



*Nebraskans for Peace*

# Nebraska Report

*There is no Peace without Justice*

JULY / AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2022  
VOLUME 50, NO. 2

## 2022 Annual Peace Conference Scheduled Saturday, September 24th



**Watch it live on Saturday, September 24th,  
or anytime after on our Social Media**

The 2022 Annual Peace Conference will be held virtually like the past few years. This gives us a unique opportunity to have some of the most prominent speakers in the history of the APC without the climate impacts of plane travel. This also means you can view the Conference live or any time after because it will be available on our Social Media platforms forever.

This year we are excited to announce that our keynotes will be CODEPINK Co-Founder and world-renowned Peace Activist, Medea Benjamin, and Co-Director of CODEPINK, Danaka Katovich. Their keynote is entitled “Working for Peace Across Generations: How to get young people involved in the Peace Movement?”

Medea co-founded not only CODEPINK but also the human rights group Global Exchange. She has been an advocate for social justice for over 40 years. Medea was one of 1,000 exemplary women from 140 countries nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the millions of women who do the essential work for peace worldwide.

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*Nebraskans for Peace's state office in Lincoln is located on land that formerly belonged to the Otoe Tribe.*

## Nebraska Report

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## Nebraskans for Peace

NFP is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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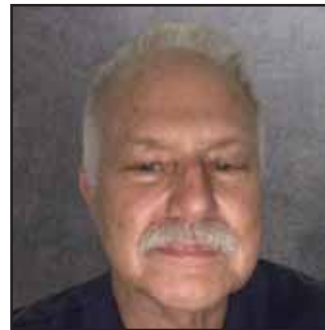
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# 2022 Annual Peace Conference, conclusion

Danaka graduated from DePaul University with a bachelor's in Political Science in November 2020. At CODEPINK, she works on youth outreach as a facilitator of the Peace Collective, CODEPINK's youth cohort that focuses on anti-imperialist education and divestment.

We will also feature three workshops this year—that cover priority topics of Nebraskans for Peace.



First, Steve Morse from Veterans for Peace will give a workshop called “The Climate Crisis and Militarism.” Steve lives in Oakland, CA and was in the Army from 1969-1971. Steve has been active in Veterans for Peace for many years; in August 2020, he co-founded the Climate Crisis & Militarism Project for Veterans for Peace.



Next, our very own Nebraskans for Peace Board Member Luisa Palomo-Hare and Nebraska teacher will lead a workshop titled “Education as a Tool for Social Justice.” After graduating college from Creighton University, Luisa chose to serve young students and their families at a dynamic urban school in downtown Omaha where she has taught for the last 18 years.



Lastly, we will be joined by Michael Kelly from Creighton Law School for the workshop on “The Role of International Law in the Russia-Ukraine War.” Professor Michael Kelly holds the Senator Allen A. Sekt Endowed Chair in Law at Creighton University's School of Law.

# The Most Important Thing

by Curtis Bryant Nebraskans for Peace  
Anti-War Committee Member

When in 1989, my eighteenth birthday got closer, it hit me like thunder: Not only did I have to register for the draft, but the US could soon be openly at war with Nicaragua, so I might have to go! All of a sudden, involvement in the peace movement and conscientious objection seemed extremely urgent. I even majored in peace studies in college!

Why did the remote chance that I would get drafted move me to action while my dread of nuclear war and global warming hadn't? It might be partly psychology—plane crashes can seem scarier than cancer, for instance—but I credit the peace movement. After determined disarmament campaigns by SANE/FREEZE (now Peace Action) and other peace organizations, the US and USSR had spent years not just talking about nuclear disarmament but taking steps toward it. Thanks to the peace movement, I felt safer and wanted to be part of it.

And global warming? Thanks to the environmental movement, the government banned the refrigerants that had caused the infamous ozone hole, the hole was starting to close, and the future of climate protection looked bright.

## Then Came Backlash

Not everyone saw that as progress, alas. The ferocity of today's backlash against the achievements of Peace and Justice movements testifies to how freaked out some people were and still are by our success.

How did we get here? Cognitive scientist George Lakoff, who has carefully studied how conservative and progressive Americans think, traces the backlash's beginning to a 1973 memo to wealthy conservatives from Lewis Powell calling for the creation of institutions to promote conservative

values and power in every area of life. The result was a system of well-funded think-tanks, conservative media, and candidates carefully trained in effective messaging that has been extremely successful. Although there is a progressive counterpart to this system, it is much less robust and disciplined for various reasons.

And veteran activist George Lakey has argued that conservative movements, such as the anti-abortion movement, have stayed on the offense, while progressive movements have tended to play defense by reacting to the conservatives, saying "Stop this" and "End that," rather than seizing the initiative and going for what we want. An important exception is the LG-BTQ+ movement. This movement has overcome the backlash by staying on offense, changing Americans' attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people, and winning marriage equality and nondiscrimination laws and policies.

## A Way Forward

When tempted to feel discouraged, I remember that what we're up against today is a backlash. They are reacting to us because we are powerful and have changed this country. For example, Nebraskans for Peace protected the climate by helping block Keystone XL and helped the Lakota Nation uphold its sovereignty and health by closing the liquor stores in Whiteclay, NE. While the backlashers are a minority, the peace and justice movement can potentially mobilize the majority.

## The Personal and Political

I fell into a bad habit during the previous presidential mis-administration: doomscrolling. This is joylessly overdosing on alarming and depressing news and analysis. The psychological goal of doomscrolling is to meet a

legitimate need for control by always having the latest information, but it doesn't work because I'm actually giving my power away. Nothing could be easier because news websites and social media sites are designed to keep visitors clicking. To beat this, I've found it helps to set some boundaries:

- Reading less news and analysis of current events overall.
- Avoiding most social media.
- Avoiding clickbait by reading more on paper or listening to audiobooks.

### Changing what I read also helps:

- Movement media such as *Nebraska Report*, *Yes! Magazine*, *Waging Non-violence*, and the *Words to Win By* podcast. Though these are available online, they have a lot less clickbait, doom and gloom, and less-frequent updates than corporate media.
- Reading to educate myself about effective activism (below).

## The Most Important Thing

Taking action! As singer Joan Baez put it, "Action is the antidote to despair." Though I no longer fear the draft, I do feel personally threatened by global warming, pandemics, and efforts to deny our rights, prevent us from voting, and intimidate us with gun violence. I joined the Nebraskans for Peace Anti-War and International Law Committee and encourage my neighbors to vote as a Nebraska Democratic Party block captain.

The world, our country, Nebraska, and I need the peace and justice movement more than ever. Let's build together a world in which war is abolished, global warming has been solved, and all people everywhere live in peace, freedom, health, and prosperity!



# Degrowth: Adjusting Economy to Life (RATHER THAN VICE VERSA)

by Anthony T. Fiscella

How do we define “progress,” “development,” or even “happiness”? For many decades—and to the peril of many species on Earth (including humans)—politicians, industry, and most media in the United States have inextricably tied answers to those questions to economic growth. According to this formula, an expanding market resolves all problems ranging from war to energy scarcity. Growing economies bring growing prosperity for everyone (eventually). This ideology pertains even to environmental movements where the two dominant frameworks—“eco-modernism” (i.e., technology will solve the eco-crises) and “sustainable development” (i.e., green economies plus social justice)—both advocate an ever-expanding economy on a planet of finite resources. This belief keeps our consumer-oriented society constantly consuming more and more even while wondering: “Why hasn’t it worked?”, “Why hasn’t recycling done what we hoped it would?”, “Why do global temperatures and ocean water levels keep rising?” and “Why do thousands of plant and animal species keep disappearing each year?” In fact, rises in carbon emissions neatly follow rises in GDP.

A minority viewpoint, yet increasingly powerful one, offers a strikingly plain response: our expanding economies themselves increase carbon emissions, destroy natural habitats, and threaten countless species. This view, known as degrowth, insists that we need to topple the ideology of the economic growth paradigm and decouple economic expansion from health, prosperity, and social progress. According to degrowth principles, we need radically different means of assessing the welfare of society. Many people would feel more

happiness and harmony in their lives if they had less money but more time—if they could meet their basic needs. Subsequently, degrowth calls for a radical redistribution of wealth for all people to have the option of working less and consuming less.

As a movement among activists and scholars, the idea of degrowth (from the French *décroissance*) formally took hold at the first international degrowth conference in Paris in 2008. Its ideas and basic premises go back as far as the early 1970s

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in the Global North and have roots in indigenous societies back to time immemorial. After all, Native Americans had far fewer material technologies at their disposal than a typical urban household, yet they worked less hours to secure their basic needs. They enjoyed the opportunities to travel without passports, to resolve conflicts without police or prisons, and to build with—rather than at the expense of—nature. In South America, Native principles that advocate a collective life in shared simplicity have acquired the name *Buen Vivir*. As with the southern African concept of *Ubuntu*, *Buen Vivir* views humans as embedded within na-

ture instead of separate from it.

Similarly, John Africa (1931-1985) founded the MOVE Organization in Philadelphia in the 1970s to defend Mother Nature, animals, oceans, and all life from the constant threats of industry and economic “development.” Their inner-city experiment in communal, sober, low-tech living constituted an early foray into modern degrowth alternatives. Most degrowth scholars, however, trace their lineage to people such as priest and deschooling activist Ivan Illich (1926-2002) and Romanian-American economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen (1906-1994), who, each in their own way, advocated ridding ourselves of addictions to unnecessary and destructive technologies whether luxury cars, plastics, or weapons of war. According to Georgescu-Roegen, we could ostensibly revert to a “steady state” economy (in which the growth rate remains flat, neither increasing nor decreasing), yet, as we already consume far beyond our means, we would need first to sustain a declining economy until we reached a genuinely sustainable level of production and consumption. Illich emphasized that our current paradigm makes poverty unnecessarily miserable by supplying health care that makes people sick, education that makes people stupid, and courts that deprive people of justice. Such a system, he argued, made people ever dependent upon commodities. John Africa saw this as an extension of a misguided sense of identity. He argued that until we identify our personal lives as one with all life, we will continue to mistakenly destroy ourselves in our attempts to heal.

Right or wrong, degrowth offers a very different approach to how we answer some basic questions regarding ecology, economy, and life. (For more info, see [www.degrowth.info](http://www.degrowth.info)).

# Nebraskans for Peace Billboard in Grand Island

## Help Us Spread the Message



*Visit our billboard near Hwy 281 and Hwy 34 in Grand Island and snap a photo to post to your social media. Please tag Nebraskans for Peace and use one or more of the following hashtags: #NebraskansforPeace #NFP #Cutthemilitarybudget #endhunger*

The United States spends more on the military budget than the next 9 countries COMBINED. Nebraskans for Peace has and will remain steadfast against this unsustainable budget. This summer Representatives Barbara Lee and Mark Pocan introduced the People Over the Pentagon Act which proposed cutting \$100 billion from the proposed \$801 billion military budget. The legislation was twofold: to cut funding

from excessive spending on war and weapons and to support programs that are underfunded or not funded at all here at home.

Imagine how we could use \$100 billion here to support renewable energy infrastructure to combat climate

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# OMAHA TOGETHER ONE COMMUNITY LEADS STATEWIDE EFFORT

by Kathleen Grant and Jeanne Schuler

There are 50,000 – 80,000 job openings in Nebraska. That’s according to Bryan Slone, President of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Nebraskans see “Help Wanted” signs everywhere. There is an “urgent” need for Nebraska workers, according to Erin Porterfield, Executive Director, Heartland Workforce Solutions. Employers say they are “desperate” for workers.

Leaders of Omaha Together One Community (OTOC), a 30-year-old non-partisan organization of 25 churches and community groups, have been meeting with a diverse group of Nebraska’s business, immigrant, advocacy, faith, hospitality, labor, educational, city, legal, and agricultural interests since late 2021 about Nebraska’s labor shortage. In an *Omaha World-Herald* article, Mr. Slone noted that workforce shortage is Nebraska’s “No. 1 issue.” He stated that “big and bold steps” are needed to address Nebraska’s workforce shortage and that “Federal immigration reform is critical to solving the worker shortage.” OTOC couldn’t agree with him more.

Nebraska’s labor shortage is the worst in the country. There are 65 people looking for work for every 100 job openings in the United States. However, in Nebraska, only 32 Nebraskans are looking for work for every 100 job openings—the lowest in the U.S. We hear “that’s because no one wants to work.” Not true. Nebraska has the second highest labor force participation rate in the United States. Further, Nebraska is in the top tier of states where workers work at least two jobs.

Fortunately, Nebraska has a solution-immigration reform.

There are three opportunities for reform that would significantly increase the number of eligible workers in Nebraska. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a temporary designation that allows persons who entered the U.S. during a specific time period and met specific requirements to have a provisional designation that protects them from deportation and allows them to work lawfully. The

cause they fear reprisals after disclosing personal information. There is a current injunction due to a lawsuit filed by the State of Texas and joined by Nebraska and other states, which allows eligible “dreamers” to apply for DACA, but USCIS will not process it. President Trump attempted to end DACA. If successful, we will lose thousands of educators, health care workers, business owners, and other productive Nebraskans.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)



Migration Policy Institute estimates that 4,000 Nebraskans are immediately eligible for DACA based on the criteria outlined at the program’s launch in 2012 (2021 data). Of these, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reports that there are only 2,760 DACA recipients in Nebraska (March 31, 2022).

Unfortunately, those eligible for DACA are often reluctant to apply be-

is a designation that allows individuals to remain in the U.S. as a “safe haven” because their countries of origin are too unsafe to accept them. TPS holders have work authorizations and are protected from deportation. Persons with TPS are here lawfully. They undergo rigorous vetting every 18 months at the cost of \$500 per individual. Salvadorans are the largest group of persons with TPS in the U.S. Two thousand



Salvadorans live and work in Nebraska, mainly in construction, food processing plants, restaurants, landscaping, and childcare. Most have lived here for decades, many own their homes, and many have children who are U.S. citizens. They pay income and payroll taxes even though they are ineligible to collect Social Security or Medicare. President Trump sought to end Temporary Protected Status for those from

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El Salvador. If that effort is successful, Nebraska will lose 2,000 workers and their citizen children.

In addition to DACA and TPS holders, there are 42,000 Nebraskans without documentation, according to the Migration Policy Institute. Of that number, 39,000 are 16 years or older. The majority are longstanding Nebraska residents. Fifty-seven percent (57 percent) are proficient at speaking English; 62 percent have lived in the U.S. for more than ten years; 44 percent of those 15 years or older are married; 49 percent have children living with them; 13 percent have a college or professional degree, and a third own their homes. These Nebraskans are supporting their communities. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that undocumented Nebraskans pay \$40



million per year in state and local taxes, which does not count federal taxes!

Unfortunately, one-third of the adults are not in the labor force. Many who are working are not able to fully utilize their talents. At a recent meeting in a church in South Omaha, we met two women from Central America. One of them worked in health care before coming to the U.S. The other, a fluent English speaker, is an accountant. Both are cleaning houses.

In March 2022, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce joined a diverse group of national leaders to form the Alliance for a New Immigration Consensus (ANIC). ANIC aligns with OTOC's priorities to convince Congress to make significant changes to our current immigration system. Their initial priorities address agricultural workers and persons with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or Temporary Protected Status.

On July 27, OTOC convened a group of almost 60 Nebraska leaders at the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

to initiate a statewide effort to build the power necessary to influence our elected representatives and community leaders to recognize that immigrants are a solution to our labor shortage, and to put that recognition into action. Nebraskans for Peace leaders were active participants in this meeting. Going forward, OTOC anticipates growing this collaboration by conducting individual and small group meetings with Nebraskans across the state. These meetings will be opportunities for members of Nebraskans for Peace to be involved. We want to listen to and learn from other Nebraskans about their communities' workforce needs and priorities.

Clearly, addressing Nebraska's labor shortage is essential to Nebraska's growth and economic health. It is also vital that we embrace our newest neighbors as they enrich, sustain, and revitalize our communities. Immigration reform is essential to solving Nebraska's labor shortage. It is long overdue and the right thing to do.

# What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

## Where Was the Supreme Court When the Earth Burned?

When Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was a youngster, only a few people talked about carbon dioxide. In fact, until about 50 years ago, he and the other five justices who voted to strip the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of its power to formulate policies to slow down the impact of a rapidly heating

without detailed consideration of the existential question that we all face with regard to coal and oil: oh, wise ones, what must we do about the warming of the Earth by combustion of fossil fuels, the elephant in the geophysical broom closet? If we give any credence to most scientists and most of us who pay atten-

sue all legal avenues to forestall climate change and its catastrophic economic and ecological effects. “We cannot and will not ignore the danger to public health and existential threat the climate crisis poses,” Biden said. “The science confirms what we all see with our own eyes—the wildfires, droughts, extreme



*Justice Elena Kagan wrote the court had substituted its own judgment over that of lawmakers. “Whatever else this court may know about, it does not have a clue about how to address climate change. And let’s say the obvious: The stakes here are high. Yet the court today prevents congressionally authorized agency action to curb power plants’ carbon dioxide emissions.”*

atmosphere on everything we know and cherish would have been able to plead ignorance of Nature’s laws.

In the world of police and judges, we know that ignorance of the law is no excuse. When the crime is aiding and abetting the destruction of civilization as we have known it on a scorched planet, the six-member Trump bloc on the nine-member court seem to have received a perpetual get-out-of-jail-free card.

The Court made such a ruling

tion to our surroundings, our history, and our future: sequestering the world into little conceptual legal boxes is not going to do it. What will your families of the future think about the scalded world that you will leave them? This may not be strictly a legal question. However, planetary survival will trump legal fine points when basic survival is at issue.

Thank you for allowing me to rant. Now, let’s get practical. President Joe Biden said after the ruling he would pur-

heat, and intense storms are endangering our lives and livelihoods,” he said. “I will take action.”

In a dissent, Justice Elena Kagan wrote the court had substituted its own judgment over that of lawmakers. “Whatever else this court may know about, it does not have a clue about how to address climate change,” she wrote. “And let’s say the obvious: The stakes here are high. Yet the court today prevents congressionally authorized agency action to curb power plants’ carbon dioxide emissions.”



## The Earth is Not on the Docket

What's to do when the high and mighty U.S. Supreme Court declares the Earth is not on the docket? Perhaps we—the “we” who read and watch the news—who have paid attention to the case we'll call Clarence Thomas, et al. vs. the Earth's residents, re: survival of all species, great and small. Rise up and declare the maintenance of the status quo irrelevant to these proceedings.

If it's a utility, buy a few shares of its stock, attend annual meetings, and make some noise. Bring some similarly situated friends and learn some things. Write letters to your newspaper, and don't make any moves until you are secure in your knowledge of who's doing what to whom and why. You may be surprised at the effect a growing number of well-informed, active people can have. No Supreme Court is needed.

If yours is a public utility (every kilowatt of power generated in Nebraska is publicly owned), even better. You are already a shareholder. You can attend meetings without asking for a hall pass.

Let's sum this up: Andy Borowitz of *The New Yorker* came up with this take on our activist, ideologically driven Supreme Court:

### Nation's Fetuses Puzzled Why Supreme Court Wants Them Exposed to Air Pollution

#### A Bloody Temper Tantrum

Let's see: Someone whose name we won't mention lost two presidential elections by about 10 million votes. He won the electoral college by a narrow margin and assumed office for four years of pitiful, painful, harrowing... you can pick your own adjective. In the second elec-

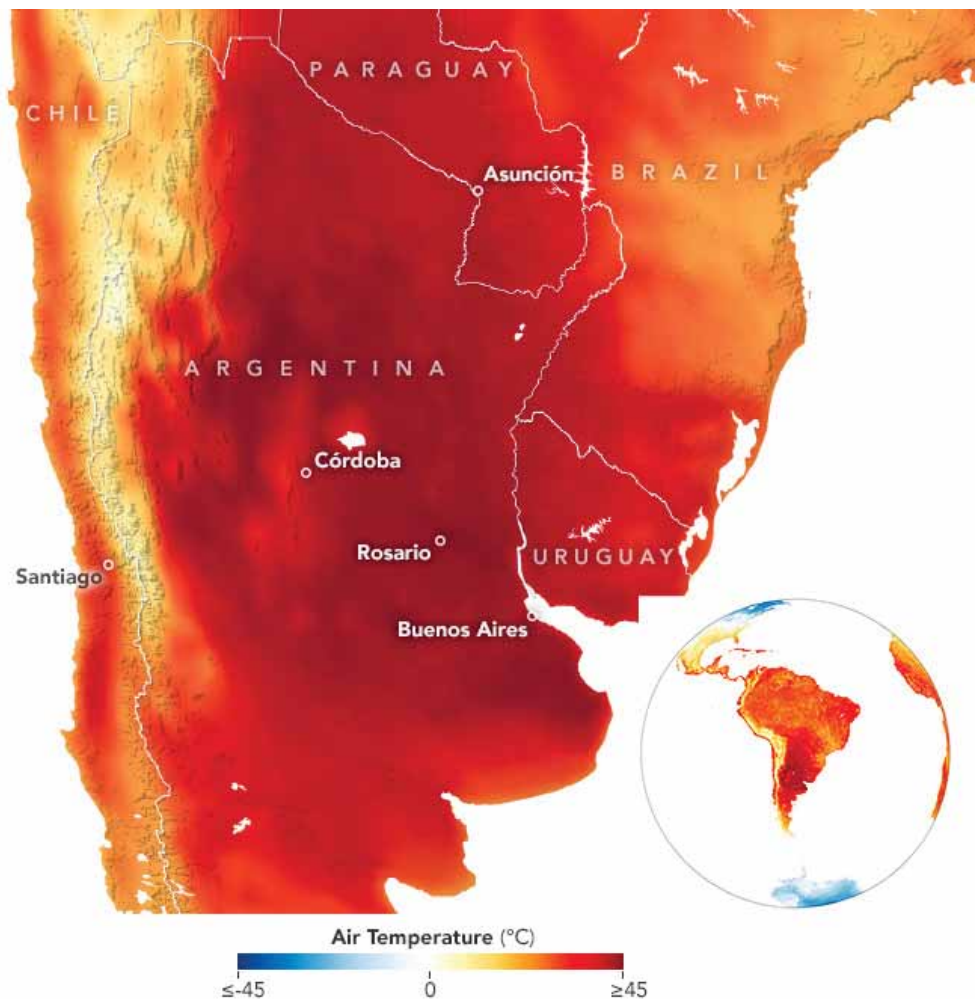
tion, he lost both the popular vote and the electoral college and then claimed that the election had been stolen from him. He took his case to court about 60 times and lost all of them. He then polished off his second ill-gained term in the White House by egging on a large, bloody, and deadly temper tantrum at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Before the curtain came down on this farce, this person, who will not be named, had an opportunity to nominate three Supreme Court justices. With retirements by smarter, historically attuned justices, the balance of the court's opinions (which is what counts) veered quickly to the right. Before he took off for Mar-a-Lago, he left a huge stink bomb—which is now going off regularly with no regard for the majority of people who support reproductive rights—and no knowledge (so it seems)

of the catastrophe that all of us will inherit as levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases continue to rise above levels last experienced on Earth about 2 to 3 million years ago.

Who knows what lies in the future of our people, nation, and planet? If the United States ever called itself a “democracy” by and for “the people,” those notions may now be covered with the streaks of urine and feces that his supporters left on the Capitol Rotunda about the time that he threw his lunch at a wall in the White House, dripping catsup. History will judge and may die laughing.

*Dr. Johansen taught journalism, environmentalism, and Native American Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha from 1982 to 2019, when he retired as emeritus, with 55 books.*



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# AN UNDERGROUND CIVIL WAR AND CONTROL OF NEBRASKA

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by Paul A. Olson

*Nebraskans for Peace Board Member*

I have been accustomed to saying that Nebraska conservatism is different from that in the Rust Belt, deep South, or some parts of the coasts. I was thinking of much Rust Belt, Southern, and coastal conservatism as a species of Fascism such as that generated by the late Sen. Joe McCarthy. Clear connections exist between the neo-Fascism of the late 40s and 50s in the U. S. and that of the 2020s. In both cases, the figure of Roy Cohn is important. Mr. Cohn was Sen. Joe McCarthy's chief advisor and invented many of the senator's techniques of false accusation, grievance, and intimidation to accuse numerous faithful government employees of being agents of Soviet Russia and the Communist Party. Mr. Cohn and Sen. McCarthy invented the notion that there were thousands of American collaborators with the Soviet Union and that a vast conspiracy existed in the late 40s and early 50s to overthrow the government of the United States. For some years, most Republican candidates had to espouse McCarthyite notions to win. Richard Nixon sailed to national prominence on the wings of McCarthyism by accusing his California election opponents of collaboration with the Communists. Ronald Reagan first acquired a taste of power when he headed the actor's union in Hollywood and turned in people that he thought to be Left so that they could be blacklisted by the motion picture industry.

That sort of Fascism fell out of favor in the 1960s and 70s, but not until after thousands of Americans had been gratuitously asked to swear that

they were not members of the Communist Party and had never advocated the violent overthrow of the government of the United States. Many were fired for refusing—on the grounds of the defense of academic or personal freedom—to take the oath. When McCarthyism fell out of favor during and after the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954, Roy Cohn went to New York, where he became the lawyer for, among other clients, Donald J. Trump, who met Cohn in 1973 and asked him to become his and his father's lawyer in cases where they were being sued by the Justice Department for discriminating against African-Americans wishing to rent apartments from the Trumps' real estate company. Cohn taught Trump the tactics of intimidation and counter-suing that became his hallmark. Trump is said to have remarked that he learned everything from Roy. In times of difficulty, he would say, "Where's my Roy Cohn" or "Where's my Roy Cohn when I need him." A direct connection through Cohn exists between the intimidation and counter-punching tactics used by the neo-Fascists of the late 40s and 50s and those of the late teens and 20s of our century, including those of the last administration.

But there's also a difference between the self-expression of the two. In the 40s and 50s, the Republican claim was that people who wished reform in America were trying to overthrow the government of the United States and substitute a Russian-Soviet style administration. The claims were never substantiated save in the cases of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and uncertainly there. However, in 2021, some Repub-

licans and their allies on the alt-right did try to overthrow the government of the United States. They sponsored an insurrection whose targets were Nancy Pelosi, Mike Pence, the Congress of the United States, and Joe Biden's orderly succession to the presidency of the United States. Simultaneously, the people whom the insurrection wished to keep in office were people who had close ties with Russia and with a Russian faction in the Ukraine through Paul Manafort and Donald Trump. The latter bragged that he got along well with Vladimir Putin, the ex-KGB operative. The putative roles were reversed, only this time, the conspiracy to overthrow the government became real on January 6.

This reversal of roles has been reenacted in Nebraska with some differences. Though, because of McCarthyism here, some people had their jobs threatened at the University of Nebraska in the 1950s; though some Nebraska political leaders espoused a sort of prairie McCarthyism, McCarthy was never the dominant force in the Nebraska Republican Party. Old-fashioned Nebraska Republicanism was a combination of our moneyed interests looking after their money, peasant conservatism that resisted any change of any kind, particularly change that might require increased taxation to support public services, and liberal Republican sentiment that people of color should be given a better shake in our national political life than the southern Democrats were willing to offer them in the 40s-60s. In this connection, I am thinking especially of Republican Governors Crosby and Tiemann.

Now, the conservatism that had some merits in the 50s and 60s is being replaced by another kind of conserva-

tism that seems hell-bent on insurrection or civil war of one sort or another: violent or cultural warfare, or both.

One of the candidates in the primary for the Republican nomination for governor of Nebraska was Charles Herbster. Mr. Herbster, who contributed \$1.3 million to Trump, was in the room on January 5 when the last touches on the insurrection of January 6 were being planned by Trump's inner circle. Herbster approved a Facebook account of his meeting with the President's minions on the evening of the January 5. This Facebook page was then sent out by one of Mr. Herbster's staff in his name, and part of it reads as follows:

*Right now, I stand in the White House with patriots joining me in a battle for justice and truth. U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville, Alabama; Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani; Mr. Donald Trump Jr.; Mr. Peter Navarro, Assistant to President Donald J. Trump, Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, and the National Defense Production Act Policy Coordinator; Mr. Eric Trump; Mr. Adam Piper, Executive Director Republican Attorney General Association; Mr. David Bossie, President and Chairman of Citizens United and Deputy Campaign Manager of the 2016 Donald J. Trump Presidential Campaign; Mr. Corey Lewandowski, 2016 Donald J. Trump for President Campaign Manager; and General Michael Flynn, 25th United States National Security Advisor. These faithful servants of freedom need our prayers, and the U.S. Congress. Tomorrow, on Capitol Hill, they open sealed electoral voting certificates from each state. This joint session is the last official chance for our members of Congress to object to the widespread voter fraud that happened on November 3. God Bless America.*

As the January 6 committee hearings have established, the "faithful

servants of freedom" who "need our prayers" were the people central in the effort to overthrow the election and keep Mr. Trump in office.

A little later, Mr. Herbster wrote: *Correction we are not at the White House we are in the private residence of the president at Trump International sorry in the meeting with General Flynn.*

Later, during the height of the riot, Mr. Herbster's staff tweeted that they were concerned about how the riot would look and that any tweets would affect Herbster's campaign. Hush-hush would be best. This is a later exchange between Herbster and staff:

3:10 p.m., Herbster campaign adviser *President needs to calm this too if you can get to him*

3:11 p.m., Herbster *There is a much bigger threat possible Iran but can't say anymore that is why they rushed out.*

Herbster chose to believe that a fictitious Iranian threat was more important than the attack on Congress and a timely intervention by the President to prevent further murder and mayhem and threats to Mike Pence.

On the other side, Mr. Herbster at about 2:00 also wrote on Twitter:

*While I support the right for every American to peacefully protest, what is happening at the Capitol is unacceptable and dangerous. We must be better than this. Please pray for peace, our country and safety of all Americans.*

Herbster knew the attack was wrong and did not ask Trump to stop it, rather calling for prayers.


Herbster eventually lost the gubernatorial election to candidate Jim Pillen. However, forces representing his ideology later took over the Nebraska Republican party in their July 2022 state meeting. They did so under the leadership of Eric Underwood who was elected chairperson of the state GOP, defeating the Pillen people. It remains to be seen whether the January 6 insurrection grievances and the effort to change

election rules will be endorsed by the whole Nebraska Republican Party. Thus far, so far as I can discern, only Sen. Sasse has spoken out against Mr. Trump and his insurrection by saying that the riot was not "legitimate political discourse."

Mr. Underwood's supporter and perhaps the primary organizer of his victory at the Nebraska Republican convention, Fanchon Blythe, has written in her Twitter account of the meeting when Underwood was elected and the Trump forces triumphed over Ricketts ones, "Patriot delegates, pure MAGA[,] overthrow Rickett's machine in Nebraska after epic daylong battle for control of the GOP." This sounds like Trumpism to me. Of course, both factions are making nice to each other in public in preparation for the Fall elections, but the fact that the dominant political party in the state is controlled by the MAGA forces is not reassuring. Ms. Blythe was at the January 6 riot and said after it that "said events some U.S. leaders called insurrection were nothing like the Black Lives Matter protests she condemned." (LJS, January 7, 2021); also that perhaps some rioters were overzealous and took the idea that the Capitol is the people's house a little too literally but that she had no regrets about attending the event and would attend again in a heartbeat if another were to be held.

The intertwining of one of our political parties with an insurrectionist movement that chose to disrupt the orderly succession to the presidency is not promising, whether that party be Republican or Democratic, Right or Left. In the next part of this study, I wish to examine the movement toward militias and hate groups in Nebraska because a January 6-style effort to control the government cannot be done by leaders alone. It takes foot soldiers organizing in the villages and cities and countryside of Nebraska. Such foot soldiers exist. The question is whether they are strong enough, numerous enough to create a movement that can control the state or create genuine civil strife in our midst.





# Recent Letters to the Editor

*by Nebraskans for Peace  
Board and Staff*

## People Over Pentagon Act

*Letter to the Editor by Henry D'Souza NFP Board Member*

*Published in the Omaha World Herald on July 13, 2022*

While the world endures our human-caused climate change disasters, the Senate Armed Services Committee increases the Pentagon budget by \$45 billion (“US seeks to scrap StratCom’s biggest nuke”) to a whopping \$847 billion. Over half of this goes to private military contractors. The Congress, bought by these contractors, votes additional spending against the wishes of most Americans—no surprise.

President Eisenhower’s farewell address reminded us:

*“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.”*

Most recent American wars have been in the Middle East and Africa. Our media did not cover the deaths, suffering, or destruction, and most of us remained indifferent. But we have a clear picture of the disasters in the war in Ukraine. Instead of encouraging negotiations to end this war, Congress came up with nearly \$60 billion to arm Ukraine, fattening defense contractors and prolonging hostilities.

We call for a Ukrainian ceasefire and strongly urge Biden to use diplomacy to end the bloodshed. We must support the People Over Pentagon Act of 2022 proposed by Reps. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) and Mark Pocan (D-Wis.). It would cut nearly \$100 billion from the Pentagon budget, reallocating all to tackle COVID-19, climate change, and poverty. Please call your congresspersons and senators to support the bill.

**JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022 NE REPORT, P. 12**

## “Fossil Fuels”

*Letter to the Editor by Mark Welsch NFP  
Omaha Coordinator*

*Published in the Omaha World Herald  
August 17, 2022*

Like the ineffective leader Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned, leaders in our state, including the Omaha Public Power board and senior management, Gov. Pete Ricketts, Mayor Jean Stothert and all of our Omaha City Council members are fiddling around while Omaha and the rest of our state heats up and burns. The Canyon Camp wildfire burned at least three homes and 25 square miles near Gering, Nebraska, in one week.

Record heat levels are happening around the world every year. This is because companies like OPPD continue to burn fossil fuels and Omaha and the state do not have the most up-to-date building codes in place. OPPD needs to stop burning fossil fuels as soon as possible. Solutions include: the OPPD board extending the coal and gas burning for only one year, letting their staff know a longer extension is unacceptable. Mayor Stothert, City Council President Pete Festersen and the other members should adopt the most fuel-efficient building codes immediately. Every day they delay allows new buildings to lock in energy and money wasting construction in new buildings. It is time to put out the fires.

## “Defense Cloud Issue”

*Letter to the Editor by Brittany  
Cooper NFP State Coordinator*

*Published in the Lincoln Journal  
Star on June 3, 2022*

Business Insider, on May 13, reported that Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer inherited between \$50,001 and \$100,000 worth of stock in Lockheed Martin in December. Lockheed Martin is a weapons manufacturer and one of two producers of the Javelin rocket system.

The concern is that Fischer is a leading Republican on the Senate Armed Service Committee. The committee has oversight of the Department of Defense and the United States Strategic Command right here in Nebraska.

So, while Fischer is considering whether to vote on sending aid, including weapons, to Ukraine she stands to personally profit from these votes, especially while the U.S. is increasing shipments of the Javelin missiles produced in part by Lockheed Martin to Ukraine. These missiles have been dubbed the “fire and forget” missiles that can pierce tanks and helicopters are sold to the U.S. government for \$176,000 each. Fischer places herself in a conflict-of-interest situation by owning these stocks in Lockheed Martin and serving on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Is she considering her ownership of these stocks while making decisions on how to vote for the \$40 billion in additional aid to Ukraine? If so, Fischer is profiting off the continued war in Ukraine. Lawmakers with business interests in defense companies could be part of the reason why our military budget is higher than the spending of the next eight nations in the world. We should not allow this kind of blatant conflict of interest with our elected officials.

## “States’ LGBT Lawsuit Should Embarrass Us”

*Letter to the Editor by Maggie Ballard NFP Vice President*

*Published in the North Platte Telegraph on August 6, 2022*

We should be embarrassed that our state is one of 22 signing onto a lawsuit wherein we insist that we should not have to prevent discrimination against LGBT students. Nebraskans For Peace supports schools including LGBTQIA protections in the form of anti-discrimination. This should already be a priority.

You can argue the misinterpretation of case law and say that this is about states’ rights all you want, but it doesn’t change that we’re being asked to do something that should be happening already.

What we have on our hands are 22 states that believe — for whatever reason — that some students should not be protected for being who they are. What’s sad is that (whether they realize it or not) every single one of the people that signed onto this lawsuit knows a child that is already feeling like they are “different.” They are already internalizing the homophobia and transphobia in our society that will make them statistically more likely to smoke, drink, use drugs and self-harm before their 21st birthday unless they have accepting and supportive friends and family. We are forgetting that our students should not have to be subjected to the irrational phobias of our states’ leaders and ultimately, they should feel physically safe in schools. Perhaps the next time that a student is participating in an active-shooter drill, our leaders can participate in a “Here’s-How-To-Not-Discriminate” drill.

### Your Foundation Speaks

**Mark Vasina, Nebraska Peace Foundation President**

Donations to Nebraska Peace Foundation may be directed into two different accounts depending on the wishes of the donor. These are an unrestricted account and a restricted account. The unrestricted account goes to pay the day-to-day educational expenses of Nebraskans for Peace.

Donations into the restricted account add to the investments in the permanent endowment of Nebraska Peace Foundation. These investments bring in a yearly yield of 4 to 5% in dividends and interest. These dividends and interest then go into the unrestricted account to support Nebraskans for Peace as listed above.

Please indicate on your check whether you want your donation to go directly to the unrestricted account or to the restricted account where it will be invested in socially-responsible, fossil-free and mainly renewable energy stocks and bonds.



# HARD TRUTH, continued

plan by Trump and company to steal the 2020 election, with malice aforethought in spades. Sociopath Trump—fake billionaire and media creation who believes his own hype—rallied supporters from around the country, whipped them into a mob which he knew to be armed, then told them to march on the Capitol and “fight like hell.” He WOULD have joined them, it’s clear, if he could have done, and that he didn’t actually hang his own vice-president for treason, we have the sanity and patriotism of a few Secret Service folks to thank.

**HARD TRUTH:** Trump did not win landslides in 2016 and 2020. In 2016, Hilary Clinton won the popular vote and in 2020, Joe Biden won. Full stop.

## 2. Joe Biden botched the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Following a week of victories for Democrats (AND for Democracy)—passage of long overdue climate mitigation and tax reform legislation, passage of life-saving legislation for veterans and others poisoned by burn pits in the line of duty, and the FBI raid on Trump’s home to secure boxes of documents which may implicate the former president on multiple felonies, the Right met last Sunday morning’s TV audience with a scathing denunciation of the chaos and suffering of hundreds of thousands of Afghans left behind in the US pull-out from that long, preposterous war.

**HARD TRUTH:** The withdrawal was much wished for by a majority of Americans and negotiated by Trump. Joe Biden ripped off the blood-stiffened bandage.

The Right has a lot of damned gall trying to blame the decades of war in the Middle East on Democrats. The war ITSELF was the response of President

George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney to the September 11, 2001, attack on the US by a group led by Osama Bin Laden, likely financed by Saudi Arabia (which as strategic partner in Big Oil got a pass), after Afghanistan refused to hand Bin Laden over so that “justice” might be done and Americans have someone to punish.

Some estimates indicate that as many as half a million people died, more than a million people were internally displaced and the 20 year Afghan adventure has cost US taxpayers more than \$2 trillion to date.

## 3. The government is the enemy.

The government takes your money, spends it on activities that work against your beliefs and is otherwise useless or worse.

**HARD TRUTH:** Railing against the bosses is probably as old as language. Maybe older. When the ruling class will not or cannot provide the people with good wages or other conditions which ACTUALLY make their lives better (health care, safe comfortable housing, good public schools, farm programs and environmental stewardship—in short a future for the generations to come), job one is creating fervor against any target but themselves.

Back in the infancy of shock jock radio, the evil precursor of the Balrog that is social media, Grover Norquist, founder of Americans for Tax Reform in 1985 at the urging of President Reagan, declared in 2001: ‘I don’t want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub.’ Of course

“shrinking government” was really code for giving corporations more tax cuts, tax breaks and the power to run government agencies via the revolving door between corporations and Republican government appointees.

Trump advocated for shrinking the government as early as 2000.

<https://theconversation.com/the-shutdown-drowning-government-in-the-bathtub-111333>

Blaming those easily identifiable as OTHER through external markers like ethnicity, skin color, language, gender identity and class has been and continues to be very effective historically. Trump, FOX and the Republican party carry water for the ruling class which has three agendas: Own everything. Pay little to no taxes. Keep the people distracted with trinkets, fearful and fighting among one another, so they will not see their commonality, join forces and turn against the ruling class.

Blaming government has the added advantage—for the corporations and the hyper rich families who own them—of weakening the only force on Earth, the democratic governments of NATO and others, with the power and scale of operation to bring corrupt capitalism to heel.

## 4. Knowledge is dangerous, poisonous and/or fake.

Trump’s early popularity was fueled without doubt by his glee at getting up the noses of the urban elite. Think Diane and Frazier from popular eighties American sitcom Cheers. Education and cultural sophistication were lampooned as pretension and snobbishness, against the working-class normalcy which always won out over eleven highly successful seasons.

Intellect is now cast by the GOP as



# Billboard in Grand Island, conclusion

change, supply Americans with equitable healthcare or keep our kids safe in schools. Unfortunately, The People Over the Pentagon Act failed but we can keep the message alive. Nebraskans for Peace displayed the billboard above in downtown Omaha during May and June and was viewed by thousands who attended The College World Series. We also held a press conference and were featured on several news outlets. Since that was a successful campaign, we decided to keep our message going.

Right now, in Grand Island, you will find another NFP billboard pointing out the bloated military budget that can

be viewed through the end of October. But we need your help to spread the message far and wide. Here are some ways you can help:

- Write to your US and State Representatives letting them know the importance of cutting the US military budget to fund much needed programs at home.
- Write letters to the editor pointing out that the US spends more on the military than the next 9 countries combined and how if we cut some of that funding, we could support programs at home.
- Visit our billboard near Hwy 281 and Hwy 34 in Grand Island and snap a photo to post to your social media. Please tag Nebraskans for Peace and use one or more of the following hashtags: #NebraskansforPeace #NFP #Cutthemilitarybudget #endhunger #climatechange #healthcareforall #endgunviolence.
- You can also visit [nebraskansforpeace.org/join](http://nebraskansforpeace.org/join) to donate in order support initiatives like this and the day-to-day work of Nebraskans for Peace.

## HARD TRUTH, conclusion

the enemy. In the Republican narrative knowledge must never come to children by anyone other than parents and their churches. Interpersonal relations education (including sexuality, gender & emotional intelligence as well as mindfulness and nonmedical wellness practice like meditation) is how the Left “grooms” children for sexual abuse and/or recruits people to raise LGBTQ numbers.

**HARD TRUTH:** The real “elites” are Republicans. Think Harvard and Yale Law School grads like Senators Ted Cruz and January 6 fist pump insurrectionist Josh Hawley as well as Congresswoman Stefanik, who all pretend to be ‘oh so rural and just one of us common folk’ “taking back our country” ...they’re all frauds and fakes.

Trump, who knows how to sucker and “grift” voters and some of us common folks into thinking “we’re together” and “we” have to fight the “deep state”... unless of course WE occupy the White

House. Then WE are the deep state and that’s just fine, because OUR “Deep State” works for us.

Fueling the culture war is how to keep The Many fighting one another instead of the REAL enemy--corrupt, exploitative corporations which are just soulless piles of money with one goal--becoming larger piles of money.

The democratic government of the US must be weakened and denatured because it is the only force on Earth strong enough to actually reign in corrupt, winner-takes-all capitalism, which is really just piracy. Citizens United hardly matters any more because of the ungovernability of social media which has evolved into the perfect vehicle to unleash the perfect storm.

### 5. Individualism is the ground of American history and values

This idea is deeply embraced in

MAGA country—the states of the Old South and the West. The plantation culture of the South was the expression of colonialism at its worst, slave-trade-based (talk about piracy!) and the root of the racism that still afflicts us today.

**HARD TRUTH:** Indigenous cultures, early settlers (Plymouth and other colonists), and the great cooperative movement of the early 20th century that drove so much of modern agricultural prosperity, pre-Dust Bowl/Depression, were intensely communal/collective at heart.

This inclination survives in a small town/rural ethos of helping one another and strangers alike, but that kind of collective compassion can be found in urban settings as well. Evidently the ancient memory (at the cellular level, who knows?) of interbeing lingers in social animals everywhere.

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# HARD TRUTH

by Sally Herrin

## Top Five Big Lies from the Right

I would say it's been a long hot summer already, as I write during early August, only that's the kind of statement that makes someone declare, "You ain't seen nothing yet," followed by bitter laughter. Speaking of bitter laughter, as the mid-term election approaches, it's time to reckon the **TOP FIVE BIG LIES** at the heart of the Republican Party message today.

### 1. The election of 2020 was stolen.

ANY Trump-MAGAmerica accusation is in fact a confession, of intention or deed. In fact, the only stolen US presidential election of my time on earth so far was Bush v. Gore. How quickly we forget.

Bush Senior, remembered by some today as a gentlemanly old school Commander in Chief, was in fact Director

of the CIA at the height of so-called Dirty Tricks. This man had a LOT of experience stealing elections in banana republics—third world countries saddled with exploitative colonial capitalism and therefore of strategic interest to the USA.

That any GOP accusation is in reality a confession is being scientifically proved as the January 6 hearings unpack the