibly, on June 2, as reported in YourCentralValleyNews.com, the Fresno Mission's CEO said that the searing heat can have an unintended positive impact on those experiencing homelessness.

"So, we do appreciate that when the weather starts turning bad," said Matthew Dildine, CEO of the Fresno Mission, "the heat causes people to say 'I don't want this life anymore. I don't want to live when it's 110 on the street,' and so, we see increased demand for our life transformation services."

Dildine has the audacity to say this, knowing full well there is no housing or shelter for the thousands living on the streets of Fresno. He implies in his statement that homelessness is a choice. This is far from the truth.

The most recent data, based on surveys and a comprehensive analysis by UC San Francisco, indicate that poverty, lack of affordable housing and discrimination are the main drivers of homelessness. In addition, more than half of Californians living on the streets are more than 50 years old.

## Major Setback by the Court

In a sad development, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the city of Grants Pass, Ore., in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson* on June 28 and against the unhoused people of America.

The case challenged a 2018 ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that protected people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in much of the western United States from being punished for sleeping outdoors. The case was filed by Grants Pass, a small city in Oregon with only one shelter that was enforcing a local anti-camping law against people sleeping in public using a blanket or any other rudimentary protection against the elements—even if they had nowhere else to go.

The Supreme Court had to decide, "Is it unconstitutional to punish homeless people for doing in public things that are necessary to survive, such as sleeping, when there is no option to do these acts in private." The court decided in favor of Grants Pass. The 6-3 decision, written by Justice Neil Gorsuch, rejected the claim that criminalizing sleeping in public by those with nowhere to go violates the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.

As many who disagree with the ruling point out, homelessness in the United States is a function of poverty, not criminality. Justice Sonia Sotomayor said in her written dissent to the court's ruling that "sleep is a biological necessity, not a crime." Sotomayor was joined in her dissent by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

## HART-Less Code Enforcement

The Homeless Task Force was renamed the Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) in January 2022. At that time, City officials committed to a more "compassionate" and



HART at work violating the Fourth Amendment. Photo by Bob McCloskey

"humanitarian" response to addressing street homelessness. The mayor also said, "Honestly, I am trying to minimize the involvement of our police officers in the area of homelessness and the area of mental health."

Unfortunately, this has not been the case. Instead, HART members are heartless enforcers of the cruel policy put forth by Arias and Bredefeld.

HART continues to abuse the unhoused, constantly forcing them to move, throwing away their only possessions, and continuing the insane and inhumane policy of trying to make those unfortunate enough to be on the harsh streets of Fresno disappear.

The mayor and the City Council continue the failed and cruel past practices that have been used for many years to criminalize and punish the homeless. Any person with a conscience should loudly object to the continuation of such practices.

Even though the recent Supreme Court decision allows for further criminalization of the unhoused, the Fourth Amendment's prohibition on unreasonable searches and seizures still applies. The City and HART violate the Fourth Amendment every day. One might ask, who are the real criminals?

As determined in *Lavan v. City of Los Angeles* (2012), the government cannot seize property unless it has an objectively reasonable belief that the property is 1) abandoned, 2) presents an immediate threat to public health or safety or 3) is evidence of a crime, or contraband.

In *Lavan*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld an injunction preventing the City of Los Angeles from seizing and destroying unattended property of unhoused individuals. The City had seized and destroyed property it believed was abandoned, which would have rendered the seizure reasonable under the Fourth Amendment.

The seizure and immediate destruction of unattended items based on size is also unconstitutional. Citing *Lavan*, the Ninth Circuit in *Garcia v. City of Los Angeles* (2021) enjoined the City from enforcing an ordinance allowing it to immediately seize and destroy "bulky" personal property (defined as property larger than can fit in a 60-gallon trash can) stored in public areas.

Locally, HART continues its illegal and unconstitutional practices of destroying property.

## What Fresno Can Do

The City could open the Convention Center or other public buildings for emergency shelters; purchase trailers as temporary shelters; hire more outreach teams; open shelters to allow people to stay there during daytime hours; and distribute tents, tarps, sleeping bags and clothes as if there is a disaster.

The current situation is a humanitarian disaster unfolding daily in plain sight. The City could clean up the trash, provide more shower/sanitation stations and provide portable toilets. The County could provide more social services such as drug treatment programs, mental health treatment and alcohol rehabilitation services. The residents of Fresno could stop calling HART to report unhoused people.

Instead, people could provide cold water to the unhoused people of Fresno during these extreme heat days and donate water and supplies to advocacy organizations. Volunteer with Project H2O. Show some humanity. Show up at City Council meetings to speak up for unhoused people. They are people, just like you. Contact the mayor and your City Council member. Tell them to abolish the "no sleep, no stand, no sit ordinance." Demand humane treatment from HART. Demand the end of property destruction. Ask the mayor and City Council to act like human beings with some humanity.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob McCloskey is an advocate and a Community Alliance reporter. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

Support the *Community Alliance* newspaper by becoming a subscriber. See page 3.



National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) is a multi-partisan, multi-racial, grassroots organization dedicated to increasing women's participation in the political process and creating a true women's political power base to achieve equality for all women. Dinner Meetings the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm at Toledo's Restaurant at Shaw and Blackstone. \$18.00 at the door

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nwpcfresno.org

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# Descansa en Paz Merlinda Hermosa

BY PATRICIA WELLS SOLÓRZANO

"Whether belting out a Mexican revolutionary song or filling the role of Lucia Norman [Maria Broussé], Espinosa dominates the stage, she is a gem."

—Juan Esparza, editor, *Vida en el Valle*

Merlinda Espinosa was a talented singer/guitarist and songwriter, a highly skilled actor and an artist/instructor who passed away on June 17. From a young age, she followed her calling, studying and preparing herself to become the professional artist that she was. She transformed sadness into joy with her unique and powerful voice. And she ignited the stage with her acting, bringing to life the experiences of women whose courage and insight created positive change in the world.

Merlinda's journey began as a child who loved to sing popular songs she heard on local Mexican radio stations at family gatherings and celebrations. In the late 1990s, Arte Américas sponsored a residency by singer/songwriter Agustín Lira. Lira, NEA National Heritage Fellow and co-founder of Teatro Campesino, saw a special light in her, an enthusiasm and love for music that is rare in most individuals.

She was driven, diligent and steady, developing her skills in guitar and singing. I guess you could say she was fearless in that respect. I recall having taken Merlinda to the *Sammy Rodriguez Show* at Radio Bilingüe where she sang two songs live on the air. She didn't miss a lick and her voice did not fail; was it a recording?! Afterward, she giggled and said she was extremely nervous.

As the project coordinator of the residency, I would videotape the classes periodically to send to the California Arts Council. I remember a hectic afternoon as I rushed to film Agustín's guitar class. I was stressed out; I got there with a headache. I started filming.

Merlinda was singing a song that Agustín arranged in her key "La del Rebozo Blanco" ("The Woman with the White Shawl"), a classic Mexican *huapango* that spoke of the pudor or inner strength of a woman—"everyone would like to see her crushed and destroyed but she holds her head up high wrapped in her white shawl." Merlinda sang and played the guitar as if she had written the song, hitting the falsettos with ease; before I knew it, my headache went away.

This wasn't the last time it happened. Shortly thereafter, I invited her to open for public performances by the student group in my residency, to the delight of our audiences. I began to book her in local festivals such as the Tamejavi Festival, events at Arte Américas and the Fresno Art Museum. We invited her to tour California venues with our group Agustín Lira and Alma at colleges, universities and cultural centers. Standing ovations were not uncommon; the audience always wanted more. She was still a student at University High School at Fresno State.

In the year 2000, Agustín and I started *Teatro Inmigrante* (Immigrant Theater) at Arte Américas to produce original authentic plays. Merlinda was one of the first students to join the group. She received training from Lira, and we worked together to develop our characters and scenes. Her enthusiasm and insatiable search for knowledge resulted in wonderful portrayals.

She carried out lead roles to popular acclaim: from a farmworker mother in *Labor Camp 12* to the companion of Ricardo Flores Magón in *Regeneración*. For a more detailed list of plays, visit [teatrotierraonline.org/plays/](http://teatrotierraonline.org/plays/).

She offered audience members entertaining, informative windows into our history as a community. I'm sure that this contributed to Mike Rhodes stating that our work as actors and as a theater was "world class."

Merlinda was an excellent role model, a person who was not only talented but also championed the rights of the poor and disenfranchised through her theater, her music and her deeds. She volunteered her talent for a number of causes and organizations throughout her short and busy life. She was a favorite singer of the Unitarian Universalist Sunday Services and the Fresno County Library touring performances, and she performed for all the social justice organizations in Fresno, including this newspaper, and a number of NGOs. She was generous beyond comparison.

Merlinda performed with local musician Lennie Mendoza for almost two decades, playing an eclectic repertoire in different venues. She was the lead singer of Without a Doubt, Las Tortillas Quemadas and other popular local groups.

She wrote and produced her own album of original music, *A Place for My Heart*, containing Merlinda's enticing elegant voice and mesmerizing guitar riffs, inviting you to listen to her words of love and feel her longing, and she wrote a song about the state of the world. She also recorded a Chaka Khan song with Steve Alcalá's Rumba 32 jazz band for their CD collection. Her voice can still be heard in an array of TV commercials that she recorded for.

Before her untimely passing, she was going to record several songs with us (Lira and Wells), and she was going to



Merlinda Espinosa. Photo courtesy of Monica Silva

teach in the community through Teatro de la Tierra. In one of the last conversations that I had with her, she expressed her sorrow about the genocide in Gaza, the deaths of so many children and how she wished she could make it stop somehow.

I hope these words give the reader a better idea of who this homegrown Central Valley chicana diva was. We lost a beautiful person, a loving friend and an outstanding artist. Born Feb. 14, 1986, to Rebecca and Javier Espinosa in Fresno, Merlinda passed away on June 17. She is survived by both her parents, her husband Mikey Torres, her sister Monica (and husband) and her two nephews, Robert and Jacob.

*Descansa en Paz Merlinda Hermosa!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Patricia Wells Solórzano is a singer/guitarist, actor, director, instructor and administrator for Teatro de la Tierra. She was trained by NEA National Fellow Agustín Lira; together, they have toured nationally and recorded music with Smithsonian Folkways Records. She co-founded, with Lira, local theater group Teatro Inmigrante in 1999 and the Generaciones Music Project in 2010. Contact her at [patriciawells1@gmail.com](mailto:patriciawells1@gmail.com).

## Backward Christian Soldiers

Continues from page 6

The 118th batch will be sworn in on Jan. 3. Three days later they'll meet to receive the presidential election results of the Electoral College. If enough of those have been blocked back in their home states, it will fall to the House of Representatives to decide through a contingency election. Each state's Congressional delegation gets only one vote. Whichever party controls the House controls the outcome. Granted, the California delegation would cast its lone vote for Biden, but control of the House is critically important, too.

Our only backstop—the contingency election—is a vulnerable one, according to no less than Thomas Jefferson: "I have no hesitation in saying that I have ever considered the constitutional mode of election, ultimately by the legislature voting by states, as the most dangerous blot in our constitution, and one which some unlucky chance will someday hit, and give us a pope and antipope."

Jefferson might recognize the amoral Trump as an antipope and his anti-abortion running mate as a pope. Did he fear we could have both at once?

For their part, D.C. Democrats and the Beltway commentariat formed a circular firing squad in June following Biden's poor debate performance. People are wrong to think debates win campaigns. Money, image and messaging do. Money spent on targeting, agitating and turning out your voters, "the base."

And coup-backers have beaucoup bucks to do so. From Elon Musk pledging contributions of \$45 million per month and Peter Thiel again backing his protege J.D. Vance with tens of millions, to nondenominational Protestant and Roman Catholic churches preaching MAGA politics, they're expanding their base. But not by chasing after votes from suburban white women.

Instead, as is made clear by Trump's choice of Vance, the plan is to turn out people who never vote but who can be identified by the technocrats and reached through their pastors and priests, even a few rabbis. One great irony in the backing of pro-Russia Trump and Vance by many in the U.S. clergy and their followers is how none of them would be allowed to practice their faith in Putin's Russia and occupied Ukraine.

As reported by PBS News in April: "Since the occupation, evangelical congregations, Protestant churches, all the non-Russian Orthodox Christian faiths have been deemed undesirable and tens of thousands of believers have been forced to flee. Those who remain gather in secret in private homes for fear of angering the new regime. The head of that new regime makes himself out to be the defender of the faith, his faith. With the client patriarch of the national church at his side, Vladimir Putin and his supporters make little secret of their plans to put Russian Orthodox Christianity above all other forms of Christianity."

Trump and Vance are riding to power on a similar vision for the U.S.A., thanks largely to the Catholic-dominated Supreme Court, but which church hopes to become this country's official definer and enforcer of morals and ethics? Or would they meld into an amorphous state religion focused on punishing and banning nonconformists?

As always, local politics offer a microcosm of the political parties' respective power. Resident MAGA politicians and clergy demonstrated their strength with a rally in front of Fresno City Hall in early 2022 when they forced the City Council's Democratic majority to drop a resolution in support of "reproductive freedom."

Brianna Calix reported in the *Fresno Bee* that Mayor Jerry Dyer and City Council Member Garry Bredefeld were joined at the rally by "former Fresno Mayor Alan Autry, the executive

director of Right to Life of Central California, the Fresno Roman Catholic Diocese bishop, the Cornerstone Church pastor, and the president of the Fresno County and City Republican Women Federated."

The popes and antipopes are to be found everywhere, aping what their leaders demonstrate as acceptable behavior. The November election, likely to be preceded and followed by the faithful's violent intimidation of voters and elected officials, will be their biggest leap of idolatrous faith yet, all in service to their gold-plated icon of greed and lasciviousness.

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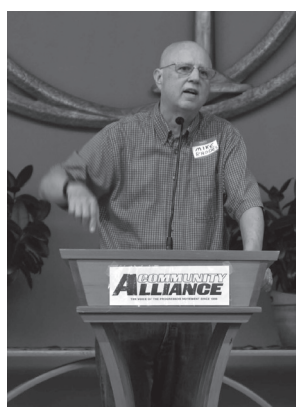
Kevin Hall hosts Climate Politics on KCF 88.1 FM every second and fourth Friday, 5 p.m.–6 p.m. He tweets as @airfresno and @sjvalleyclimate, coordinates an informal network of climate activists at [valleyclimate.org](http://valleyclimate.org) and can be contacted at [sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com](mailto:sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com) for presentations and information.

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# Human Toll of Broken Security Promises

BY ZARINA ZABRISKY

"We were the first to meet the enemy," said Tetiana Mironenko, representative of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Commissioner for Human Rights Protection.

We met in a spacious office in downtown Sumy, a regional center in northeastern Ukraine. Mironenko stayed in Sumy from the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

"Our country made a big mistake in 1994," she says.

Mironenko refers to the decision to relinquish nuclear weapons. Ukraine, a former republic of the Soviet Union, used to host Soviet nuclear weapons, as did three other republics: Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. In 1991, when the Soviet Union dissolved, Ukraine became the third-largest nuclear power in the world, possessing about one-third of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal.

In 1994, Ukraine transferred its nuclear weapons to Russia in exchange for assurances from the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom to respect Ukrainian independence and sovereignty within its existing borders, signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Twenty years later, in 2014, the Russian Federation annexed the Crimean Peninsula and initiated a proxy war in the Donbas region. The United States and the United Kingdom sanctioned Russia but provided insufficient support to Ukraine.

In 2022, emboldened by the lack of international help to Ukraine, Russia invaded Ukraine and occupied several regions, including the Sumy region—but not the city of Sumy.

"Our region has the longest territory along the border with the Russian Federation: 349 miles. As the Russian military arrived, Sumy residents were ill-prepared," said Mironenko. "All we had was Kalashnikov assault rifles and Molotov cocktails.

"My brother and nephew were among the territorial defense fighting with Kalashnikovs only. This was the first time they held weapons in their hands. Yet, our volunteers set up block posts and stopped the aggressor on the first day of the invasion.

"Russians did not have any detailed information on the situation in Sumy and did not realize that the resistance fighters had little to no weapons. If not for these volunteers, all of us would have been destroyed by tank columns."

By April 2022, the Russian military withdrew from the Sumy region, but the proximity to the border makes Sumy one of the toughest places to live in Ukraine.

"Air raid alarms are nonstop; we are under a lot of stress," says Mironenko. "When we go to sleep at night, we do not know if we will wake up in the morning. Last year, we had continuous blackouts; it is happening again this summer, and we are concerned about the forthcoming fall and winter. In addition to the psychological pressure, the blackouts destroy our economy.

"Overall, Russia destroys the future. In the communities along the border, shelling never stops. Every day, 24 hours a day, attacks prevent people from living their daily lives. Parents who took their children to Europe to escape shelling consider staying abroad for good as the safety of their children is on the line. A lot of Ukrainians are forced to live abroad."

The city of Sumy is home to internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the border villages and towns such as Velyka Pysarivka and Bilopillia. The IDPs flee their homes in a three-mile zone as their places are destroyed by hourly attacks. Sumy is the only city in the country where Ukrainians can cross directly from the Russian-occupied territory and the Russian Federation. They arrive through the Kolotylovka-Pokrovka corridor.

The conditions are rough. Russians force refugees, often handicapped, elderly and families with young children to cross on foot along the unpaved road, facing freezing temperatures in winter and scorching heat in summer. Ukrainian volunteers and rescue workers meet the refugees halfway and transport them past the border, where they go through passport and document checks.



Reception area at a filtration center. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

Ukrainian authorities, the police, border guards and the migration service, assisted by volunteers and international organizations, process the documents. The state provides material assistance, and the center offers shelter, hot food and initial medical assistance. Children are treated with special care.

On the night the author interviewed refugees, disheveled and exhausted people arrived at the reception area of the filtration center by 8 p.m. A woman from the Kherson region enters the reception area, her eyes red and swollen, tears streaming down her cheeks. She doesn't want to speak, just waves her hand, and goes to the canteen where two volunteers are serving hot borscht with black bread.

Volunteers sit at the help desk tables, waiting for the refugees to get clearance. On some days, they help process up to 200 refugees. An elderly lady born and raised in Sumy arrives from Moscow but refuses an interview, saying she is scared of publicity. Several volunteers processing documents confirm that many Ukrainians fled not just from Moscow, but from all over Russia, as well as annexed Crimea.

Three children are playing in a brightly decorated room with many toys and kids' books on the shelves. Two of them, eight and 15, are from Kakhovka, the occupied part of the Kherson region. Their mother, Olyona, agrees to share her story but asks to change her name.



Velyka Pisaryvka. Photo by Zarina Zabrisky

Under the occupation, she had to hide the children at home for three years because Russians forced kids to go to their school where they imposed propaganda and brainwashed students. In case of failure to attend, the occupational authorities abducted children to Russia. Olyona had to obtain a Russian passport as the Ukrainian passport showed that she is the mother of two.

Liliia, also from Kakhovka, with kind, sad blue eyes and a modest smile, is not afraid to talk. Her only regret is waiting to escape for so long. She believed that the Ukrainian army would liberate the occupied territories.

After two years, she decided to take her elderly mother and flee. Her escape took four days. Passing four block posts, she traveled by a minibus. Her mother, who suffered from diabetes and had had a foot amputated, got gravely ill during the trip.

In Novo-Azovsk, Russian border control guards interrogated Liliia, looking through her phone even though she had erased most of the content. They informed her that they found some Telegram channels "discrediting the Russian army," an illegal activity leading to a prison term in Russia. The interrogators pushed Liliia to confess that she was selling the coordinates of the Russian military equipment to the Ukrainian army.

In addition, they ran the last name of her close relative based in Ukraine through their computer system, immediately producing personal information such as college education, employment details and a current address. Liliia was told that she would be sent back to the Russian-occupied territories instead of returning to Ukraine.

After five hours, she was released, only to undergo the same treatment at the last block post before Kolotylovka, the final stop in Russia. As she was held at passport control for hours, all the other refugees on her minibus, including her sick mother, had to wait.

Two more women from the occupied villages in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions didn't mind talking but were so exhausted they could hardly speak. Both said that the Russian soldiers started to wear civilian clothes to avoid being targeted by Ukrainian drones, and used civilians as a shield, hiding the cars behind residential buildings.

After finishing their meal, refugees are transported to a transit point, a shelter, where they can sleep and rest overnight. There, a manager, Kateryna, a woman in her mid-20s, makes sure that everyone gets a bed and snacks, and helps with documents, luggage and medical needs. Kateryna understands the needs: she escaped Bakhmut in Donbas, a legendary city that is no more. After erasing Bakhmut from the face of the earth, the Russian military captured the ruins.

At the shelter, Olga, 77, a retired mathematician from the Russian-occupied city of Luhansk, eagerly tells her story. She had lived in the occupied area for 10 years but never obtained a Russian passport.

When the Russians stopped paying her pension, she was left with no income, and, recently, her family in Ukraine became concerned about the Russians closing the Kolotylovka checkpoint. That would mean no escape.

To get to Ukrainian-controlled territory, Olga had to walk 1.5 miles on a gravel road, carrying a heavy bag in 90-degree heat until the Ukrainian Red Cross volunteers were able to meet her with a wheelchair. In her bag, Olga carried her family photo albums.

At the shelter, Kateryna and other volunteers helped her to restore Ukrainian bank accounts and telephone numbers.

From the transit point, a free train transports them to Kyiv. Financial support is provided and refugees can choose their final destination.

The Russian annexation of Crimea, the proxy war in Donbas and the 2022 invasion exposed the fragility of international assurances. The lack of substantial support from the United States and the United Kingdom, beyond sanctions, breached the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons' security guarantees.

The international community must act decisively to honor commitments and provide substantial support to Ukraine. Treaties must be backed by action. Now is the time to restore faith in international agreements and protect global stability.

\*\*\*\*\*

Zarina Zabrisky is an American journalist and an award-winning novelist currently reporting on the Russian war in Ukraine. She is a war correspondent for Bywire News (UK), writes a Daily Review column for Euromaidan Press, an online Ukrainian English-language independent newspaper since 2014, and contributes articles and podcasts on information warfare, reports from the sites and interviews military experts and eyewitnesses for these and other publications, including The Byline Times (UK) and the Community Alliance newspaper in Fresno.

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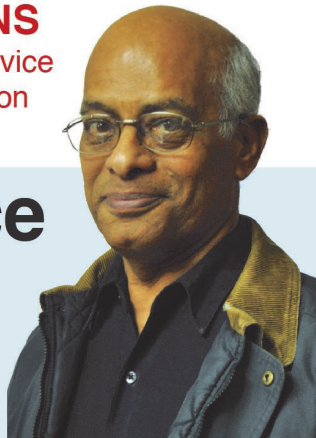
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# Delano Sued Over a Bottling Plant

BY PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

In April, the Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District (the "District") filed a lawsuit against the City of Delano ("Delano") over the newly established Niagara water bottling plant.

The District claims that Delano failed to conduct required environmental reviews and public hearings, which violates the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It claims that the plant would draw 1,792 acre-feet annually from the aquifer under Delano, exacerbating the area's water deficit.

Delano, however, argues that it complied by connecting the plant to its existing water system, bypassing new well regulations. The lawsuit seeks to halt the plant's operations.

In the Central Valley, the consequences of declining aquifers are severe. When this happens, residential wells can either dry up or produce contaminated water. This disproportionately impacts rural and low-income communities that already have limited access to clean water.

Drying and overpumping wells would only worsen food and water insecurity in groundwater-dependent communities. With climate change and spiking temperatures, access to water is essential. Large-scale groundwater pumping has also led to land subsidence, causing fissures that might damage critical infrastructure such as roads or bridges.

The District, which was established in 1935, operates under contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to manage water distribution across approximately 67,000 acres in Kern County. It primarily serves agricultural lands, covering about 51,000 acres, though urban expansion has reduced irrigated areas.

According to the District, Delano is already experiencing a water deficit, regardless of whether existing or future wells are used. Delano and its residents depend on that depleting groundwater.

In an interview with SJV Water, Roland Gross, general manager of the District, mentioned that he heard a rumor about the possibility of a water plant in Delano a year ago. The District proceeded to advise both Niagara Bottling and Delano against such a project and warned that the District would oppose it.

Despite this, the District was blindsided when learning that the project was moving forward. The District found itself forced into filing a lawsuit to protect Delano's groundwater because its warning had been ignored.

The lawsuit argues that Delano's approval of the Niagara Bottling project violated CEQA in bypassing the required environmental review. The District focuses on the critically overdrafted state of Delano's groundwater basin and argues that Niagara's substantial daily groundwater extraction will worsen the deficit without adequate replenishment.

This could lead to serious environmental damage. The lawsuit underscores CEQA's essential mandate for thorough environmental evaluations to mitigate such impacts.

The lawsuit also highlights CEQA's mandate for comprehensive environmental reviews of projects with potential significant impacts because the District believes



In the Central Valley, because of the severe declining aquifers, homeowners and farmers rely more and more on water pumps, creating additional problems to the environment and exhausting underground water sources. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

that Delano failed to conduct these reviews or determine the project's exemption from CEQA requirements.

The District claims that approving the project without proper CEQA review constitutes an abuse of discretion and seeks a writ of mandate to annul all project approvals until full compliance with CEQA is achieved.

In addition, the lawsuit notes that the District has exhausted all administrative remedies and adhered to legal prerequisites before filing. It underscores Delano's failure to hold a public hearing on the project, further breaching CEQA protocols.

The District asserts its right to recover attorney fees, emphasizing that the lawsuit serves the public interest by enforcing CEQA compliance. The suit requests a halt to the project's operations until these legal and environmental standards are met, highlighting the broader implications for environmental oversight and community protection.

CEQA mandates a specific process to assess environmental impacts of proposed projects. Agencies must first conduct an initial study to determine the potential environmental effects.

If significant impacts are identified, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to detail these impacts and suggest mitigation measures. If mitigation can reduce impacts to less than significant levels, a mitigated negative declaration (MND) can be issued instead.

Crucially, CEQA mandates public participation, ensuring community members can voice concerns and provide input on proposed projects.

Neither Delano Mayor Joe L. Alindajao or the city's attorney, Mark Hensley, would comment as the legal matter is pending.

Niagara Bottling replied as follows:

"Niagara Bottling's new manufacturing facility will provide a range of employment opportunities and economic benefits to the Delano community without any negative impact on the city's water supply. We have worked very closely with the City of Delano since mid-2022 to ensure the project adheres to all environmental requirements and development standards.

"We do not believe there is any merit to the Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District's lawsuit. We are proud to have brought world-class manufacturing to Delano and look forward to growing our long-term partnership with the city."

If Niagara Bottling has been doing everything in their power to comply with California's regulations, why has it maintained practically no contact with the District or provided sufficient proof that the plant will not negatively affect the groundwater in Delano?

According to Niagara Bottling's website, "The capital investment [for the plant] is estimated to be up to \$160 million." That seems like a lot of money to invest without going through the proper procedures, although to a company worth \$28.4 billion, it might not be that significant.

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*Paulina Deeds Ortiz is a former fellow with the Community Alliance newspaper. She is a Mexican immigrant currently attending Fresno State, working on an anthropology major with a minor in psychology. She spends her free time writing poetry or painting.*

## Looking for Every Opportunity to Do Evil: H.R. 8771

*Continues from page 7*

(g) Climate Executive Orders—None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, enforce, or otherwise carry out the following—

(1) Executive Order 13990, relating to Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science To Tackle the Climate Crisis;

(2) Executive Order 14008, relating to Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad;

(3) Section 6 of Executive Order 14013, relating to Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs To Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration;

(4) Executive Order 14030, relating to Climate-Related Financial Risk;

(5) Executive Order 14037, relating to Strengthening American Leadership in Clean Cars and Trucks;

(6) Executive Order 14057, relating to Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs through Federal Sustainability;

(7) Executive Order 14082, relating to Implementation of the Energy and Infrastructure Provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022; and

(8) Executive Order 14096, relating to Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All.

### Palestine

The SFO Appropriations Bill eliminates funds for refugees, including prohibiting any funds to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which is the agency that provides direct services of healthcare and education to Palestinian refugees. This, despite the fact that the UNRWA has practically stood on its head to ensure that its facilities are not utilized for any purpose other than the provision of services by the UNRWA to Palestine refugees

(As this article was being penned, the news broke that Israel had bombed yet another UNRWA school, killing at least 16 Palestinians and injuring 75 including many children at the UNRWA's Al-Jaouni school, which sheltered displaced people in al-Nuseirat camp in central Gaza.)

There is much anti-Palestinian language in the bill, including demands that any Palestinian entity receiving aid must recognize the state of Israel. Of course, there is no corresponding demand that Israeli governments or organizations recognize the state of Palestine. Just the opposite:

None of the funds appropriated under the heading "Economic Support Fund" in this Act may be made available for assistance for the Palestinian Authority, if after the date of enactment of this Act:

(i) the Palestinians obtain the same standing as member states or full membership as a state in the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof outside an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians; or

(ii) the Palestinians initiate an International Criminal Court (ICC) judicially authorized investigation, or actively support such an

investigation, that subjects Israeli nationals to an investigation for alleged crimes against Palestinians.

### Israel

Here's the Israel section:

"Israel—Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading 'Foreign Military Financing Program,' not less than \$3,300,000,000 shall be available for grants only for Israel: provided, that any funds appropriated by this Act under the heading 'Foreign Military Financing Program' and made available for assistance for Israel shall be disbursed within 30 days of the date of enactment of this Act:

"Provided further, That to the extent that the Government of Israel requests that funds be used for such purposes, grants made available for Israel under this heading shall, as agreed by the United States and Israel, be available for advanced weapons systems, of which not less than \$450,300,000 shall be available for the procurement in Israel of defense articles and defense services, including research and development."

Not less than \$3.3 billion!

But, as Noam Chomsky and Karl Marx said, "The task is not just to understand the world but to change it."

We must tell our senators that we want the language attacking our rights, attacking gender diversity, attacking women, attacking healthcare, attacking the climate, attacking Palestine, attacking Cuba—all of that—stripped from the Senate version of this bill: the State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, H.R. 8771.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Leni Villagomez Reeves is a local physician and activist. Check out her news and views about Cuba on Facebook (facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/).*

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**WEEKLY**

**Raza Against War Wednesdays** 11 a.m.–1 p.m. 2500 Tulare St. For more info, contact comworkeradvocate@gmail.com.

**Stand for Gaza Saturdays** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. N. Blackstone and E. Nees avenues. Stand for humanity and human rights. Hosted by the Palestine Liberation Group. Limited signs available. Bring a friend. For more info, contact camille.russell@peacefresno.org.

**Stand Up, Speak Up, Spread the Truth** Sundays, 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Mooney and Walnut avenues, Visalia. Free Palestine. Let Gaza Live! Cease Fire Now. For more info, contact fida.taha@gmail.com.

**THU 01** **ArtHop Downtown/Tower District** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit FACarthop on Facebook.

**SAT 03** **Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or claval@comcast.net.

**MON 05** **Democratic Women in Action** 5:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. Guest speakers: James Martinez, Andy Levine, Nasreen Johnson and Pablo Villagrana. For more info, contact 559-681-3140 or ggaston1234@aol.com.

**TUE 06** **Commemorating the 79th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki** 8 a.m. Peace Garden, Fresno State. Gather in solidarity to commemorate those who died, who continue to suffer and in the hope for peace and justice. Sponsored by the Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley. For more info, contact 559-270-7041 or bvazz5@comcast.net.

**National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. Topic: Antisemitism in Fresno?! Speaker: Rabbi Dr. Laura Novak Winer, director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or joanne@pbyoga.com.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**WED 07** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**Getting Started with CMAC** 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m. 1555 Van Ness Ave., Suite 201. Learn how the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) can help you tell the stories that are important to you and your community. Free and open to all. For more info, visit cmac.tv/workshops.

**THU 08** **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** 7 p.m. Online/in person, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or taca\_03@ymail.com.

**FRI 09** **Commemorating the 79th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki** 10:30 a.m. Shinzen Friendship Garden, Woodward Park. Gather in solidarity to commemorate those who died, who continue to suffer and in the hope for peace and justice. Sponsored by the Human Rights Coalition of the Central Valley. For more info, contact 559-270-7041 or bvazz5@comcast.net.

**SAT 10** **Central Valley Progressive PAC** 3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or simone.rhodes@seiu521.org.

**MON 12** **Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact swgamble@aol.com.

**TUE 13** **Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or bapacfresno@gmail.com.

**Stonewall Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. For more info, contact 559-285-1641 or info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**WED 14** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**Trans-E-Motion Board Meeting** 7:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Fresno EOC LGBTQ+ Resource Center, 1252 Fulton St. For more info, contact transemotion@gmail.com or visit transemotion.com.

**THU 15** **ArtHop Metropolitan/Fresno Metro Area** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Museums, studios, galleries and other venues open their exhibits free to the public. For more info, visit FACarthop on Facebook.

**Clovis Democratic Club** 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For details, contact 559-322-9740 or jenikren@gmail.com.

**SAT 17** **State of Black California 2024** Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 2425 Fresno St. A community conversation on the state of Black life in Fresno. Register at [stateofblackcalifornia.org/event/fresno#register](http://stateofblackcalifornia.org/event/fresno#register). Hosted by Assembly Member and California Legislative Black Caucus Chair Lori D. Wilson (11th District).

**TUE 20** **Central Valley Partnership** 5:30 p.m. Location TBD. For more info, contact 559-967-1940 or agrariandemocracy@gmail.com or visit centralvalleypartnership.org.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**WED 21** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire*** 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Denny's Restaurant, 1110 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-312-3925.

**THU 22** **Peace Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. In person/via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-668-0591.

**FRI 23** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *It's a Queer Thing*** 5 p.m.–6 p.m. Covers local and national LGBTQ+ issues and events. Hosted by Chris Jarvis and Kaylia Metcalfe Armstrong. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**Indigenous Wisdom: Celebrating Our Central Valley Indigenous Elders** 6 p.m., Fresno State Library, 5200 N. Barton Ave. Join the NEUM Native American Student Association for a short film screening showcasing and honoring the life and work of three Central Valley Indigenous elders. Each film will feature the elders on topics such as environmental stewardship and Native language preservation. Followed by a drum circle and a panel discussion with the elders. RSVP at [bit.ly/wisdom-event](https://bit.ly/wisdom-event). For more info, contact gbarnes@mail.fresnostate.edu.

**SAT 24** **Queer Housing Summit** In person/virtual. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Tower Theatre, 815 E. Olive Ave. Exploring the unique housing experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in our community. Keynote speaker: Madeline Pendleton, CEO and founder of Tunnel Vision. \$20/person. For more info, contact [info@queerhousingsummit.org](mailto:info@queerhousingsummit.org) or visit [linktr.ee/queerhousingsummit](https://linktr.ee/queerhousingsummit).

**NWPC Fresno Women's Equality Day** 5:30 p.m.–9 p.m. Omnia Event Center, 760 W. Bullard Ave. "When Women Are Elected, Everyone Wins!" Keynote speaker: Betty Yee, 2024 candidate for Governor and former State Controller. Mistress of ceremonies: Sabrina Ashjian, President of California NWPC. Honoring Cathy Brass, beloved NWPC member; Dr. Marie Harris, Vice President of Learning and Student Success, Madera Community College; and Elizabeth Jonasson Rosa, Fresno Unified Trustee District 2. Mary Stanley Courage to Run Award: Jen Cruz, former candidate for Fresno County Board of Supervisors, and Raj Sodhi-Lane, former candidate for Fresno City Council. Good Guy Award: Luis Chavez, Fresno City Council Member District 5 and Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 3 candidate. Tickets: [tinyurl.com/2024NWPCFresnoWED](https://tinyurl.com/2024NWPCFresnoWED). For more info, contact [fresnonwpc@gmail.com](mailto:fresnonwpc@gmail.com).

**MON 26** **Fresno County Democratic Women's Club** 11 a.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or claval@comcast.net.

**TUE 27** **California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)** 10 a.m. SEIU Local 521, 4228 E. Pine Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-5955 or 559-704-8384.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** 7 p.m. Radio show in Spanish hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**WED 28** **KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit kfcf.org.

**THU 29** **Candidate Forum: City Council District 3** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Westside Church of God, 1422 W. California Ave. Hosted by the Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) and the African American/Black Clergyman Caucus. For more info, contact 559-930-4909 and ibedam@gmail.com.

**SAT 31** **Informational Forum on Leahy Law and the Foreign Assistance Act** 5:30 p.m.–8 p.m. Sanctuary, Big Red Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Blvd. Plant the seeds that would inform civic action to demand passage of resolutions invoking the Leahy Law and the Foreign Assistance Act in Congress. For more info, contact 559-908-6701.

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# Another Scramble for Africa

BY DEBAY TADESSE

Historians refer to the spread of European empires over Africa during the Age of Imperialism as the "scramble for Africa." The scramble for Africa unfolded as a series of significant events that eventually saw the African continent colonized and divided by the major European powers driven by the Second Industrial Revolution.

The scramble for Africa peaked during the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. In search of natural resources for their expanding industrial sectors and a possible market for the commodities these factories produced, European countries, including Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain, divided Africa among themselves.

Ten percent of the continent was officially ruled by Europe in 1870. By 1914, this percentage had increased to about 90%, with only Liberia and Ethiopia retaining their full sovereignty. Conflict erupted on the continent from 1884 to 1914 when these European nations seized territory and authority from existing African states and peoples.

## Why Africa Matters

Globally, corporations and governments are racing to deepen their commercial, strategic and diplomatic relationships with Africa. If Africa handles this new scramble wisely, Africans will emerge as the main winners.

The level of foreign involvement in Africa is unparalleled. The largest embassy-building boom in history recently took place in Africa, as more than 320 embassies were established from 2010 to 2016. Turkey alone opened 26 embassies in Africa. India has announced plans to open 18 embassies.

In addition, military relationships are growing. Supporting the fight against jihadism in the Sahel, the United States and France are providing technology and military support. China has 45 defense-tech relationships and is the largest arms supplier to sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2014, Russia and 19 African nations have signed military agreements. Arab nations with abundant oil resources are constructing bases around the Horn of Africa.

The most powerful nations in the world are contesting with one another for control of the abundant natural riches found in Africa. Referring to the original scramble for Africa, some experts refer to this phenomenon as a "new scramble for Africa."

Superpowers such as the United States, China, Russia and European nations, together with states such as Japan, India and Brazil, are heavily involved in Africa. Energy-rich Gulf states are likewise hurrying to consolidate their African assets to diversify their economies away from the oil and gas sector.

## Foreign Military Presence in Africa

Under the pretense of counterterrorism operations, the number of foreign military personnel on the continent is also increasing. American naval and drone stations that operate in the Horn of Africa and beyond have agreed to be housed in Djibouti. Many other nations have also established military bases in the country, including a Chinese naval base, a French airbase, an Italian support base and a Japanese base. Germany and Spain provide military support to the French installation in Djibouti.

On the other hand, Somalia is currently hosting Turkish troops, and countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have erected military bases in Eritrea and Somaliland.

## Africa's Current State of Affairs

In late July 2023, the Nigerian military said on national television that President Mohamed Bazoum had been overthrown. The head of Niger's presidential guard, Abdourahmane Tchiani, headed the coup junta that declared the end of military cooperation with the French army.

France, a close comrade in the battle against terrorism in Africa, formally concluded a 10-year anti-terrorism campaign in the Sahel in December 2023 by withdrawing all of its troops. The United States attempted but ultimately was unable to continue security cooperation with Niger following the coup.

The U.S. Department of Defense recently declared that it will be pulling out most of its forces from Niger and Chad following the demands of the two African nations' transitional governments. As per the plan, the United States will withdraw approximately 75 members of the Army Special Forces from Chad and more than 1,000 deployed members from Niger. Earlier, France was forced to withdraw its military forces from Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.

The fact that U.S. and French troops were removed from pertinent African nations is indicative of Africa's deep discontent with the futility of counterterrorism led by the West. In the pretext of fighting terrorism, the United States and other Western nations stationed soldiers in the Sahel, but the region's counterterrorism situation quickly worsened.

The reasons lie in the fact that the U.S. and other Western countries are not willing to help Africa fight against terrorists in real terms but want to go all out to engage in great power competition. They are concerned that they will lose their existing spheres of influence in Africa as well.

## Russian Influence in Africa

Russia is another key player in Africa. Recently, Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, traveled around Africa, stopping in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Mozambique. Lavrov also met with the African Union's chairperson in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The other nations he traveled to were all in Southern Africa and had abundant natural resources, including cobalt, gold, copper, diamonds, oil and uranium.

Namibia and Niger are the top two producers of uranium in Africa. Several nations in this region have recruited the Russian mercenary group PMC Wagner to fill the vacuum left by French and U.S. withdrawal to train and support their forces. These countries are increasingly vocal about demanding the departure of U.S. and French troops.

This demonstrates that obtaining natural resources from Africa is Russia's top priority rather than restoring its reputation and power from the Soviet era. In Africa, Russia is also funding military and security initiatives. It sells weapons worth billions of dollars every year all over the continent. Lavrov signed a deal with Mozambique on defense cooperation during his recent visit.



British Foreign Secretary William Hague stands with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud at the opening of the newly built British Embassy in the Somali capital of Mogadishu in 2013. More than 320 embassies were established in Africa from 2010 to 2016. Photo courtesy of The Commons

## U.S. Approach in Africa

The Obama administration prioritized the Middle East over Africa regarding foreign policy. Like his predecessor, Trump prioritized the Middle East. Furthermore, Trump made several controversial remarks about Africa that many Africans and other people found to be insulting and racist, both during and after his presidential campaign.

Trump reportedly referred to African nations as "shithole countries." Since then, this comment has come to represent his derogatory views regarding the continent of Africa and its people.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration seems little interested in developing a genuine, mutually beneficial engagement with Africa. Instead, it is only interested in pursuing its limited national interests, including counterterrorism measures and natural resource extraction.

To encourage investment in Africa and spark new agreements, U.S. officials should expand the number of reverse trade missions and arrange for the visits of African leaders. However, it is just as critical that high-ranking American officials repay the favor when visiting African nations.

Furthermore, American politicians and diplomats must make a consistent effort to visit communities affected by the diaspora. By doing this, they can ask these communities for advice and try to allay their worries about American policies in Africa. Maintaining the quality of a hometown argument regarding the relevance of Africa to America is essential.

## Africa's Response

Currently, Africa does not have a serious, unified strategy or the institutional capacity to respond to this so-called new scramble for Africa effectively. Under the direction of former Commission Chair Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the African Union unveiled an ambitious strategy framework known as Agenda 2063 in 2016. However, this agenda does not include a coherent strategy for increasing foreign presence and competition in Africa.

There is no clear plan for boosting international competitiveness and presence in Africa on this agenda. African leaders also lack the capacity and the political will to oppose foreign influence and defend the continent's essential interests.

## Conclusion

The African Union should create a comprehensive, cohesive plan that encourages cooperation rather than exploitation to address the scramble between superpowers for Africa's natural resources. It should put substantial institutional reforms into place as soon as possible and begin taking the lead on the continent.

African governments should endeavor to reduce their financial reliance on the West, Russia, China and other global actors to fend off harmful foreign meddling and maintain their independence, dignity and sovereignty.

The West-African relationship, particularly military exchanges, is transitioning as the world experiences significant changes not seen in a century. Western countries should acknowledge Africa's legitimate aspirations as they will unavoidably pursue flexible and independent diplomacy.

Most crucially, the days of gatekeepers in Africa's ties with the outside world must stop. African masses, civil society, youth and women's groups should take the lead in these relationships. Direct interaction between Africans and the outside world is both important and natural.

A new scramble for Africa might be under way, but this time the foreign powers' interest in African nations could and should benefit Africans. Any operating foreign powers in Africa, including the United States, China and Russia, among others, should only be permitted if their activities also help the continent.

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Debay Tadesse has a Ph.D. in African studies specializing in public policy and development from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and an M.A. in African history and a B.A. in world history from Georgia State University in Atlanta. He is currently lecturing at Fresno City College and Fresno State.

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# Gender, Misogyny, Race/Class Questions in Presidential Election

BY MALIK SIMBA

With President Biden's withdrawal from his presidential bid, Vice President Kamala Harris is the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party for the presidency.

Kamala Harris's parents gave her the middle name Devi, which in Hindu Sanskrit means "Goddess." With a Hindu Indian mother, Dr. Shyamala Gopalan (noted breast cancer researcher), and a Jamaican father, Professor Donald Harris (Marxist economist), Harris represents the best of what America has always been, which is a "nation of immigrants."

The Harris family themselves are immigrants, as are Donald Trump's Slovakian wife and the wife of his running mate, J.D. Vance, who is, like Harris, a woman born of Hindu parents. Usha Vance, like many Central American and Mexican immigrants, was born in the United States of first-generation immigrants. Usha is a successful lawyer, somewhat like so many "Dreamers."

At the 2021 swearing-in ceremony of Biden and Harris, Harris did a shoutout to her late mother, stating in her mother's words, "You think you just fell out of a coconut tree [but] you exist in the context of all in which you live and what came before you."

This is why Harris applauded the many Black women political activists and elected officials on "whose shoulders" she stands. Harris alluded to such women as Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, Anna Lee Cooper, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Daisy Bates, Amelia Boynton, Dianne Nash, Shirley Chisholm, Barbara Jordan, Carlotta Bass and Carlene Mitchell, Communist Party of America candidate.

Harris firmly stated that these Black women are the "backbone of our democracy," which she believes is deeply threatened by Trump and his motley right-wing cabal of White supremacists, anti-union reactionaries, pro-life extremists, climate-change deniers and other blind and deaf men and women such as traditional conservative GOP voters.

However, Harris said that "even in dark times, we not only dream, but we also do." Doing the do for whatever it takes to struggle to bring about a better America more than likely came from her father, Donald Harris, a noted Marxist scholar of capitalist political economy.

Professor Harris instilled in his daughter the dictum of "study and struggle," and Harris remembers her mother, with her child in a stroller, going to civil rights demonstrations at UC Berkeley on a wide variety of the social issues of the day. The Harris family lived in the "flatlands" hood of West Berkeley, and her mom took her two daughters, Kamala and a younger sister, Maya, to attend several Black churches.

Harris attended Howard University (also known as "the Black Harvard") where confronting social issues was the de facto undergraduate curriculum as she attained her baccalaureate. While at Howard, she joined the Black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha and laughed with her sorors over dating Black men in non-amorous and amorous relationships. Harris continued her love of Black haute cuisine, oft-referred to as "soul food."

After graduating from Howard, Harris attained her law degree in California from Hastings Law School in 1989 and, soon after, she worked as an assistant district attorney of San Francisco and eventually as the duly-elected California Attorney General.

With vast experience in criminal justice field work, Harris was involved in successfully prosecuting marijuana violators, homicides, burglaries, hustlers, robberies and sexual

assaulters. It was these real experiences led her, on July 21, 2024, at a rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to forcefully express to the crowd that "I know Donald Trump's type."

Think Trump University, Trump Steaks, Gold Basketball shoes, stiffed subcontractors and adultery with a porn star and a Playboy playmate both without using condoms, fake two-dollar bills with his picture on them, and lastly, Trump Bibles. Trump is a snake-oil salesperson to his core.

Harris married Jewish businessperson Douglass Craig Emhoff on Aug. 22, 2014, and became a stepmom to his two adult children. However, the GOP attack dogs keep referencing her long-ago pre-marital liaison with the "Lion of the California Legislature," longtime Assembly Speaker Willie Brown. This, for many women, is slut shaming.

Keeping up this line of attack also included references to Harris's mixed-race ethnicity, which prompted GOP House Speaker Mike Johnson to plead with his colleagues to stop playing the race card and stick to the issues.

Harris's personality expresses itself with a genuine smile and a gregarious laugh, but for some, this is also, somehow, to be criticized. One Republican friend recently told me that Harris was the most reviled public figure in California, and I queried in return, "Is that why she was elected San Francisco's District Attorney and a California U.S. Senator?" My friend swallowed deeply and said not one word further.

Finally, Harris's attempt to become President, if successful, will follow in a tardy way how other nations have, much earlier, voted women as their heads of state. Think Margaret Thatcher of England, Indira Gandhi of India, Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico, Sylvania Burton of Dominica, Giotgis Meloni of Italy, Natasha Pirc Musar of Slovenia, Dina Boluarte of Peru and Droupadi Mumu of India.

These few examples beg the question, "When will the United States elect a woman to the presidency?" Will Harris, like Barack Obama, be the "chosen one," to use Oprah Winfrey's words?

Harris has reenergized the Democratic Party. Popular Black Journalist Roland Martin hosted a Black Star Network fundraiser called, "Black Men for Kamala." This fundraiser and many others hosted by Black men have raised close to one and a half million dollars, and Black women raised a similar amount for Harris within the 24 hours of the announced transition.

In fact, within those 24 hours after President Biden relinquished his bid for a second presidential run, more than 40,000 new voters registered, and 24,000 volunteers joined Harris's election campaign. And recently, the Harris campaign raised \$200 million in grassroots donations and wealthy donors.

The latest announced fundraiser number now stands at \$200 million and with the official endorsements of Barack and Michelle Obama, those numbers should elevate even higher. There have also been several thousand more field worker volunteers signed up.

This next presidential race will be the ultimate America's Rubicon and, at the same time, its Gordian Knot. Electing a Black woman to lead the nation will cross that river of no return, and her victory will be like Alexander using his sword to cut through a nation's deeply held dark beliefs per the wish of J.D. Vance to keep women barefoot and pregnant so they will not become old cat ladies.

So, will progressive women, men, the old and young, and racial minorities have the presence of mind to "do the right thing" so this nation, in the words of that old Negro spiritual, be will "free at last"? Misogyny, along with racism and the class question, are interlocking, intractable knots of American history and culture, and voters have the sword in their hands to determine Harris's and this nation's destiny.

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Dr. Malik Simba is an emeritus professor of Africana studies and history at Fresno State.

## Jägermeister Cup

BY PETER MAIDEN

*Jägermeister*, which translates as "master of the hunt," produces a variety of German aperitifs, which are popular in the United States as liqueurs. The company is the sponsor of the Jägermeister Cup, a mid-season championship for USL1 soccer teams.

On July 19, in a game that was part of the Cup competition, Central Valley Fuego beat Spokane Velocity 1-0. CV Fuego is not in a position to win the Cup, but this victory for the team was quite welcome. CV Fuego is getting its shooting game together, losing a good half a dozen shots that nearly scored. Shavon John-Brown made the winning goal from close to the goal mouth.

For tickets and information, visit [cvfuego.com](http://cvfuego.com).

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Peter Maiden is the photo editor of the Community Alliance newspaper.



Central Valley Fuego's Abdul Razak Cromwell advances the ball closely followed by Spokane's Luis Gil. Cromwell is a native of Ghana. Photo by Peter Maiden

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Rodeado de jugadores de Spokane Velocity, el número 32 de CV Fuego, Javier Mariona, inicia una larga carrera por el campo que termina en un remate al arco. Fue fichado como jugador de la academia a principios de este año. Se parece un poco a un joven Maradona y es un claro favorito entre sus compañeros de equipo, que le gritaron muchas palabras de aliento desde el banco de Fuego. Foto de Peter Maiden

## Copa Jägermeister

POR PETER MAIDEN

Jägermeister, que se traduce como “maestro de la caza”, produce una variedad de aperitivos alemanes, que son populares en los EE. UU. como licores. La empresa es patrocinadora de la Copa Jägermeister, un campeonato de mitad de temporada para equipos de fútbol de la liga USL1.

El 19 de julio, en un partido que formaba parte de la competencia de la Copa, Central Valley Fuego venció a Spokane Velocity por 1-0. CV Fuego no está en condiciones de ganar la Copa, pero esta victoria fue bienvenida por el equipo. CV Fuego está mejorando en materia de disparos al arco, perdiendo una buena media docena de tiros donde casi marcan. Shavon John-Brown anotó el gol de la victoria desde cerca de la boca del arco.

Para obtener entradas e información, visite [cvfuego.com](http://cvfuego.com).

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Peter Maiden es el editor de fotografías de Community Alliance.

## Nuevo Portal Permite a Hispanohablantes Denunciar si les Niegan Atención Médica de Emergencia

POR AMAIRANI HERNÁNDEZ

(Nota del Editor: la siguiente nota se reproduce con autorización de Caló News)

Los Centros de Medicare y Medicaid (MediCal en California) han lanzado un nuevo portal en línea que permite a los pacientes de habla hispana denunciar que les han negado atención médica de emergencia, a la que tienen derecho bajo la Ley de Tratamiento Médico de Emergencia y Trabajo de Parto Activo (Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act o EMTALA), establecida en 1986.

Además de guiar a los visitantes a través del proceso de presentación de una queja EMTALA, el portal también presenta información sobre el derecho individual a la atención médica.

Hace apenas dos años, la Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos eliminó el derecho constitucional al aborto cuando falló a favor de revocar a Roe v. Wade, ignorando 50 años de precedentes legales. La decisión de para revertir Roe v. Wade llevó a los gobiernos estatales a establecer independientemente leyes sobre el derecho al aborto para sus residentes.

El portal se abrió pocas semanas después de que la Corte Suprema se pronunciara sobre la atención de emergencia en el caso *Moyle v. Estados Unidos*, cuando decidió que una ley de aborto de Idaho potencialmente entraba en conflicto con la Ley federal de trabajo y tratamiento médico de emergencia, y devolvió el caso a un tribunal inferior.

El interrogante del caso es si EMTALA se impone a la Ley de Defensa de la Vida de Idaho y si esta última podría afectar la interpretación de EMTALA descrita en la guía emitida en 2022 por la administración Biden. Ahora que el tribunal se pronunció sobre la atención de emergencia, por el momento la atención del aborto se puede brindar en Idaho como un tratamiento médico estabilizador en caso de peligro a la vida, bajo el amparo de la ley EMTALA.

“Damos la bienvenida al anuncio de los Centros de Servicios de Medicare y Medicaid (MediCAL en California) de la apertura de un nuevo portal para que los hispanohablantes nos hagan saber si se les ha negado la atención de emergencia que les corresponde según la Ley de Tratamiento Médico de Emergencia y Trabajo de Parto Activo (EMTALA)”, dijo Lupe M. Rodríguez, Directora Ejecutiva del Instituto Nacional de Latinas para la Justicia Reproductiva (National Latina Institute

for Reproductive Justice).

“Este nuevo portal constituye una herramienta necesaria y muy esperada que puede asegurar los derechos de quienes buscan atención médica, incluyendo la práctica del aborto, especialmente después de que la Corte Suprema se rehusó a ampliar las protecciones para las pacientes embarazadas. Es fundamental que los miembros de nuestras comunidades puedan compartir sus inquietudes en el idioma que dominan para que nuestro sistema de atención médica funcione para todos”, concluyó Rodríguez.

Según un análisis del Instituto Guttmacher, casi una de cada cuatro mujeres en Estados Unidos (el 23,7%) tendrá un aborto antes de los 45 años.

En nuestro país, la mayoría de las mujeres que abortan son mujeres de color. En 2019, las hispanas representaron el 21% de este grupo; las afroamericanas, el 38%; las blancas el 33%; y entre otras razas y etnias, el 7%, según la Kaiser Family Foundation. Además de los impedimentos económicos que enfrentan muchas mujeres también existen barreras sistémicas adicionales relacionadas con la atención médica.

“A causa de las prohibiciones del aborto en diferentes estados, a demasiadas mujeres embarazadas se les negó el aborto de emergencia. Las más afectadas por las restricciones al aborto, entre ellas las latinas, los inmigrantes y otras comunidades de color, también visitan las salas de emergencia en mayor proporción que otros grupos debido a barreras sistémicas a la atención médica que existen hace muchos años. Bajo EMTALA, todavía tienen derecho a la atención de emergencia que necesitan para proteger su salud y sus vidas, pero los políticos y jueces antiaborto no dejarán de intentar negarles esta atención. A nadie se le debe negar atención en una emergencia médica, sin importar quién sea o dónde viva”, dijo Rodríguez. “El Instituto Nacional de Latinas para la Justicia Reproductiva continuará apoyando al crecimiento del poder de las comunidades latinas en todo el país y garantizando el derecho federal al aborto para que todos tengan acceso a la atención médica que necesitan. No nos detendremos hasta que en nuestro país exista la verdadera libertad reproductiva para todos”.

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Amairani Hernández es colaboradora de Caló News.



Un nuevo portal permite a las personas que hablan español denunciar si les niegan acceso a salas de emergencia, incluyendo casos de un aborto de emergencia. En la imagen, sala de emergencia de RSU Manado Medical Center. Photo cortesía de The Commons

El periódico *Community Alliance* (*Alianza Comunitaria*) se publica mensualmente por San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance, ubicada en 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. El periódico *Community Alliance* (*Alianza Comunitaria*) se distribuye gratis o por suscripción. Las suscripciones son de \$40 por año; \$60 por año para activistas; y \$15 para personas de bajos ingresos.

Desde 1996, *Alianza Comunitaria* ha sido una voz progresista independiente para el Valle Central de San Joaquín. *Alianza Comunitaria* aboga por

- la justicia racial, social, ambiental y económica;
- Igualdad de derechos para todos, incluidos los inmigrantes, las personas sin hogar y la comunidad LGBTQ+;
- Acceso a una educación pública gratuita y de calidad para todos;
- Acceso a la atención sanitaria para todos;
- Un salario digno para todos los trabajadores.

Nuestro objetivo es exponer los problemas raciales, sociales, medioambientales y económicos e injusticias políticas. Ayudaremos a construir un poderoso movimiento progresista que hará que todas nuestras comunidades sean más seguras, más sanas, más equitativas y más habitables.

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# Introducción a la sección de Artes y Cultura

POR NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

En medio del pulso artístico de Fresno se encuentra una comunidad que a menudo pasa desapercibida y no se celebra. Artistas talentosos y organizadores dedicados ponen todo su corazón y alma en su trabajo, pero luego tienen dificultades para promocionarlo y darle visibilidad. La nueva sección de Artes y Cultura de la *Community Alliance*

tiene como objetivo cambiar eso, cerrando la brecha entre los artistas y los amantes del arte, y asegurando que la vibrante escena artística de Fresno reciba el reconocimiento que merece.

La sección de Artes y Cultura destaca los próximos eventos artísticos y presenta a artistas locales cada mes. Esta plataforma está abierta a todos los que se incluyen en el amplio paraguas de los "eventos artísticos", desde exhibiciones tradicionales de pintura, multimedia y escultura hasta música, prácticas culturales y otras formas de autoexpresión.

El arte en Fresno es diverso y está en constante evolución, lo que refleja un vibrante collage de culturas y estilos. Somos el hogar de una amplia gama de artistas, cada uno de los cuales contribuye de manera única a nuestro tejido cultural. *Community Alliance* espera proporcionar un escenario muy

necesario para estas voces, asegurando que ninguna obra maestra pase desapercibida.

La sección de Artes y Cultura estará disponible tanto en inglés como en español y está financiada por el Consejo de Artes de Fresno.

Envíe eventos para el calendario de Artes y Cultura a [calendar@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:calendar@fresnoalliance.com).

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Noah Deeds Ortiz es un estudiante actual de la Universidad Estatal de Fresno que se especializa en psicología. Coordina la sección de Artes y Cultura de *Community Alliance* junto con su esposa, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. Presentó el podcast "Queer Goggles".

## Proyecto de Ley de Alimentos de Apoyo Médico de Medi-Cal

POR SEJAL PAREKH

(Nota del Editor: La siguiente nota se reproduce con autorización de Ethnic Media Services)

La cirugía de rodilla en 2021 limitó la actividad física de Elizabeth Durán y le hizo ganar peso. Durán, de 65 años, tomaba pastillas para la presión arterial alta y lidiaba con su ansiedad en privado.

En el otoño de 2023, su médico lo remitió a un programa del condado, Recipe 4 Health, que entrega productos frescos a su hogar. Durán, que es latina, le da crédito al programa por ayudarla a recuperar su bienestar.

"Estaba familiarizada con las acelgas y la col rizada", dijo Durán, "pero nunca elegiría esas cosas". Después de conocer su valor nutricional en el programa, buscó cómo cocinarlos.

Durán dijo que participar en Recipe 4 Health la ayudó a controlar su presión arterial, dormir mejor y reducir su ansiedad.

Desde su creación en 2020, Recipe 4 Health, parte de la iniciativa "alimentos como medicina", ha conectado a más de 6,000 residentes de Alameda, el 83 % de ellos personas de color y más de la mitad de habla hispana, con verduras saludables y asesoramiento sobre salud. Los resultados son impresionantes.

"Un tercio de nuestros pacientes con prediabetes y diabetes muestran una reducción clínicamente significativa de su nivel de azúcar en la sangre", señaló el director médico del programa, el Dr. Steven Chen. "Dos tercios de los pacientes mejoraron sus indicadores de colesterol, reduciendo así el riesgo de enfermedades cardíacas" mientras que "el 44% de nuestros pacientes están reduciendo sus síntomas de depresión".

Estos resultados pueden ayudar a prevenir enfermedades crónicas y cardiovasculares que, en última instancia, ahorran dinero en atención médica, dijo Chen. Él cree que una financiación constante para Recipe 4 Health es fundamental para su longevidad.

Actualmente, Recipe 4 Health recibe gran parte de su financiación de CalAIM, una iniciativa plurianual que combina dólares federales y estatales para abordar los factores sociales de la salud, incluida la inseguridad alimentaria y habitacional.

El Departamento de Servicios de Atención Médica (DHCS) del estado administra CalAIM y financia planes locales de Medi-Cal para reembolsar programas como Recipe 4 Health que brindan nutrición con apoyo médico.

Al DHCS se le concedió una extensión de cinco años para la financiación federal para CalAIM, que anteriormente estaba programada para expirar en diciembre de 2021. A medida que se acerca el año 2026, Chen busca una fuente de financiación estable para su programa que no necesite una renovación frecuente.

Es por eso que está instando a los legisladores a adoptar la AB 1975, el segundo intento de la asambleísta Mia Bonta (D-Oakland) de exigir la cobertura de Medi-Cal para los programas de alimentos con apoyo médico. De aprobarse, California se convertiría en el primer estado del país en exigir que su programa Medicaid cubra este beneficio. El proyecto de ley se encuentra actualmente en trámite en la legislatura estatal.

"Demasiados californianos, particularmente californianos de color, viven con enfermedades y afecciones crónicas que en gran medida se pueden prevenir", dijo Bonta, señalando que su medida contribuiría en gran medida a promover la equidad en salud en el estado.

La mayoría de los inscritos en Recipe 4 Health son personas de color de bajos ingresos.

Cada semana durante 3 meses, los participantes del programa reciben 16 porciones de frutas y verduras frescas, dijo Sasha Shankar, directora agrícola de Dig Deep Farms, que suministra los productos del programa.

Mientras tanto, el asesoramiento de salud semanal ayuda a los participantes a aprender sobre nutrición, ejercicio



El programa Recipe 4 Health busca una alimentación más sana para pacientes con enfermedades crónicas.  
Foto cortesía de Ethnic Media Services ([www.ethnicmediaservices.org](http://www.ethnicmediaservices.org))

y manejo del estrés, al mismo tiempo que los ayuda a establecer y alcanzar objetivos de salud.

Para participar en Recipe 4 Health, los pacientes de Medi-Cal en el condado de Alameda necesitan una derivación de su proveedor de atención primaria en los centros de salud participantes, que incluyen Alameda Health System, Bay Area Community Health, Lifelong Medical Care, Native American Health Center y Tiburcio Vásquez Centro de Salud.

El programa es independiente de CalFresh, el programa de cupones para alimentos de California, y muchos pacientes pueden recibir los beneficios de Recipe 4 Health y CalFresh al mismo tiempo.

Los proveedores de atención primaria pueden derivar pacientes si padecen inseguridad alimentaria o padecen una afección crónica como diabetes, presión arterial alta, colesterol alto, insuficiencia cardíaca o accidente cerebrovascular.

Casi el 10% (aproximadamente 154.000) de los 1,6 millones de residentes de Alameda viven en hogares que experimentan inseguridad alimentaria.

Una vez que los participantes han sido remitidos por su proveedor de atención primaria, Recipe 4 Health recibe la derivación y la pasa al plan Medi-Cal del condado, Alameda Alliance for Health, para su autorización. La referencia también se envía a los socios Dig Deep Farms y Open Source Wellness, que brindan asesoramiento sobre salud. Estos socios se comunican con el participante para verificar la información de contacto antes de iniciar los servicios.

Aún así, a pesar de sus éxitos, el programa no ha estado exento de desafíos. "Literalmente, unas semanas después de iniciado el programa, llegó la pandemia", dijo Chen. "Fuimos totalmente a la entrega a domicilio. Y luego pasamos a grupos virtuales".

La pandemia tuvo varios otros efectos dominó en el programa. A medida que menos personas acudieron a su

proveedor de atención primaria para recibir atención de rutina, se realizaron menos derivaciones a Recipe 4 Health.

La información de contacto en los registros médicos de la clínica también quedó obsoleta. Si los números de teléfono no se actualizaban en el registro de la clínica, las referencias llevarían esa información incorrecta a Recipe 4 Health. Cuando eso sucede, "tenemos datos que muestran que disminuye significativamente", hasta en un 50%. "Número equivocado, no se puede localizar al paciente, está como muerto en el agua", dijo Chen.

La falta de tiempo o de transporte también puede impedir que las personas participen en las sesiones de entrenamiento semanales. En 2023, solo 1.105 de 1.949 (alrededor del 56%) participantes de Recipe 4 Health asistieron al entrenamiento.

Eso ha ejercido presión sobre el código abierto, explicó la directora Elizabeth Markle, quien dijo que Recipe 4 Health actualmente está tratando de renegociar su contrato con la organización pasando a un modelo de pago por servicio.

El aumento de la inflación y los costos de los alimentos también han tenido un impacto. Shankar dijo que a Dig Deep Farms se le reembolsaron 23 dólares por bolsa de productos entregados a los participantes en 2023, y que las tasas de reembolso tuvieron que aumentarse en 2024.

Pero en comparación con los miles de millones que California gasta cada año en el tratamiento de enfermedades crónicas, los desembolsos por paciente de Recipe 4 Health (aproximadamente \$785 por participante por año, según la información proporcionada por el equipo de Chen) son más rentables.

Cuando los críticos preguntan: "¿Cómo pagamos por esta comida?" Chen responde: "Ya lo estamos pagando. Es simplemente a través de nuestro sistema de salud".

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El Dr. Sejal Parekh es pediatra y miembro del programa Health Equity Media de Stanford.

## Se solicita vendedor/a de medio tiempo

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Contacto: Eduardo, 559-304-3714, [eduardostanley@comcast.net](mailto:eduardostanley@comcast.net)



# Demandan a Delano Por Embotelladora de Agua

Continúa de página 24

de Delano y argumenta que la considerable extracción diaria de agua subterránea de Niagara agravará el déficit sin una reposición adecuada. Esto podría llevar a daños ambientales graves.

La demanda subraya el mandato esencial de la CEQA para evaluaciones ambientales exhaustivas para mitigar tales impactos. La demanda también destaca el mandato de la CEQA para revisiones ambientales exhaustivas de proyectos con posibles impactos significativos, porque creen que Delano no llevó a cabo estas revisiones ni determinó la exención del proyecto de los requisitos de la CEQA.

El SSJMUD afirma que aprobar el proyecto sin la revisión adecuada de la CEQA constituye un abuso de discreción y busca un mandamiento judicial para anular todas las aprobaciones del proyecto hasta que se cumpla completamente con la CEQA. Además, la demanda señala que el SSJMUD ha agotado todos los recursos administrativos y ha cumplido con los requisitos legales

antes de presentar la demanda. Subraya el incumplimiento de Delano de realizar una audiencia pública sobre el proyecto, lo que supone otra violación de los protocolos de la CEQA.

El SSJMUD afirma su derecho a recuperar los honorarios de los abogados, enfatizando que la demanda sirve al interés público al hacer cumplir el cumplimiento de la CEQA. La demanda solicita detener las operaciones del proyecto hasta que se cumplan estas normas legales y ambientales, destacando las implicaciones más amplias para la supervisión ambiental y la protección de la comunidad.

La Ley de Calidad Ambiental de California (CEQA) exige un proceso específico para evaluar los impactos ambientales de los proyectos propuestos. Las agencias deben realizar primero un estudio inicial para determinar los posibles efectos ambientales. Si se identifican impactos significativos, se requiere un Informe de Impacto Ambiental (EIR) para detallar estos impactos y sugerir medidas de mitigación. Si la mitigación puede reducir los impactos a niveles menos significativos, se puede emitir una Declaración Negativa Mitigada (MND).

Es crucial que la CEQA exige la participación pública, asegurando que los miembros de la comunidad puedan expresar sus preocupaciones y aportar información sobre los proyectos propuestos.

No recibí respuesta del alcalde de Delano (Joe L. Alindajao) ni de SUING, pero Niagara Bottling respondió con lo siguiente:

“La nueva planta embotelladora de Niagara Bottling proporcionará una variedad de oportunidades de empleo y beneficios económicos a la comunidad de Delano sin ningún impacto negativo en el suministro de agua de la ciudad. Hemos trabajado muy de cerca con la Ciudad de Delano desde mediados de 2022 para asegurar que el proyecto cumpla con todos los requisitos ambientales y estándares de desarrollo. No creemos que haya ningún mérito en la demanda del Distrito Municipal de Servicios Públicos del Sur de San Joaquín. Nos enorgullece haber llevado una manufactura de clase mundial a Delano y esperamos crecer nuestra asociación a largo plazo con la ciudad.”

Si han estado haciendo todo lo posible para cumplir con las regulaciones de California, ¿por qué han mantenido prácticamente ningún contacto con el SSJMUD o les han proporcionado pruebas suficientes de que la planta no afectará negativamente las aguas subterráneas en Delano?

Según su sitio web, “La inversión de capital [para la planta] se estima en hasta \$160 millones.” Parece mucho dinero para invertir sin seguir los procedimientos adecuados, aunque para una empresa que vale \$28.40 mil millones, puede que no sea tan significativo.

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Paulina Deeds Ortiz es una ex-becaria de Community Alliance. Ella es una inmigrante mexicana y actualmente está estudiando Antropología y Psicología en CSU Fresno. Paulina dedica su tiempo libre a escribir poesía y pintar.

# Entusiasmo Por la Candidatura de Kamala Harris

Continúa de página 24

Francisco Duarte (Fresno)

En cuanto a Kamala Harris como candidata... algunas comunidades de color, o grupos feministas, esperarían que una persona de color, además de ser mujer, pudiera significar algún beneficio para ellos, lo cual, si bien es una posibilidad, no está garantizado. Miren a [el senador republicano de Florida] Marco Rubio o [el senador republicano de Texas] Ted Cruz; ¿qué tan bueno es para los inmigrantes [que] estén en el Congreso?

Muchos activistas que quieren tener una opción realmente progresista, digamos, como Bernie Sanders, se ven obligados en cambio a elegir el menor de los dos males en las elecciones: el Partido Demócrata, incluso sabiendo que los dos partidos dominantes responden a intereses político-económicos similares. Otros elegirán no participar en el proceso y esperar a que haya cambios reales.

Nayamin Martinez (Fresno)

Creo que Kamala, al ser una mujer de color, puede atraer a otras mujeres de color, principalmente inmigrantes o descendientes de inmigrantes que no se sintieron representadas por un hombre blanco de edad avanzada. Votaré por ella si es la candidata. Espero que adopte una agenda más liberal, en términos de derechos reproductivos y en políticas migratorias.

Si México ya eligió a una mujer como presidenta, me gustaría que este fenómeno se repita en Estados Unidos. Espero que cierren filas y apoyen a Kamala, que nos puede salvar del abismo llamado Trump.

Johanna Torres (Madera)

Creo que alguien que no sea intolerante es bueno para la sociedad en su conjunto. Yo votaría por ella.

Sandra Iyall (Fresno)

Voy a votar por Kamala Harris para presidenta y ya he donado a su campaña y he pedido una camiseta de “Harris 2024”. Estoy agradecida de que los medios tengan algo de qué hablar además de la actuación de Biden en el debate. Nunca apoyaré a un candidato republicano, y ahora los demócratas tienen una candidata que la gente está entusiasmada por apoyar.

Como mujer [de la tribu] Cowlitz, confío en que Kamala entienda la importancia de proteger los derechos de las mujeres y los derechos civiles. Me alentó la elección de Biden para Secretaria del Interior cuando eligió a Deb Haaland, miembro del Pueblo de Laguna y una neomexicana de 35.ª generación, y tengo todas las razones para creer que la presidenta Harris continuará con el legado.

Dependerá de todos nosotros aplicar [la] presión necesaria a nuestros representantes electos para exigir un alto el fuego en Gaza, financiar la educación superior para nuestra juventud, promover los derechos de los trabajadores a sindicalizarse, proteger nuestro medio ambiente y tener paz con justicia.

Oralia Maceda (Fresno)

Creo que el hecho de que Kamala Harris, siendo una mujer de color, se presente como candidata, es algo bueno. Sin embargo, no creo que las políticas que implementará sean diferentes a las que hemos vivido. Al final, ella tiene que seguir la dirección de su partido.

Sin embargo, sus discursos son menos agresivos que los de Trump. Quizá sea mucho pedir que deje de apoyar económica y moralmente a los países que están causando muertes y guerras.

Lourdes Oliva (Fresno)

Me siento confiada de que Kamala Harris será nuestra próxima Presidenta. Ser mujer es importante y esencial para empezar a escuchar a la mayoría de los votantes registrados y a la fuerza laboral actual, y a las familias. Su historia de inmigrante y la de su madre es una con la que nos podemos identificar.

Estoy muy orgullosa de que el Presidente Biden le haya dado su apoyo y le haya pasado la posta a Kamala. Necesitamos ver todos los beneficios de su liderazgo y nuestras inversiones como votantes y donantes de su campaña y su carrera. Tuve la oportunidad de conocerla cuando asistió a Fresno antes de su primera candidatura a la presidencia.

Yo era escéptica antes de conocerla porque otras personas de la comunidad mayoritariamente blanca hablaban de su política. Sin embargo, cuando BWOPA la invitó a venir a Fresno, lo hizo y verla en persona me inspiró.

Creo que necesitará todo nuestro apoyo porque será la primera mujer líder de la nación. Esta es una gran oportunidad para inspirar a toda nuestra generación Z y millennials y a nuestros jóvenes y, por qué no, a mi nieta de dos años.

Teresa Castillo (Fresno)

Una amiga me dijo que el registro de votantes de 18 a 35 años ha aumentado mucho después de que Biden se

retiró de su campaña de reelección y nominó a Harris. No conozco su fuente, pero esto sigue mi sentimiento inicial de esperanza.

He sentido que Biden está fuera de contacto con lo que la mayoría de los estadounidenses necesitan y quieren (la mayoría de los políticos de carrera también están fuera de contacto). Tenía poca fe en su capacidad para ganar la reelección. Me horroriza ver lo que Trump y su gente le harían a nuestro país, y no veo una plataforma lo suficientemente fuerte como para que gane un tercer partido, así que Kamala Harris me da esperanza.

Realmente me encantaría ver a nuestro país “patas arriba” con un líder progresista, justo y comprometido con la aplicación de los derechos humanos y la equidad para todos. No veo a Harris como ese líder, pero como una mujer de color que es fuerte en su liderazgo y que puede hablar con convicción, es un comienzo.

Mis problemas surgen al no saber cuál es su verdadera postura en varios temas, principalmente Israel. No creo que hayamos visto su verdadero lado todavía, y si se alinea con una política dura contra el genocidio de Israel y los abusos de los derechos humanos del apartheid, ¿realmente será capaz de controlar a los partidarios acérrimos de Israel y oponerse a ese lobby?

Aun así, tengo la esperanza de que nos traerá algo mejor, para ayudar a nuestro país a estar más unido por el bien y centrarse en la construcción interna en lugar de la destrucción constante de países en el extranjero.

Como mujer de color, ha experimentado personalmente cierta discriminación y desprecio que otras han experimentado, lo que le permite entender a las comunidades despreciadas. Sin embargo, también tiene un nivel de privilegio por encima de muchas mujeres de color de Estados Unidos, por lo que espero que pueda tener empatía y llegar a quienes podrían beneficiarse de su experiencia de vida.

Sin embargo, en general, la representación importa, por lo que siento que su sola presencia podría inspirar a muchas personas a animarse, votar y renovarse en el proceso político.

Tatiana Vizcaino (Merced)

Me siento animada con la posibilidad de que una mujer con sus características e historia llegue a la presidencia de Estados Unidos. Me encantaría que hubiera dos mujeres liderando norteamérica—México y EE.UU.—y resolviendo asuntos realmente importantes como la inmigración.

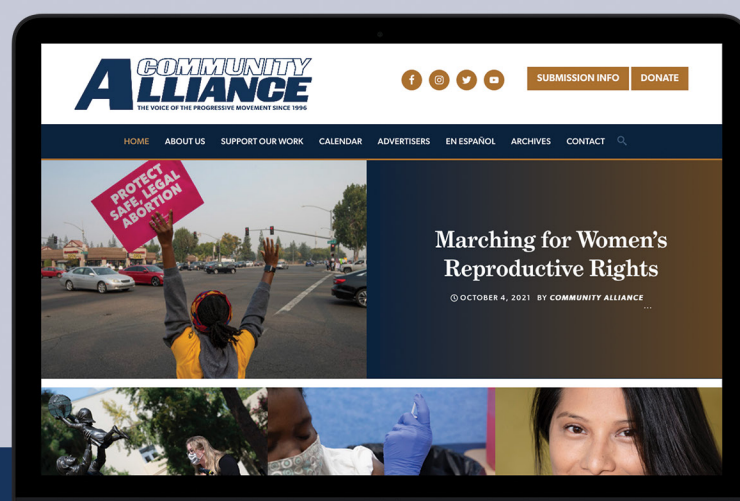
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# ALIANZA COMUNITARIA

LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

## Demandan a Delano Por Embotelladora de Agua

POR PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

En abril, el Distrito Municipal de Servicios Públicos del Sur de San Joaquín (SSJMUD, por sus siglas en inglés) presentó una demanda contra la Ciudad de Delano por la recién establecida planta embotelladora de agua de Niagara. El distrito alega que la Ciudad de Delano no llevó a cabo las revisiones ambientales requeridas ni las audiencias públicas, lo que viola la Ley de Calidad Ambiental de California (CEQA, por sus siglas en inglés).

Afirman que la planta extraerá 1.792 acres-pie anualmente del acuífero, exacerbando el déficit de agua de la zona. Sin embargo, Delano argumenta que cumplió con las normas al conectar la planta a su sistema de agua ya existente, eludiendo así las regulaciones sobre nuevos pozos. La demanda busca detener las operaciones de la planta.

En el Valle Central de California, las consecuencias de la disminución de los acuíferos son severas. Cuando esto sucede, los pozos residenciales pueden secarse o producir agua contaminada. Esto afecta desproporcionadamente a las comunidades rurales y de bajos ingresos que ya tienen acceso limitado al agua limpia.

El secado y sobreexplotación de los pozos solo empeoraría la inseguridad alimentaria y de agua en las comunidades dependientes de las aguas subterráneas. Con el cambio climático y el aumento de las temperaturas, el acceso al agua es esencial. La extracción de agua subterránea a gran escala también ha llevado a la subsidencia del terreno, causando fisuras que pueden dañar infraestructura crítica como carreteras o puentes.

El Distrito Municipal de Servicios Públicos del Sur de San Joaquín (establecido en 1935) opera bajo



En el Valle Central, debido a la grave disminución de los acuíferos, los propietarios de viviendas y los agricultores dependen cada vez más de las bombas de agua, lo que genera problemas adicionales para el medio ambiente y agota las fuentes de agua subterráneas.

Foto de Eduardo Stanley

contrato con la Oficina de Reclamación de los EE. UU. para gestionar la distribución de agua en aproximadamente 67.000 acres en el condado de Kern. Principalmente sirve a tierras agrícolas, cubriendo unos 51.000 acres, aunque la expansión urbana ha reducido las áreas irrigadas.

Según el SSJMUD, Delano ya está experimentando un déficit de agua, independientemente de los pozos existentes o futuros que se utilicen. Delano y sus residentes dependen de esas aguas subterráneas en disminución.

En una entrevista previa con SJV Water, Roland Gross (Gerente General del SSJMUD) había escuchado solo un rumor sobre la posibilidad de una planta de agua en Delano hace un año. El SSJMUD procedió a advertir tanto a Niagara

Bottling como a la ciudad en contra de dicho proyecto y avisó que el distrito se opondría.

A pesar de esto, se sorprendieron cuando se enteraron de que el proyecto se llevaría a cabo. De repente se vieron obligados a presentar una demanda para proteger las aguas subterráneas de Delano porque su advertencia fue ignorada.

La demanda argumenta que la aprobación del proyecto de Niagara Bottling por parte de Delano violó la Ley de Calidad Ambiental de California (CEQA) al eludir la revisión ambiental requerida.

El SSJMUD se centra en el estado críticamente sobreexplotado de la cuenca de aguas subterráneas

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## Entusiasmo Por la Candidatura de Kamala Harris

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

El presidente Joe Biden terminó su campaña de reelección el 21 de julio y respaldó a la vicepresidenta Kamala Harris para sucederlo como candidata demócrata. Biden, de 81 años, estaba bajo presión después de su incoherente desempeño en el debate contra Donald Trump el 27 de junio. Fue criticado abiertamente por los medios corporativos debido a su edad, a pesar de que su oponente de entonces, el republicano Donald Trump, de 78 años, es solo tres años más joven.

Otra preocupación sobre las posibilidades de reelección de Biden en noviembre de este año fue su desconexión con los votantes jóvenes debido a su apoyo a Israel y su falta de atractivo para ellos.

Harris, de 59 años, no perdió el tiempo y se lanzó decididamente a su campaña, dando la imagen de una candidata enérgica y aguda. Ha dejado en claro los puntos principales de su agenda, siendo los derechos de las mujeres, incluidos los derechos reproductivos, una prioridad.

El registro de votantes se disparó justo después de que Biden la respaldara. Según el sitio no partidista Vote.org, casi 40.000 personas se registraron para votar tras la entrada de Harris en la carrera presidencial.

"Es la mayor cantidad de nuevos votantes registrados en un período de 48 horas que hemos visto en todo este ciclo", publicó Andrea Hailey, directora ejecutiva de Vote.org, en X (anteriormente Twitter). El mayor grupo demográfico que se registró fue el de personas de entre 18 y 34 años.

Hay mucha especulación sobre a quién nombrará Harris como su compañero de fórmula, que no se había anunciado al momento de imprimir Community Alliance. La Convención Nacional Demócrata se llevará a cabo en Chicago del 19 al 22 de agosto.

A continuación, una muestra de las reacciones locales:



La vicepresidenta Kamala Harris durante una conferencia telefónica el 1 de febrero de 2021.

Foto cortesía de The Commons

### Minerva Mendoza (Madera)

Como posible candidata presidencial, la vicepresidenta Harris ha reavivado mi entusiasmo por las próximas elecciones presidenciales en los Estados Unidos. La posibilidad de que una presidenta e hija de inmigrantes ascienda a la presidencia es realmente inspiradora.

Ella aporta tanto experiencia como una perspectiva fresca. Su comprensión de cuestiones tan importantes como la acción afirmativa, el derecho al aborto, el control de armas y la inmigración resuena en mí. Aunque reconozco su legado mixto y su impacto en las comunidades de color, ella merece una oportunidad, y nosotros como nación la merecemos. La apoyo con cautela, ya que hemos estado en situaciones similares antes en las que creíamos que un presidente podría cambiar las cosas para nuestra comunidad, solo para terminar decepcionados.

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