ELECTIONS

In a report issued in July, the Brennan Center for Justice warns that a significant threat to voting rights that isn’t getting enough attention is purges of voter rolls. While accurate purges are needed from time to time to eliminate voters no longer in a district or who have passed away, the country has seen a rash of poorly managed purges that have left thousands of people forced to file provisional ballots or simply turned away at the polls. These problems have occurred in locations ranging from Brooklyn (more than 200,000 voters incorrectly removed from rolls) to Virginia (where purges in some counties had error rates up to 17%). There are federal standards for purges, set in the 1993 National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). Since 2013 Florida, New York, North Carolina and Virginia have conducted illegal purges. Alabama, Arizona, Indiana, and Maine have written policies that violate the NVRA and provide for illegal purges. Some groups around the country (guess who?) are urging for even more draconian purges. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**TELL** our Congress people and key members of the Senate Judiciary Committee that we want to see the provisions of the NVRA followed in every state and that we want further protections for voter, not increased purges.

• **Senator Chuck Grassley** (R-IA), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, 135 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3744

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

ENVIRONMENT

The federal government has lifted a stay on mineral exploration in national forests just outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, a one million acre wilderness in northeastern Minnesota. Roughly a quarter of a million people visit Boundary Waters annually for canoeing, fishing, and hiking, making it one of the most visited wilderness areas in the country. National forests are owned by all of us—and given the importance of Boundary Waters, mineral exploration in the surrounding area (and in a national forest) is a terrible idea. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

TELL our Congresspeople and key members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and its Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee that we want Boundary Waters and other wilderness areas protected for our use, not for the benefit of corporations

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

• **Senator Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK), Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

• **Senator Maria Cantwell** (D-WA), Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

• **Senator Mike Lee** (R-UT), Chair, Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

• **Senator Ron Wyden** (D-OR), Ranking Member, Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

For decades, the U.S. has been a leader in protecting endangered species, but that has been changing under the current Republican administration. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have proposed rule changes that would significantly weaken the administration of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Currently only biological factors based on rigorous science can be taken into account when a decision about a species’ endangered status is made. Under the proposals by FWS and NOAA, economic analyses would be added to the factors considered when a decision about a species/ endangered species status is made. Currently under the ESA, protections are put into place immediately once a species is determined to be endangered. The FWS proposal would instead require a separate proposed rule to protect any species found to be endangered from harassment, harming, and killing—leaving the open to human threats while the second, necessary rule is crafted, commented upon, and enacted. (h/t Wildlife Conservation Society) (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**REMIND** our Congress people and leaders at FWS and NOAA that “engendered” means endangered now—now when business interests find it convenient or after yet another bureaucratic process

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

• **Jim Kurth**, Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1849 C St. NW, Washington DC 20240, (800) 344-WILD

• **Steve Guertin**, Deputy Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1849 C St. NW, Washington DC 20240, (800) 344-WILD

• **Dr. Neil Jacobs**, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1401 Constitution NW, Room 5128, Washington DC 20230, (828) 271-4800

• **RDML Tim Gallaudett**, PhD, Assistant Secretary and Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1401 Constitution NW, Room 5128, Washington DC 20230, (828) 271-4800

*ProPublica* has reported that an Energy Department order that could be used to withhold information from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) and prevent them from overseeing worker safety at nuclear facilities appears to violate provisions in the Atomic Energy Act. Members of the DNFSB, both Republican and Democrat, are united in their criticism of this order published in mid-May. The order prevents the DNFSB from accessing sensitive information, imposes additional legal hurdles on board staff, and mandates that energy officials “speak with one voice” when communicating with the board. This order has already been cited in denying the Board access to information studies related to explosives at the Pantex Plant in Texas and about reclassification of explosive reactions at Los Alamos National Laboratories. Before the order was issues, the Department of Energy consulted with private contractors who run national laboratories, but not the board, workers’ unions or residents near nuclear facilities. This follows an effort last year, led by the Trump-appointed then-chairman of the board to dissolve the DNFSB entirely. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**TELL** the Energy Department and key members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and its Energy Subcommittee that for the sake of public safety we want a board regulating its activity and want to see any orders interfering with the functions of that board overturned

• **Rick Perry**, Secretary of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20585, (202) 586-5000

• **Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty**, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security; Administrator, National Nuclear Safety Administration, 1000 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20585, (202) 586-5000

• **Senator Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK), Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

• **Senator Maria Cantwell** (D-WA), Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

• **Senator Cory Gardner** (R-CO), Chair, Subcommittee on Energy, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

• **Senator Joe Manchin III** (D-WA), Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4971

ETHICS, SEPARATION of POWERS, TRANSPARENCY

It turns out that part of the way we’re paying for all the detentions required through the new “zero tolerance” immigration policy is by pulling money out of other pots. We’ve got hurricane season coming up and expect it to be a bad one, so one would figure we might want to take good care of funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Coast Guard, as both organizations will be helping during the disaster and the recovery. It appears, however, that detaining asylum seekers is a more importance use of funding. Senator Jeff Merkley has released documents showing that the Department of Homeland Security has transferred $10 million from the FEMA budget into detention funding. Homeland Security did the same with the Coast Guard, moving $29 million dollars earmarked for them to pay for detentions. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**EXPLAIN** to appropriate administration figures that if they really want us to feel secure in our homeland, they shouldn’t take away money that could protect us from natural disasters we know are coming in order to implement blanket detention of asylum seekers whether or not they present any threat to public safety

• **Kirstjen Nielsen**, Secretary of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane SW, Washington DC 20528-0075, (202) 282-8494

• **Ronald D. Vitiello**, Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 500 12th St. SW, Washington DC 20536,(866) DHS-2-ICE

**ASK** our Congresspeople what they intend to do in light of this cutting of disaster funding

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

**THANK** Senator Merkley for shedding light on these financial shenanigans

• **Senator Jeff Merkley** (D-OR), 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3753

FAMILY SEPARATION, DENATURALIZATION, and IMMIGRATION

Now that the courts have put the kibosh on family separation, the Republican administration is planning to—detain families together. There’s a court agreement (the “Flores Agreement”), in place since 1997, limits the detention of minors in immigration jails to twenty days. Now the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services are moving to withdraw from the Flores Agreement, so family detention can be indefinite. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**CRITICIZE** this latest attempt to criminalize and penalize asylum seekers, including families with children and **DEMAND** that we continue to honor the Flores Agreement

• **Kirstjen Nielsen**, Secretary of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane SW, Washington DC 20528-0075, (202) 282-8494

• **Alex M. Azar II**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC20201, (202) 690-7000

**THANK** our Congresspeople for their full and consistent opposition to family separation and “zero tolerance and **ASK** them to keep up the fight

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

If you’re uncomfortable with this new “detention in togetherness” policy, you will want to urge support for H.R.6692, the “Alternative to Detention Act,” which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop alternative programs to the current use of immigration detention. H.R.6692 requires a determination within two days of whether the detainee fits into one of the following categories: asylum seeker, victim of torture, victim of human trafficking; those with special religious, cultural, or spiritual considerations; pregnant and nursing women; those younger than 21 or older than 60; gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or intersex; victim of or witness to crime; those with mental disorders and/or physical disabilities; those who have suffered severe trauma, torture, or gender-based violence. If an individual does fall into one of these categories, H.R.6692 calls for her/him to be given an alternative to immigration detention. Given that the Republican administration is currently moving to triple the size of a Texas tent camp for unaccompanied minor children (we now have the largest population of detained migrant children ever), H.R.6692 needs support *now*. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**ASK** these members of the House Judiciary Committee, where H.R.6692 is currently awaiting action, to take swift, decisive action to see that these alternatives to detention are approved and funded

• **Representative Bob Goodlatte** (R-VA), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2138 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3951

• **Representative Jerry Nadler** (D-NY), Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee, 2138 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3951

• **Representative Raúl Labrador** (R-ID), Chair, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, House Judiciary Committee, 2138 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3951

• **Representative Zoe Lofgren** (D-CA), Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, House Judiciary Committee, 2138 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3951

**IMPLORE** our Representative to join the very small (4) list of cosponsors for H.R.6692 and **POINT OUT** that doing this is particularly appropriate given both the population he represents and previous stances he’s taken on immigration legislation

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

At the moment, our country is home to individuals from ten countries who have been granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which allows them to remain in the U.S. beyond the usual visa period due to natural disaster or ongoing armed conflict in their home countries. These nations are El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The Republican administration has repeatedly signaled its intention to end TPS for these groups—despite the fact that many of the have been in the U.S. for a decade or more. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**TELL** our Congresspeople we want them to fight to see that these valuable and vulnerable members of our communities can remain here

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

GENERAL DECENCY

The “Strength in Diversity Act,” which would give funds to elementary and secondary schools that institute programs to increase their diversity, has been introduced in both houses of Congress. In the Senate, this legislation is S.3413; in the House it is H.R.6722. The Senate version of the bill is with the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee; the House version is with the Education and the Workforce Committee. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**ENCOURAGE** our Senators to support S.3413

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

**ENCOURAGE** our Representative to support H.R.6722

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

**URGE** key members of the Senate HELP Committee to take quick action on S.3413

• **Senator Lamar Alexander** (R-TN), Chair, HELP Committee,428 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5375

• **Senator Patty Murray** (D-WA), Ranking Member, Committee,428 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5375

**URGE** key members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee to take quick action on H.R.6722

• **Representative Virginia Foxx** (R-NC), Chair, Education and the Workforce Committee, 2176 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4527

• **Representative Joe Wilson** (R-SC), Vice-Chair, Education and the Workforce Committee, 2176 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4527

• **Representative Robert C. “Bobby” Scott** (D-VA) Ranking Member), Education and the Workforce Committee, 2176 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4527

GUNS

Among the pieces of legislation waiting on Governor Brown’s signature is S.B.1100, which would raise the legal age for buying firearms to 21. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**URGE** the Governor to sign off on this legislation

• **Governor Edmund G. Brown**, c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-2841

HEALTHCARE and HEALTH

The Money Follow the Person Program (MFP) has enabled people with disabilities to transition out of institutions, in order to live in less restrictive environments, become more independent, and integrate into their communities. Unfortunately, the program was not renewed in 2016 and is now sunsetting, ending FMP funding for states. The EMPOWER Care Act (S.2227 in the Senate; H.R.5306) would reauthorize the MFP demonstration program. (Initial write-up 9/13/2018)

**ASK** our Senators to keep an eye out for S.2227 and to give it their full support

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224- 3841

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3553

**ASK** our Representative to keep an eye out for H.R.5306 and to give it his full support

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 228 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861