**ASYLUM, FAMILY SEPARATION, DENATURALIZATION, and IMMIGRATION**

Via *Rogan’s List*: The staffing cuts, lack of medical care and oversight and the slow trickle of refugees allowed into this country are causing children who have already lived a lifetime of suffering to lay languishing at the border and they are dying This is unacceptable from the wealthiest country in the world. This is not how we treat refugees. We need a reallocation of funding toward increased staffing and resources at the border. This administration has dramatically cut staffing to process asylum seekers which is why they are only coming in at a trickle and staying in unsanitary camps outside the border where conditions can breed disease. We also need adequate medical care and staffing at ports of entry and independent medical oversight of this care. When migrants do get in there is insufficient medical care at ports of entry for vulnerable children who have been enduring these conditions and there is no independent medical oversight to assess quality of care. Finally we need humane conditions in processing centers. When they first get here migrants are kept in processing covers the first few days where it is so cold they are referred to as ‘ice boxes,’ where the water is said to taste like bleach, the lights are left on 24hrs a day and the food is said to be partially frozen when served . Not acceptable. (Write-up 1/4/19)

**SPEAK OUT** for increased staffing, resources, medical care, and conditions for all asylum seekers—children in particular

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

• **Ronald Vitiello**, Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**,** 500 12th St. SW, Washington D.C. 20536, (866) DHS-2-ICE

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

Two children, both asylum seekers accompanied by a parent, have died in Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) custody. Before this happens again, we need to ensure that immediate, professional health screenings are done as soon anyone—but particularly children—is taken into CBP custody. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**DEMAND** appropriate, immediate changes in policy and practice by the agencies processing asylum seekers

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

• **Ronald Vitiello**, Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**,** 500 12th St. SW, Washington D.C. 20536, (866) DHS-2-ICE

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

**DEMAND** Congressional intervention to ensure that asylum seekers entering the U.S. are not at risk of death due to absent or inadequate health screenings and healthcare

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

Nancy Pelosi has promised that the House, which is now under Democratic leadership, will pass a new DREAM Act, affirming the rights of those who entered this country as children. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**INFORM** (probable) Speaker of the House Pelosi that we expect her to keep her word on this and that we want to see swift action and **REMIND** her of the number of false promises regarding DREAM legislation that we’ve experience under Paul Ryan’s (now ended) Speakership

• **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), House Speaker Candidate, 233 Canon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

On New Year’s Eve, as many of us celebrated our hopes for a new year, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) was tear-gassing asylum seekers attempting to enter the U.S.—adults and children alike. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**EXPRESS** your disgust at this action and **DEMAND** better treatment of asylum seekers that accords with international law

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

• **Ronald Vitiello**, Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**,** 500 12th St. SW, Washington D.C. 20536, (866) DHS-2-ICE

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

In late December, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen was questioned in a House Judiciary Committee hearing. Nielsen was unable to answer a number of pressing questions. How many people have died in the Department of Homeland Security’s Custody? Nielsen can’t say. (Note that in 2015, the most recent government data available, ten people died as a result of use of force by Customs and Border Patrol officials.) Was the Secretary aware of the research, including research by conservative think tanks like the Cato Institute, indicating that migrants, both documented and undocumented, are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans? No, Nielsen claims she has not seen those studies. How many legal points of entry are there along the U.S.-Mexico border? Nielsen thought it was between twenty and thirty, but wasn’t sure. (Actually, there are 48 legal points of entry along that border.) (Write-up 1/2/19)

**DECRY** this level of ignorance in the person responsible for overseeing Homeland Security and making sure our borders are safe, not just for those of us already within them, but for asylum seekers as well

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

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

Via *Rogan’s List*: “Trump's xenophobic policies continue, this time against immigrants who fled to the U.S. during the Vietnam War. The Trump administration has reinterpreted a U.S.-Vietnam agreement from 2008, which protected Vietnamese immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to 1995 from deportation, and are now stating that there are no such protections, even for refugees. This means that people who have lived in the United States for nearly half of a century, and who may have been children when they arrived, are now at risk of deportation.” This move also raises the threat of more family separations as parents are deported while their U.S.-born children have the right to remain in the country. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**INSIST** to the White House and the Department of Homeland Security that they stop wasting their time and resources, and instead follow the 2008 agreement as originally agreed upon and stop deportation of Vietnamese immigrants

• **Donald Trump**, the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 50500, (202) 456-1111

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

**CALL** on our Congresspeople to respond to this inhumane proposal to reinterpret the 2008 agreement firmly and vocally

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus has taken a vocal stance against Southeast Asian deportations. In a letter to the Republican administration the Caucus states that “It is troubling to see Southeast Asian American families being targeted at unprecedented levels. We urge you to reexamine policies on the arbitrary detention and deportation of Southeast Asian Americans who prove no threat to public safety, are interwoven into our communities, and support U.S. citizen families.” (Write-up 12/28/18)

**THANKS** for standing up for this vulnerable community to

• **Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus**, 2423 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515, Phone: (202) 225-5464, Fax: (202) 225-5467

A 5-month-old baby who was being held in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody is severely ill from pneumonia. According to NBC News, “the border agents took medicine from the mother and the infant and mother were kept inside ‘freezing’ holding cells [literally, these are cells designed to be punitively cold] for two days in San Ysidro, California. They were then taken to San Diego where they were held in custody for three more days." These unheated icebox cells are common in different detention centers. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**DEMAND** an immediate end to the placement of asylum seekers in icebox cells

• California Enrollment Center, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office, 405 Virginia Avenue, San Diego, CA 92173, (619) 690-7600

• Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520, (202) 647-4000

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

• **Ronald Vitiello**, Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**,** 500 12th St. SW, Washington D.C. 20536, (866) DHS-2-ICE

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

**CALL FOR** an investigation of this abuse of asylum seekers

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

**CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION**

From *Rogan’s List*: [T]he administration asked the National Institute of Health to stop acquiring fetal tissue obtained from women who have had legal abortions, a move that will suspend studies in process that are seeking a cure to the HIV virus. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**TELL** the White House, the Department of Health and Human Services, and our Congresspeople that the concerns of the religious right should not be dictating policy that impedes public health and **ASK** them to work toward lifting this ban and assuring that finding a cure for HIV remains a top priority

• **Donald Trump**, the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 50500, (202) 456-1111

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (202) 690-7000

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

**From Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU): “**Just last month, [Trump’s attorney General nominee, William] Barr joined former attorneys general Edwin Meese III and Michael B. Mukasey in a *Washington Post*column praising [outgoing Attorney General Jeff] Sessions in part for his October 2017 directive “to all executive departments containing guidance for protecting religious expression.” The Sessions order… is just a blueprint for using religion to discriminate. Americans United criticized the guidance for insisting that religious organizations have a right to take taxpayer money and discriminate against employees and the people they serve. The language, AU said, could give federal government workers the right to use their religious beliefs as a reason to discriminate and deny services to other Americans. Some older statements by Barr are equally troubling. Barr, who served as attorney general under President George H.W. Bush from November of 1991 until the end of Bush’s presidency early in 1993, gave at least two speeches in 1992 during which he attacked church-state separation and secular government. Addressing a conference of governors on juvenile crime in Milwaukee on April 1, 1992,Barr blasted public schools for no longer providing moral instruction. He asserted that public schools had undergone a ‘moral lobotomy’ and blamed it on ‘extremist notions of separation of church and state.’ About six months later, Barr struck again [in a speech] to the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, a traditionalist Catholic group, Barr called for the imposition of ‘God’s law’ in America. ‘To the extent that a society’s moral culture is based on God’s law, it will guide men toward the best possible life,’ Barr said. He also attacked ‘modern secularists’ for supposedly ushering in cultural decline, remarking, ‘The secularists of today are clearly fanatics.’ Barr seems to be uncomfortable with things like secular government, church-state separation, religious pluralism and indeed the realities of modern life. (Write-up 12/12/18)

**TELL** key members of the Senate Judiciary Committee that Americans cannot be served fairly by an Attorney General with such clear religious bias

• **Senator Chick Grassley** (R-IA), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, 224 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5225

• **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, 224 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5225

• **Senator Kamala Harris** (D- A), Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, 224 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5225

**CONSUMER PROTECTIONS and WORKPLACE RIGHTS**

From *Rogan’s List*: “GEO Group and CoreCivic, for-profit companies that run immigration detention centers, spend millions to lobby the federal government. These and other private prison companies have made large donations to Trump’s campaign and inauguration. And while they run lucrative businesses, they pay slave wages to the detained immigrants languishing in their facilities.” (Write-up 1/4/19)

ASK for a US House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform investigation of this matter

• **Representative Elijah Cummings** (D-MD), Incoming Chair House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, 2157 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3974

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

One of the topics the next session of Congress will likely deal with is access to and affordability of housing. *The Nation* summarizes some of the proposals that were on the table at the end of the previous session of Congress and that will probably be reintroduced: “Senator Elizabeth Warren’s (D-MA) American Housing and Economic Mobility Act would be one of the first [pieces of federal legislation] to recognize the intersectionality of housing justice by reinforcing protections against discriminatory real estate owners, actively promote desegregation, and proposes a total of half a trillion dollars of investment in creating over 3 million new units of affordable housing in the coming decade. Two other Senate bills also focused on affordability issues. Senator Kamala Harris’s (D-CA) Rent Relief Act would use a tax credit to help 20 million rent-burdened households pay their rent. Senator Cory Booker’s (D-NJ) Housing, Opportunity, Mobility, and Equity (HOME) Act calls for cities to replace exclusionary zoning practices with inclusionary ones.” We don’t know yet what numbers will be assigned to these pieces of legislation, but that doesn’t mean we can’t start advocating for them. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**EXPLAIN** to your Congresspeople the kinds of fair, affordable legislation you’d like to see them take on

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

From United Farmworkers: “Farm workers at Watsonville-based Premiere Raspberries, a major berry grower, walked off the job on strike in both 2017 and 2018 due to repeated violations of the law. Premiere workers voted for the UFW [United Farm Workers Union] in a state-supervised secret-ballot election conducted by the Agricultural Labor Relations Board [ALRB] on Aug. 9, 2017. After the company refused to negotiate, last December the workers followed California law and asked for a neutral state mediator to draw up a contract based on data both sides had the opportunity to provide. The company refused to participate, but had their attorney present. The mediator issued a preliminary contract on August 11, 2018. The company appealed it. On Aug. 29 the full ALRB ordered the grower to implement the union contract for the approximately 550 workers. Again, the company refused. Workers are fed up. They are tired of the company continuously breaking the law. **WellPict distributes all of Premiere's raspberries under their label.** The workers are demanding that WellPict ensure their contracted growers obey the law.” (Write-up 12/12/18)

**EXPLAIN** to WellPict that we want berries sourced from growers who honor labor law—which means they need to drop Premiere

• **Dan Crowley**, Vice-President for Sales and Marketing, WellPict Berries, 209 Riverside Road, Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 722-6340

From *Axios*: “Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters is proposing a new direction for the House Financial Services Committee, which she will lead in the next Congress…. The most notable proposed change is lumping oversight of ‘International Financial Institutions’—which could mean anything from the World Bank to foreign banks—with the existing Terrorism and Illicit Finance subcommittee, while scrapping the Monetary Policy and Trade subcommittee. As word leaks out about the proposal, it's catching the attention of foreign banks. It's a strong signal that Waters is not just *talking* about going after the likes of Deutsche Bank, sources familiar with the proposal tell Axios…. Waters has been fixated on going after international financial institutions for their potential roles as laundromats for bad actors like Russia and China. A big target for Waters is Deutsche Bank, for its ties to President Trump and Russia money laundering. Other proposed changes to the House Financial Services Committee include dropping insurance from the ‘Housing and Insurance’ subcommittee, and renaming it ‘Housing and Community Development.’ Waters also proposed to swap ‘Consumer Credit’ with ‘Consumer Protection for the current Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit subcommittee. There's also a new proposed subcommittee, solely focused on diversity and inclusion within the financial sector, as first reported by Reuters.” (Write-up 12/12/18)

**THANKS** to Waters for her willingness to take on new issues and to reshape her the Finance Committee to better serve ordinary Americans

• **Representative Maxine Waters** (D-CA), 2221 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2201

Existing law, as decided in Dynamex Operations West, Inc. v. Superior Court of Los Angeles, creates a presumption that a worker who performs services for a hirer is an employee and requires a three-part test before a worker can be classified as an independent contractor. A.B.5 would codify this ruling and clarify its application. There will be a massive effort by businesses to sink this legislation, so it will need active, ongoing support. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**ASK** the Governor and your Assemblyperson to support A.B.5, regardless of the pressures the business community puts on them

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

**EDUCATION**

From *Politico*: “The Trump administration for months concealed a report that showed Wells Fargo charged college students fees that were on average several times higher than some of its competitors. The ‘unpublished’ report was obtained by POLITICO through a Freedom of Information Act request. It was produced by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau office previously led by Seth Frotman, who quit as the bureau’s top student loan official in protest of Trump administration policies. Frotman said in his resignation letter that CFPB leaders had ‘suppressed the publication’ of the report. The previously unseen analysis examined the fees associated with debit cards and other financial products provided by 14 companies through agreements with more than 500 colleges across the country. Wells Fargo provided roughly one-quarter of those accounts but the bank collected more than half of all fees paid by students, according to the report data. The bank’s average annual fee per account was nearly $50, the highest of any provider. The report raises questions about whether campus accounts with high fees comply with Education Department rules requiring colleges to make sure the products they help promote are ‘not inconsistent with the best financial interests’ of their students.” (Write-up 12/12/18)

**INSIST** that the CFPB act to rein in Wells Fargo’s practices regarding student cardholders and **CRITICIZE** the CFPB’s decision not to release important information like this to consumers

• **Kathy Kraninger**, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G St. NW, Washington DC 20552, (844) 411-2372

From *Rogan’s List*: “Although no African American student has been implicated in any high-profile school shooting, Trump’s ‘school safety’ commission formed after the Parkland, FL high school massacre—headed by Ed Secretary Betsy DeVos and including Acting AG [Attorney General] Matthew Whitaker, HHS [Health and Human Services] Secretary Alex Azar, and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Neilsen—[have] formally recommend[ed] that the Trump administration rescind ‘groundbreaking’ Obama-era policies that aimed to prevent disciplinary discrimination against students of color on the grounds that these make students less safe; no gun control provisions are recommended.” (Write-up 12/28/18)

**TELL** these officials that we are not fooled: if “school safety” is really their object, they should disarm shooters, not permit the wildly disproportionate disciplining of students of color

• **Betsy DeVos**, Secretary of Education, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington DC 20202, (800) 872-5327

• **Matthew Whitaker**, Acting Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20530-0001

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

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

**ELECTIONS**

Democrat Ellen Weintraub is the incoming Chair of the Federal Elections Commission (FEC). The FEC has six members, three Democrat, three Republican. Any actions the FEC takes must be endorsed by at least four of the six commissioners, ensuring that all decisions are at least minimally bipartisan. Bloomberg Government reports that “The threat of foreign money influencing U.S. elections and the need for increased disclosure of campaign funding will be top priorities for Ellen Weintraub… next year. Weintraub said she plans to initiate ‘outward-facing public events’ to draw attention to campaign finance problems and possible solutions. Such events could be important, she said, as the Democratic-controlled House is poised to take up campaign finance proposals as a top priority when the new Congress convenes in January.” (Write-up 1/2/19)

**CONGRATULATE** Weintraub on her new FEC position and **THANK** her for taking on these issues

• **Ellen Weintraub**, Chair, Federal Elections Commission, 1050 First St. NE, Washington DC 20463, (800) 424-9530

S.B.47, the new Petition DISCLOSE Act, is intended to stop bad initiatives from getting on the ballot while hiding who's behind them. S.B.47 will require people collecting signatures for ballot initiatives to show you their top three funders before you sign to help place the petition on the California ballot. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor and your State Senator that S.B.47 is essential in this era of big-money politics

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

Existing law requires the Secretary of State to annually provide every high school, community college, and California State University and University of California campus with voter registration forms. Existing law also expresses the intent of the Legislature that every eligible high school and college students receive a meaningful opportunity to register to vote. A.B.59 would express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would make a polling place or vote center available on every college and university campus in the state. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**ASK** the Governor and your Assemblyperson to support participation among younger voters by supporting A.B.59

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

S.B.27 would require a presidential candidate to provide California with his or her income tax returns for the five most recent tax years. The returns would then become available on the Secretary of State's website. A candidate could not be placed on the California primary ballot without providing this information. Trump is the first president since Nixon to keep his tax returns private. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**ASK** the Governor and your State Senator to ensure that Californians are not forced to make crucial electoral decisions without sufficient information

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

HR1, the very first bill that our newly-elected, Democratic-majority House of Representatives will consider aims to expand voting rights and fight campaign corruption. The bill will face savage opposition from those who thrive in the current ecosystem of lobbyists and dark money, so HR1 and its proud sponsors really need to hear our support. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**ASSURE** our Representative that HR1 should be a top priority for the new Congress

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

**ENVIRONMENT**

*The Hill* reports, “House Democrats have created a new committee on climate change, without many of the main factors that progressives wanted in the panel’s structure.…The rules… say the select committee is instructed ‘to investigate, study, make findings, and develop recommendations on policies, strategies, and innovations to achieve substantial and permanent reductions in pollution and other activities that contribute to the climate crisis which will honor our responsibility to be good stewards of the planet for future generations.’… The panel will not have many of the features that… dozens of other Democrats and hundreds of activists have asked for to lead to a ‘Green New Deal.’ The panel will not have the power to subpoena or depose, nor will it have the authority to vote on legislation and send it directly to the House floor for a vote. It also is not being explicitly charged with developing Green New Deal legislation, which supporters envision as bringing the county to 100 percent renewable electricity and decarbonizing major industries over 10 years, as well as a universal jobs guarantee and other ideas.” (Write-up 1/4/19)

**EXPLAIN** to Speaker Pelosi and your Representative that we need a stronger committee than the one they’re proposing—we have an economy, a nation, and a planet to save

• **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), Speaker of the House, 233 Canon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline, has missed its 2018 deadline to plant tens of thousands of trees along the pipeline’s route. The company was supposed to plant 20,000 trees along the pipeline's 359-mile route through North Dakota by the end of 2018, as per the terms of a September 2017 settlement with North Dakota's Public Service Commission. So far, it has planted only around 8,800. Now, Energy Transfer Partners is relying on a provision in the settlement allowing it more time to plant the trees if it encounters difficulties. (Write-up 1/3/19)

**ASK** Energy Transfer Partners and the Chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, “where are the trees?”

• **Kelcy Warren**, Chairman and Chief Executive Office, Energy Transfer Partners, 8111 Westchester Dr., Dallas, TX 75225, (214) 981-0700

• **Representative Frank Pallone** (D-NJ), Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2927

Just a reminder that, as *Outside* reported in 2016, “Assuming Trump's wall will run along the entire 1,989-mile long land border the U.S. shares with Mexico and that the construction project will impact a total width of 1,000 feet (access roads, support structures, staging areas, etc.), the USFWS [United States Fish and Wildlife Service] estimates that the project will “potentially impact” 111 endangered species, 108 species of migratory bird, four wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries, and an unknown number of protected wetlands.”

**SHARE** this reminder with your Congresspeople and **CALL** for no further funding of the wall

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

• **Senator Kamal Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-35653

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 225-2861

In October I wrote: “Here’s a giant exercise in connect-the-dots. Andrew Wheeler, former *coal* lobbyist and current Acting Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is sending the White House a proposal to raise the threshold for mercury emissions from *coal*-burning power plants. This is a rollback that Robert E, Murray, chief executive of Murray Energy Corp. (which produces *coal*-based energy), personally requested. And why would Wheeler and the White House listen to a *coal* executive? Because said executive is Wheeler’s *former boss* and was also *a major donor* to the Trump inauguration fund. Not a very pretty picture once those dots are connected. And—bonus fun fact—this proposal to change mercury emissions rules cites a dissent by Brett Kavanaugh to a court ruling that upheld limits on mercury emissions.” Unfortunately, the Republican administration has followed through and officially proposed these rules changes.” (Write-up updated 1/2/19)

**EXPLAIN** to Wheeler that he is now an employee of the U.S. people, not coal companies, and that we, the people, like our air mercury-free

• **Andrew Wheeler**, Acting Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 1101A, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20460, (202) 564-4700

**TELL** our Congresspeople that you don’t like the picture you’re seeing and you want **ACTION** on this apparent collusion between the coal industry and the Republican administration

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

• **Senator Kamal Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-35653

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 225-2861

The *Independent* reports: “Swathes of [the U.S. National Butterfly Center] a 100-acre butterfly sanctuary along the Rio Grande in Texas are to be bulldozed to make way for Donald Trump’s US-Mexico border wall, putting endangered species at risk of extinction, experts have warned. Marianna Wright, the sanctuary’s executive director, said 70 per cent of the land belonging to the center will end up on the other side of the border wall. The wall could be up to three-stories tall, with 18-foot steel beams rising from a concrete base. Construction through the refuge could start in February, according to the *San-Antonio Express News*. The Trump administration is bypassing 28 federal laws, which exist mostly to protect the environment, in order to build the section of border wall through the Rio Grande Valley. The Animal Legal Defense Fund and two other organizations tried to take the government to court, but the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, thereby upholding a February [2018] ruling in favor of the government. Every year hundreds of thousands of butterflies pass through the area where the planned wall will go. ‘Just like farmers get crop yield in acres and inches, we get butterflies based on what we have planted in acres and inches,’ Ms. Wright said. ‘So having a wide swath of our property bulldozed is going to negatively impact the volume of the species and diversity of the species.’” (Write-up 1/2/19)

**OBJECT** to this destruction of a key environmental resource and the threat to essential butterfly species

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

• **Senator Kamal Harris** (D-CA), 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-35653

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 225-2861

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has given five companies the go-ahead to use seismic airgun testing to look for offshore oil and gas deposits on the eastern coast of the U.S. from Delaware to Florida. Seismic airgun testing can be heard at distances up to 2,500 miles. It can deafen marine mammals and disturb breeding and feeding behaviors. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**EXPRESS** your concern for the safety of marine life and ecosystems to NOAA

• **RDML Tim Gaulladet, Ph.D., USN ret.**, Assistant Secretary and Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1401 Constitution NW, Rm. 5128, Washington DC 20230, (828) 271-4800

• **Brandon Elsner**, Senior Policy Adviser, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1401 Constitution NW, Rm. 5128, Washington DC 20230, (828) 271-4800

• **Taylor Jordan**, Senior Policy Adviser, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1401 Constitution NW, Rm. 5128, Washington DC 20230, (828) 271-4800

**ASK** the Chair of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology for a review of this decision and **SUGGEST** that destructive pursuit of fossil fuels is not an appropriate means of supplying U.S. energy

• **Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson** (D-TX), Chair, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 2321 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6371

Chuck Todd, host of NBC’s Meet the Press has announced that he will no longer be welcoming climate change deniers to appear on the program. “The science is settled, even if public opinion is not,” said Todd, who explained that he would not indulge anyone ignoring facts on the topic. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**THANK** Todd for making this commitment to fact-based reporting, rather than the pro/con treatment of climate change that has been passing as news for far too long and that conflates two positions with vastly uneven weight on either side

• **Chuck Todd**, Host, Meet the Press, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10112, (212) 664-4444

According to Friends of the Earth, “Monarch butterflies are declining at an alarming rate. Their numbers have dropped by roughly 97% in the last 20 years in the West. And a key culprit is the massive increase in the use of glyphosate—a.k.a. Monsanto’s Roundup®. Roundup® wipes out milkweed, the only food young monarchs eat. It’s a simple formula: More Roundup® = less milkweed = fewer monarchs. Instead of acting to stop this crisis, the Trump administration keeps looking the other way as the use of Monsanto’s toxic pesticide increases. But we need action NOW in order to save monarchs from the risk of extinction. It’s time for Congress to step up and do what Trump won’t! At the same time, the amount of Roundup® being used each year has gone from 25-30 million pounds, to 180-185 million. That’s more than half a pound of pesticides for every American! It’s no wonder our butterflies are in trouble. And the dramatically increased use of Roundup® is bad for us as well -- the World Health Organization has found this pesticide is a ‘probable carcinogen.’” (Write-up 1/2/19)

**URGE** your Congresspeople to take action now to halt or severely limit this dangerous pesticide and **REMIND** them that our health and our ecosystem may depend upon this

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

Climate Truth.com Action and Oil Change United States have been keeping a list of politicians (currently in office, candidates, and former office holders) who have taken a “No Fossil Fuel Money” pledge. Surprisingly few California politicians are on the list. Only one of our two U.S. Senators and eight of our U.S. House members have signed on. On the state level, it’s just five Assemblypersons and six Senators. The good news is that our Governor, Lt. Governor, Superintendent of Public Schools, and State Treasurer have all signed on. (Write-up 1/1/19)

**CONTACT** some of those among the missing to let them know we’re waiting for them to make this pledge and **REMIND** them that this is about more than politics—it’s about planetary survival

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

• **Representative Jimmy Panetta** (D-CA), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

• **Assemblyperson Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblyperson** **Mark Stone** [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

S.B.43, Carbon Taxes, calls for a study on adjusting retail taxes to reflect goods’ carbon intensity. This might lead to a reduction in or elimination of current sales and use taxes. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor that it makes sense to have a taxation system that is keyed to the health of our planet

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**ASK** your State Senator to support S.B.43

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

Assemblyman Phil Ting (D-San Francisco) has introduced Zero-Emission Vehicles: Comprehensive Strategy, A.B.40, a bill that would require California energy regulators to identify a strategy to “achieve complete electrification of the transportation sector” by 2040. Politico noted Ting’s statement that “Climate change is happening at a much faster rate than anticipated…. Cleaner cars would make the biggest impact in reducing this pollution.” This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor that California needs to continue to take the lead on fighting climate change and that A.B.40 would be a significant step in this direction

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**ASK** your Assemblyperson to support A.B.40

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

Governor Brown vetoed legislation prohibiting smoking in State Parks and on State Beaches not once, but three times. Given that cigarette butts are the single most common type of ocean pollution and that we live in a state where wildfires are a year-round threat, we can hope that Governor Newsom will see this issue differently. The smoking ban has been reintroduced as S.B.8. It would impose a $25 penalty for violations of the ban. It has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor that for our health and for the health of the state and the planet we want this legislation passed

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**ASK** your State Senator to support S.B.8

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

From the *Los Angeles Times*: “The Trump administration is poised to roll back Clean Water Act protections on millions of acres of waterways and wetlands, including up to two-thirds of California’s inland streams, following through on a promise to agriculture interests and real estate developers to rewrite an Obama-era rule limiting pollution…. At stake are billions of dollars in potential development rights, the quality of drinking water for tens of millions of Americans and rules that affect farming in much of the country, as well as wildlife habitat for most of the nation’s migratory birds and many other species. Under the administration’s plan, the Clean Water Act’s protections would no longer apply to most seasonal ponds, wetlands and streams, including those that form major parts of drinking-water systems and fisheries throughout the nation, particularly in the arid West. As many as 1 in 3 Americans drink water derived in part from seasonal streams that may no longer get protections, according to scientific studies the Obama-era EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] relied on in writing the original rule. In California, where many significant stretches of fresh water dry up in the summer, as much as 66% of the state’s freshwater streams could lose federal protection. The waters would continue to have protection under state law, but few states are in position to replace the regulatory systems currently run by federal officials.” (Write-up 12/14/18)

**EXPLAIN** to the EPA (again) that this is *not* how we protect the environment

• **Andrew Wheeler**, Acting Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20460, (202) 564-4700

**ASK** our Congresspeople to explore ways they can work against these proposed rule changes

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

From *Rogan’s List*: “The Trump administration [via the Department of the Interior]… detailed its plan to open nine million acres to drilling and mining by stripping away protections for the sage grouse, an imperiled ground-nesting bird that oil companies have long considered an obstacle to some of the richest deposits in the American West. In one stroke, the action would open more land to drilling than any other step the administration has taken, environmental policy experts said. It drew immediate criticism from environmentalists while energy-industry representatives praised the move, saying that the earlier policy represented an overreach of federal authority. With this single action, the administration is saying: ‘This landscape doesn’t matter. This species doesn’t matter. Oil and gas matter. We don’t need this oil, just like we don’t need tons of coal anymore. Green Energy is our future for good climate and jobs. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**TELL** Trump and the Acting Secretary of the Interior to stop giving their oil friends our natural resources and destroying our native species

• **Donald Trump**, the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 50500, (202) 456-1111

• **David Bernhardt**, Acting Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. NW, Washington DC 20240, (202) 208-3100

**TELL** our Congresspeople that we object to these proposed rule changes and want to see them take a vocal stance against them

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

PG&E has faced scrutiny over the safety of its electrical power system in the aftermath of the 2017 fire siege. Cal Fire investigators have found the that the company's equipment was involved in starting at least 16 of last year's fires.... That’s in addition to the San Bruno explosion and this year’s Butte County wildfire. (Write-up 12/12/18)

**ASK** California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to weigh in on whether reckless operation or maintenance of PG&E electrical lines would violate state law

• **Xavier Becerra**, California Attorney General, 1300 "I" Street, Sacramento, CA 94244-2919, (916) 210-6276

While Donald Trump has refused to sign on to the Paris Climate Accords, several Sovereign Native Nations within the U.S. have declared their commitment to the Accords. (Write-up 12/12/18)

**THANKS** for taking this action in the face of U.S. intransigence to

• **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe**, Building #1 N. Standing Rock, PO Box D, Fort Yates, ND 58538, (701) 854-8500

• **Quinault Indian Nation Tribal Community**, PO Box 129, Tahola, WA 98587, (360) 276-8211

• **Swinomish Tribal Community**, 11404 Moorage Way, LaConner, WA 98257, (360) 466-7200

• **Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska**, 320 Willoughby Ave., Juneau, AK 99801, (907) 586-1432

**ETHICS and SEPARATION of POWERS**

What’s wrong with this picture? The Department of Defense is run by a former Boeing executive; The Environmental Protection Agency is run by a former coal lobbyist; Health and Human Services is run by a former pharmaceutical lobbyist; the Department of the Interior is run by a former oil-industry lobbyist. (Write-up 1/3/19)

**REMIND** your Senators of this fact and **ASSERT** your preference for government leadership independent of the industries they monitor

• **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

Fight for the Future states, “It’s a new year and the new Congress is being sworn in. Soon, supporters of net neutrality will be in charge of the key House committees that provide oversight for the FCC [Federal Communications Commission]. They’ll have the power to investigate Chairman Ajit Pai, and haul him into hearings where he’ll have no choice but to face questions about his agency’s reckless attack on Internet freedom. Finally, he’ll have to answer for things like lying to the media about a DDoS [Distributed Denial of Service] attack that never happened, and refusing to cooperate with FOIA requests and investigations into fraudulent comments.” You may remember that when public comments were being solicited on the FCC proposal to end net neutrality, a substantial body of apparently falsified comments was submitted on the topic, with hundreds of individuals reporting that they had not filed comments that had appeared under their names. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**TELL** our Congresspeople that we haven’t forgotten this problematic behavior by the FCC and its chair and that we want an investigation

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

**ASK** the Chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, which has oversight of the FCC, to make such an investigation a priority

• **Representative Frank Pallone** (D-NJ), Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2927

From *Rogan’s List*: “Want to give our senators a nice phone call [or postcard], for a change? Let's leave them both a sweet thank-you for backing Charles Schumer's commitment to block the traditional year-end mass approval of federal judicial nominees. For the past 2 years Republicans have been ramming large groups of conservative judges through the confirmation process, judges like the one in Texas who just ruled against the ACA and its protections for people with preexisting conditions.” (Write-up 1/2/19)

**ASK** our Senators to continue fighting these inappropriate, destructive judicial nominees

• **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

Let’s play Connect the Dots. *Part 1*: In early December, the *Hill* reported “A political appointee and former adviser to Charles and David Koch will oversee Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests sent to the Interior Department, a position typically held by career staff. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke last month quietly issued a secretarial order giving Daniel Jorjani the authority to oversee all FOIA requests at the agency, according to a document obtained by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD). Jorjani, who Zinke previously appointed as principal deputy solicitor and who has been serving as acting solicitor, will serve as chief FOIA officer, according to the Nov. 20 decree. *Part 2*: At the end of December *Bloomberg Environment* reported “The Interior Department said it wants the right to ignore some requests from journalists and the public under the Freedom of Information Act, noting a sharp increase in requests during the Trump administration…. Interior said it has seen a 30 percent jump between fiscal years 2016 and 2018 in the number of inquiries and litigation over the past two years. FOIA requests for information from Office of the Secretary have risen 210 percent during that time. [Under the proposed rules change the] agency wouldn’t honor any FOIA request that ‘requires an unreasonably burdensome search or requires the bureau to locate, review, redact, or arrange for inspection of a vast quantity of material,’ the proposal said. Interior had 129 active cases in litigation as of Sept. 31, 2018, compared to six cases at the end of September 2015, and 30 by Sept. 31, 2016. ‘The department’s attempts to respond accurately, completely, and in a timely manner to every request have been further hindered by the dramatic increase in litigation,’ the agency said in the proposal.” See any connections? (Write-up 1/2/19)

**DEMAND** that the Department of the Interior honor FOIA requests and **SUGGEST** that if the Department is overwhelmed by litigation the answer is not to abandon its responsibility to the U.S. public, but to stop engaging in legally dubious behaviors that result in litigation

• **David Bernhardt**, Acting Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. NW, Washington DC 20240, (202) 208-3100

**EXPRESS** your outrage at this attempt to disregard and weaken the FOIA to your Congresspeople

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

One of the lovely results of the 2018 blue wave is that all House committees will have Democratic chairs in the next session of Congress—and several of these chairs have subpoena power and are in an excellent position to stand up to the dubious claims and practices of the Republican administration. These include Jerry Nadler, Chair of Judiciary (overseeing special counsel reports and impeachment investigations); Elijah Cummings, Chair of House Oversight and Government Reform (may ask questions about Cabinet Secretaries, immigration, security clearances, and hurricane recovery); Maxine Waters, Financial Services Chair (can investigate national and international dealing of Trump Corporation); Adam Schiff, Intelligence Chair (the entire Russian election interference/collusion/obstruction thing); Richard Neal, Ways and Means Chair (tax returns!). (Write-up 1/1/19)

**WELCOME** the House members to their new positions and **TELL** them a little about how you hope they’ll use their subpoena power

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

• **Representative Elijah Cummings** (D-MD), Chair House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, 2157 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3974

• **Representative Maxine Waters** (D-CA), House Financial Services Committee Chair, 2129 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-7502

• **Representative Adam Schiff** (D-CA), House Intelligence Committee Chair, Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304, U.S. Capitol Building, Washington DC 20151-6415, (202) 225-7690

• **Representative Richard Neal** (D-MA), House Ways and Means Chair, 1102 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3625

After Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice, eighty-three ethics complaints were filed against him. All of these were dismissed, not because of their merits (or lack thereof), but because the panel of federal judges determined that they had no authority to act against a sitting Supreme Court Justice. Another complicating factor is that, unlike every other court in the land, the Supreme Court does not have a code of ethics that it is obligated to honor. One of the moves the House Judiciary Committee and its new Chair could make in the coming Congressional session is support legislation holding the Supreme Court to the ethical practices, including recusals and disqualifications from cases where they may have conflicts of interest or the appearance of bias. (Write-up 1/1/19)

**URGE** support for legislation of this sort from the new Judiciary Committee Chair and **AFFIRM** the need for every court, including our highest, to have a clear, enforceable code of ethics

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

Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayana Priestly, and Rashida Tlaib have raised concerns that the orientation for new Congress members included presentations from four corporate leaders and had no presence from labor or community activists. The orientation was sponsored by three groups: the Harvard Institute of Politics, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. (Write-up 12/12/18)

**DEMAND** that the sponsors make sure the next orientation for new members of Congress includes perspectives from all the constituents these people serve, not just from corporations and entrenched government officials

• **Harvard Institute of Politics**, 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 495-1360

• **American Enterprise Institute**, 1789 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 862-5800

• **Center for Strategic and International Studies**, 1616 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 887-0200

**GENERAL DECENCY**

From *Pro Publica*: “Over the past six months, ProPublica has gathered hundreds of police reports detailing allegations of sexual assaults in immigrant children’s shelters, which have received $4.5 billion for housing and other services since the surge of unaccompanied minors from Central America in 2014. The reports, obtained through public records requests, revealed a largely hidden side of the shelters—one in which both staff and other residents sometimes acted as predators. But ProPublica’s review of the hundreds of police reports showed something else about the assaults…. Kids at shelters across the country were, indeed, reporting sexual attacks in the shelters, often by other kids. But again and again, the reports show, the police were quickly—and with little investigation—closing the cases, often within days, or even hours. And there are likely even more such cases. ProPublica’s cache of records is missing many police reports from shelters in Texas, where the largest number of immigrant children are held, because state laws there ban child abuse reports from being made public, particularly when the assaults are committed by other minors.” (Write-up 1/2/19)

**DEMAND** investigation of these assaults and accountability for those responsible—including arrests—and an immediate removal of anyone involved in such assaults from any contact with children being held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Customs and Border Patrol detention

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

• **Ronald Vitiello**, Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**,** 500 12th St. SW, Washington D.C. 20536, (866) DHS-2-ICE

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

**DEMAND** Congressional intervention to ensure that asylum seekers entering the U.S. are not at risk of death due to absent or inadequate health screenings and healthcare

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

Russian agent Maria Butina infiltrated the NRA and there's no telling what influence she may have had on our election.” (Write-up 1/2/19)

**INSIST** on an investigation that includes NRA testimony before Congress about what they knew and when, under power of subpoena, if necessary

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

• **Representative Adam Schiff** (D-CA), House Intelligence Committee Chair, Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304, U.S. Capitol Building, Washington DC 20151-6415, (202) 225-7690

From *HillReporter.com*: “The Trump administration [apparently began] sending discharge orders to multiple members of the United States Air Force just days before Christmas. According to Lambda Legal, who has teamed with OutServe-SLDN and Winston & Strawn to file a lawsuit on the behalf of these individuals, the plaintiffs were found to be ‘unfit for continued military service,’ for the mere fact that they had HIV. The lawsuit, Roe and Voe v. Mattis, has been filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, anonymously in order to protect the plaintiffs’ identities. According to Lambda Legal, the Trump administration is using a new policy they implemented in February called ‘Deploy or Get Out, which separates those who have not deployed in over 12 months from their military service. When one combines this new policy with policies already in place which forbid service members living with HIV from deploying outside the United States without a waiver, you get the legal justification to fire HIV-positive service members.” Bear in mind that being HIV positive is *not* the same as having AIDS and that most HIV-positive individuals treated with retrovirals never progress to full-blown AIDS. (Write-up 1/2/19)

**CONDEMN** this unnecessary, bigoted harassment and severance of members of our military

• **Patrick M. Shanahan**, Acting Secretary of Defense, 1000 Defense Pentagon, Washington DC 20301-1000, (703) 571-3343

# • Representative Adam Smith (D-WA), Chair, House Armed Services Committee, 2216 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4151

# • Representative Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Member, House Armed Services Committee, 2216 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4151

A.B.32 would prohibit the Department of Corrections, as of January 1, 2020, from entering into or renewing a contract with a private, for-profit prison to incarcerate state prison inmates. The bill would also prohibit, after January 1, 2028, a state prison inmate or other person under the jurisdiction of the department from being incarcerated in a private, for-profit prison facility. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor and your State Assemblyperson that prisons should not be a for-profit industry and that we are tired of the abuses perpetrated in these facilities

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

A.B.33 would prohibit the boards of the Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS) and the State Teachers’ Retirement System (STRS) from making new investments or renewing existing investments of public employee retirement funds in a private prison company. This bill would require the boards to liquidate investments in private prison companies on or before July 1, 2020, and would require the boards to constructively engage with private prison companies to establish whether the companies are transitioning their business models to another industry. The bill would provide that it does not require a board to take any action unless the board determines in good faith that the action is consistent with the board’s fiduciary responsibilities established in the constitution. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor and your State Assemblyperson that PERS and STRS should not be contributing to the profits of the prison-industrial context and that you want strong support for A.B.33

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

Santa Cruz County’s Mark Stone has introduced A.B.45, “Inmates: medical visits.” Existing law authorizes the Director of Corrections to charge a $5 fee for each inmate-initiated medical visit of an inmate, except under specified circumstances, and requires that the moneys received be expended to reimburse the department for direct provision of inmate health care services. For most inmates, their only source of cash to pay the current fee is earnings from prison labor that currently averages 20¢ and hour, meaning a single medical visit might require the equivalent of more than half a week’s fulltime work. This bill would repeal this authorization to charge that. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**ASK** the Governor to support A.B.45

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**THANK** Assemblyperson Stone for introducing A.B.45

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

**ASK** your Assemblyperson to support A.B.45

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

A new, bipartisan attempt has been launched to extend the statute of limitations from one year to three for workers filing sexual harassment claims under state law. Former-Governor Brown had vetoed this legislation, saying harassment allegations should be investigated, but that the believed the current one-year deadline ‘not only encourages prompt resolution while memories and evidence are fresh, but also ensures that unwelcome behavior is promptly reported and halted.’ We agree that it would be ideal if all workplace sexual harassment claims could be filed within a year, but there are many reasons women—and men—may need a longer time to file claims. The recent confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh illustrates the kind of harassment those filing complaints can experience, which might make them hesitant to file. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor that we need a longer statute of limitations for workplace sexual harassment and ask him to supportA.B.9

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**ASK** your Assemblyperson to support A.B.9

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

In 2016, then-Governor Brown vetoed legislation that would have made tampons and other menstrual products nontaxable. Now that Gavin Newsom is Governor, this legislation is being reintroduced as A.B.31. A similar piece of reintroduced legislation, A.B.66, would exempt diapers from taxation. When Brown vetoed both pieces of legislation, he cited the potential loss of tax income for the state as his justification. Neither bill has been assigned to a committee at this time. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor that you don’t want to see the veto of these pieces of legislation repeated

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**ASK** your Assemblyperson to support A.B.31 and A.B.66

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

# • Assemblymember Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

# GUNS

The *BBC* reports: “This year, 113 people have been killed or injured in school shootings in the United States. That's the sobering finding of a project to count the annual toll of gun attacks in schools. At the beginning of 2018, Education Week, a journal covering education in the US, began to track school shootings—and has since recorded 23 incidents where there were deaths or injuries. With many parts of the US having about 180 school days per year, it means, on average, a shooting once every eight school days. Another database recording school shootings says 2018 has had the highest number of incidents ever recorded, in figures going back to 1970. That database, from the US Center for Homeland Defense and Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), uses a different way of identifying gun incidents in school, and says this year there have been 94.” Whichever figures we use, these numbers are unacceptable. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**REMIND** Congressional leaders that the vast majority of Americans favor reasonable gun control and that we’re still waiting for Congress to take meaningful action

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

• **Senator Chuck Schumer** (D-NY), Senate Minority Leader, 332 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-6542

• **Representative Paul Ryan** (R-WI), Speaker of the House, 1233 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3031

# • Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Minority Leader, 233 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

How many times have we heard that the blame for gun violence can placed on failures in the mental health/substance abuse system? S.B.11 would not only authorize, an employer, a coworker, or an employee of a secondary or postsecondary school that the person has attended in the last 6 months to file a petition for a one-year, renewable gun violence restraining order. It would also prohibit health care plans and insurers that provide prescription drug benefits for the treatment of substance use disorders from, among other things, imposing any prior authorization requirements on a prescription medication approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of substance use disorders. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor and your State Senator that you want them to support S.B.11’s two-pronged approach to reducing gun violence

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

Existing law provides that any person who has been convicted of certain misdemeanors may not, within 10 years of the conviction, own, purchase, receive, possess, or have under their custody or control, any firearm. Existing law also makes it a misdemeanor or a felony for a person who is prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm pursuant to these provisions to own, possess, or have under their custody or control, any ammunition or reloaded ammunition. S.B.55 would increase the number of misdemeanors that this existing law applies to, though in some cases the prohibition on firearm and ammunition possession could be for a period of less than 10 years. Additional convictions for misdemeanors of a single type could also lengthen the period of the prohibition from possessing firearms and ammunition. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**TELL** the Governor and your State Senator that this is the kind of reasonable gun regulation we need

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

CNN Reports: “Nearly 40,000 people in the United States died by guns last year [2017], marking the highest number of gun deaths in decades, according to a new analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WONDER database…. CNN replicated that analysis and found that 39,773 people died by guns in 2017, which is an increase of more than 10,000 deaths from the 28,874 in 1999. The age-adjusted rate of firearm deaths per 100,000 people rose from 10.3 per 100,000 in 1999 to 12 per 100,000 in 2017. CDC statisticians confirmed with CNN on Thursday that these numbers are correct and they show gun deaths have reached a record-high going back to at least 1979, which was the year firearm deaths started to be coded in mortality data. CNN's analysis also showed that, within the total number of deaths, 23,854 people died from suicide by guns in 2017, the highest number in 18 years. That's a difference of more than 7,000 deaths compared with 16,599 suicide deaths by guns in 1999…. [According to Adelyn Allchin, the director of public health research for the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence], ‘In 2017, nearly 109 people died every single day from gun violence. Gun violence is a public health epidemic that requires a public health solution, which is why we must immediately enact and implement evidence-based interventions—like permit-to-purchase policies and extreme risk laws.’ (Write-up 12/28/18)

**REMIND** our Congresspeople that we’re still waiting for significant action on gun control

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-286

# HEALTH and HEALTHCARE

S.B.11 and S.B.12 by Sen. Jim Beall (D-San Jose) address mental health issues. S.B.11 would require health insurers and service plans to submit annual reports showing how they comply with laws requiring them to approve mental health care treatment to the same extent they would all medical and surgical benefits. S.B.12 would authorize state and local governments to establish at least 100 mental health centers statewide for youth. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**ASK** the Governor and your Assemblyperson to support A.B.11 and 12

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Assemblymember Robert Rivas** [for Watsonville], 275 Main St. Watsonville, CA 95076, (831) 768-3035

• **Assemblymember** Mark Stone [for Santa Cruz], 701 Ocean St. #318b, Santa Cruz, CAS 95060, (831) 425-1303

S.B.24 reintroduces additional vetoed legislation and would require California public universities to provide abortion medication for students and mandate quick testing of rape kits, both of which were vetoed by Brown this year. Governor Newsom has spoken in favor of this legislation. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**THANK** the Governor for his support of S.B.24

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

**ASK** your State Senator to support S.B.24

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

From *New York*’s “Intelligencer”: “the coal industry will receive a late Christmas gift. The federal government is scheduled to reduce an excise tax on coal production by 55 percent on December 31, a move that industry representatives welcome. But what is good for the coal industry is often bad for coal miners themselves. If the tax cut takes effect as planned, the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund will lose a significant source of its funding. Currently, the government levies a tax of $1.10 per ton of coal produced. That tax goes into the fund, which defrays the significant costs associated with black lung disease…. ‘With the scheduled 2019 tax rate decrease, our moderate case simulation suggests that expected revenue will likely be insufficient to cover combined black lung benefit payments and administrative costs, as well as debt repayment expenditures,” the GAO [Government Accountability Office] explained…. [R]ates of black lung are on the rise—though the industry steadfastly denies this. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reported in July that as many as one in five miners in central Appalachia suffer from black lung, the highest rate in 25 years. Nationwide, the condition now afflicts one in ten miners, an increase of 3 percent since 2012.… In 2012, a joint investigation by NPR [National Public Radio] and the Center for Public Integrity [CPI] ‘found widespread and persistent gaming of the system designed to measure and control exposure….’ Sometimes coal operators commit outright fraud, by sampling air outside their own mines. Sometimes they simply fail to meet certain safety standards…. In other cases, operators exploit perfectly legal loopholes…. Thus, black lung, and more of it.” (Write-up 12/28/18)

**URGE** our Congresspeople to revisit the issue of the coal excise tax, the health of the Black Lung Disability Fund, and the air sampling methods used by mining 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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

In response to a recent court ruling that the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, is poised to lead the way in an appeal. Few states have as much on the line—given the aggressive implementation of both expanded Medicaid coverage through the Medi-Cal program and the insurance exchange run by Covered California. Outgoing Governor Jerry Brown called the ruling a “wanton and cruel action” that the state will fight. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**THANKS** (yet again) to our State Attorney General for being proactive in defending the well-being of Californians and all Americans

• **Attorney General Xavier Becerra**, 1300 I St., Sacramento, CA 95814-2919, (916) 445-9555

From CBS News via *Rogan’s List*: “Despite the facts that at least 20 vets commit suicide each day and that the VA identified suicide prevention as its highest clinical priority in 2018, it appears that Trump's VA sat on $6.2 million in prevention instead of using it to improve the situation. Let’s as the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs to investigate this matter.” (Write-up 12/28/18)

**CALL** for an investigation of this failure to use available resources to address the purpostedly “prioritized” issue of veteran suicides

• **Senator Johnny Isakson** (R-GA), Chair, Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, 412 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2074

• **Senator John Tester** (D-MT), Ranking Member, Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, 412 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2074

# • Representative Mark Takano (D-CA), Chair, House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, 333 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-9756

A U.S. appeals court blocked Republican administration rules that made it easier for employers to opt out of providing birth control as part of their employee health insurance coverage. When the Affordable Care Act went into effect during the Obama administration, only religious organizations were allowed to opt out of providing birth control coverage. Trump-era rule changes had extended this option to most companies, including publicly traded companies, to deny birth control coverage on religious grounds. These changes also offered privately held companies the broader option of denying birth control coverage on “moral,” not just religious, grounds. The law suit that brought about this ruling was initiated by a group of State Attorneys General led by California’s Xavier Becerra. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**THANKS** to our Attorney General for once again protecting us from some of the worst moves of the current Republican administration

# • Attorney General Xavier Becerra, 1300 I St., Sacramento, CA 95814-2919, (916) 445-9555

# HUMAN and CIVIL RIGHTS

# The *Washington Post* reports: “A recent internal Justice Department memo directed senior civil rights officials to examine how decades-old ‘disparate impact’ regulations might be changed or removed in their areas of expertise, and what the impact might be, according to people familiar with the matter. Similar action is being considered at the Education Department and is underway at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Under the concept of disparate impact, actions can amount to discrimination if they have an uneven effect even if that was not the intent, and rolling back this approach has been a longtime goal of conservative legal thinkers. Past Republican administrations have done little to erode the concept’s application, partly out of concerns that the Supreme Court might disagree, or that such changes would be unpopular and viewed as racist. Civil rights advocates said diminishing this tool could have sweeping consequences.” (Write-up 1/4/19)

# TELL the Departments involved and our Congresspeople that we have our eyes on this damaging move and OBJECT strongly

# • Matthew G. Whitaker, Acting Attorney General, Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20530-0001, (202) 353-1555

# • Secretary Betsy DeVos, U.S. Department of Education, 7W301 LBJ Building, Mail Number 0100, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington DC 20202, (202) 401-3000

# • Secretary Ben Carson, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th St. SW, Washington DC 20410, (202) 708-1112

# • 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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

S.B.31 declares it illegal to arrest someone for a civil violation while that person is in a courthouse for a proceeding or other legal business. This legislation is in response to the arrest of undocumented immigrants by federal immigration authorities while those immigrants were in court for an unrelated matter. This legislation has not yet been referred to committee. (Write-up 12/29/18)

**ASK** the Governor and your State Senator to support S.B.31, which affirms California’s status as a sanctuary state

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, State Capitol, Suite 1114, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-8994

• **Senator Bill Monning**, 701 Ocean St. #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0401

In December H.R.7212, the “Reproductive Rights Are Human Rights Act,” was introduced and sent to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This legislation would amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to require that Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices include a section on reproductive rights. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**ASK** the likely Chair of the House Foreign Relations Committee to prioritize this legislation in the next Congressional session

• **Representative Eliot Engel** (D-NY), Chair, House Foreign Affairs Committee, 2170 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2464

From *Rogan’s List*: This month, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). Although nonbinding, they include important commitments to uphold the human rights of refugees and migrants, support best practices, and work to end harmful ones As a first step, governments must demonstrate political will by stepping up with funding to begin implementing the compacts’ commitments, and that requires action in Congress. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**TELL** our Congresspeople we’d like to see them get busy writing and sponsoring funding legislation to support the GCR and GCM.

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

From *Rogan’s List*: “The Brennan Center for Justice has identified more than 100 emergency powers that ‘the president can invoke with the stroke of a pen. Some of these powers “allow the president to shut down or take over radio stations and even suspend a law that prohibits government testing of chemical and biological weapons on unwitting human subjects.’” (Write-up 12/28/18)

**JOIN** the Brennan Center in calling on our Members of Congress to review these powers and pass legislation to eliminate those that are not needed and to pass reforms to prevent their abuse.

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus has been pushing hard for an investigation of the deaths of children in Customs and Border Patrol detention facilities. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**THANKS** for standing up for the most vulnerable to

• **Congressional Hispanic Caucus**, 2329 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2410

A number of reports have emerged recently (with *Pro Publica* taking a lead) of the acquittals of prisoners who were wrongly convicted using “blood spatter analysis.” It turns out there is no sizeable body of research on blood splatter, no national body of standards, and no method for certifying “experts” in this area. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**TELL** the Department of Justice we’re concerned about the abuse of blood spatter analysis and want a) a call for the reviews of convictions in cases where so-called blood spatter analysis contributed significantly to the convictions and b) we’d like to see support for high-level, peer-reviewed research on blood spatter analysis

• **Matthew Whitaker**, Acting Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20530-0001

• **Gerald M. LaPorte M.S.F.S.**, Director, Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences, National Institute of Justice, 810 7th St. NW, Washington DC 20531, (202) 307-2942

From *Citizen Truth*: “A day after the 7-year-old girl’s small body returned to Guatemala in a coffin, a United Nations human rights expert demanded an independent probe into the death of Jakelin Caal while she was in the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)—and made a broader call for the U.S. to stop its international law-violating practice of detaining children on the basis of their migratory status. ‘The U.S. authorities must ensure that an in-depth, independent investigation of the death of Jakelin Ameí Caal is conducted,’ Felipe González Morales, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, said in a statement. Moreover, he added, ‘As repeatedly stated by a series of U.N. human rights bodies, detention of children based on their migratory status is a violation of international law.’ González Morales also expressed hope for being able to conduct an official visit to the United States, as that ‘would allow me to get first-hand, direct information about the situation of migrant children, especially on those who are being held in detention,’ and would ‘allow me to present my recommendations to the U.S. government to fulfill its international commitments to respect and protect the human rights of all migrants.’ Given the tragedy, González Morales’s office also sent a formal complaint to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.” Since then a second Guatemalan child, Felipe Gómez Alonzo, has also died in custody. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**DEMAND** an investigation into the deaths of these children and call for participation by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

• **Michael R. Pompeo**, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520, (202) 647-4000

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

After a series of short-term extensions, the 115th Congress has allowed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to expire. This failure again demonstrates the Republican administration’s disdain for protecting the marginalized. (Write-up 12/14/18)

**TELL** Congressional leadership and our Congresspeople that we want the 116th Congress to prioritize restoring VAWA

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

• **Senator Chuck Schumer** (D-NY), Senate Minority Leader, 332 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-6542

• **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), House Minority Leader [and probably Speaker], 233 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

# INTERNATIONAL

# *Kurdistan24* reports, “Google removed a map outlining the geographical extent of the Greater Kurdistan after the Turkish state asked it to do so…. ‘This map is no longer available due to a violation of our Terms of Service and/or policies,’ a note on the page that the map was previously on read. Google did not provide further details on how the Kurdistan map violated its rules. The map in question, available for years, used to be on Google’s My Maps service, a feature of Google Maps that enables users to create custom maps for personal use or sharing through search…. [Member of Parliament and ultra-right nationalist] Yavuz Agiralioglu, charged the map with ‘being at the service of terrorist organizations’… referring to Kurdish armed groups fighting for different degrees of autonomy and recognition of cultural rights in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, modern nation-states Kurdistan was divided between a century ago. He also claimed the map violated the Turkish borders, although it showed modern borders superimposed by a non-standard red line that defined Kurdistan as ‘a geo-cultural region wherein the Kurdish people have historically formed a prominent majority population.’… Currently, the search ‘Kurdistan’ on Google brings up results for the Kurdistan Region and its constitutionally-defined borders within Iraq and the Kurdistan Province in Western Iran. The use of the word ‘Kurdistan’ is criminalized in Turkey, even at the parliament’s floors.” (Write-up 1/3/19)

# OBJECT to this pandering to Turkish nationalism at the expense of acknowledging the Kurdish presence throughout much of the region

# • Larry Page, CEO and Director, Google Inc., 1600 Amphitheater Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, (650) 253-0000

From the *New York Times*: “A life on the run was not one any of these Nicaraguans ever intended. But many people in this desperately poor Central American nation now live in a bleak new reality. They have exchanged their routine lives as lawyers, engineering majors, radio broadcasters and merchants for one of ever-changing safe houses, encrypted messaging apps and pseudonyms. Eight months after a spontaneous popular uprising left 322 people dead and 565 others in jail, Nicaraguans from cities across the country have gone underground. They are hiding from an increasingly authoritarian state that is methodically tracking down those who participated in the large-scale and often violent protests against the government of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo.” It’s hard to know what Congress might be able to do to address this situation, but we can let our Congresspeople know we want them to pay attention and look for opportunities for effective action. (Write-up 12/28/18)

**TELL** our Congresspeople to keep Nicaragua in mind as the new legislative year begins

• **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), 212 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2861

From the *New York Times*: “Muslim inmates from internment camps in far western China hunched over sewing machines, in row after row. They were among hundreds of thousands who had been detained and spent month after month renouncing their religious convictions. Now the government was showing them on television as models of repentance, earning good pay — and political salvation — as factory workers. China’s ruling Communist Party has said in a surge of upbeat propaganda that a sprawling network of camps in the Xinjiang region is providing job training and putting detainees on production lines for their own good, offering an escape from poverty, backwardness and the temptations of radical Islam. But mounting evidence suggests a system of forced labor is emerging from the camps, a development likely to intensify international condemnation of China’s drastic efforts to control and indoctrinate a Muslim ethnic minority population of more than 12 million in Xinjiang. Accounts from the region, satellite images and previously unreported official documents indicate that growing numbers of detainees are being sent to new factories, built inside or near the camps, where inmates have little choice but to accept jobs and follow orders…. China has defied an international outcry against the vast internment program in Xinjiang, which holds Muslims and forces them to renounce religious piety and pledge loyalty to the party. The emerging labor program underlines the government’s determination to continue operating the camps despite calls from United Nations human rights officials, the United States and other governments to close them.” (Write-up 12/28/18)

**ASK** the Secretary of State how the U.S. intends to address these large-scale human rights violations

• **Michael R. Pompeo**, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520, (202) 647-4000