



Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

JANUARY / FEBRUARY / MARCH 2025
VOLUME 53, NO. 1

Statement on Recent National Events

March 7th 2025

For nearly 55 years, Nebraskans for Peace has been a steadfast voice advocating for reason, respect, and justice.

The past 3 weeks have been particularly challenging. We all witnessed the troubling direction the Trump Administration has taken—both in its treatment of our own people and its approach to global affairs..

Last week, this administration abandoned friends and allies and voted with autocratic nations at the United Nations. It culminated in a disheartening display of disrespect and bullying of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, using extortion to gain access to their rare mineral resources.

Nebraskans for Peace will continue to stand firm in advocating for the respect and dignity of all people, creatures, and the planet we share. We will not shy away from protesting and calling for accountability for those who harm others and undermine the democratic institutions that have sustained our republic for 248 years.

We invite you to join our effort. Together, we can ensure that justice, accountability, and the values of that democracy continue to guide us.

Your support is vital to our work. **Become a member of Nebraskans for Peace** today to help us continue this important fight. Donations of any size make a meaningful impact and ensure that our voice remains strong in advocating for peace, justice, and democracy. You can donate online at www.nebraskansforpeace.org and click “DONATE” or by sending a check to: Nebraskans for Peace, P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501

Nebraskans for Peace **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Each year, Nebraskans for Peace offers scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are pursuing a college education. We are proud to award three \$500 scholarships and six \$100 scholarships to students whose academic interests align with our mission: peace with justice through community building, education, and political action.

If you know a highschool senior please have them visit www.nebraskansforpeace.org and click “Scholarships” for more information.

The scholarships are based on written essays and are evenly divided among Nebraska’s three congressional districts. These awards recognize students who are committed to making a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

We are able to provide these scholarships thanks to the generous donations of our members. If you would like to contribute directly to this program, you can mail a check to: Nebraskans for Peace, P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501. Please write “Scholarship” in the memo line.

Your support helps empower the next generation of leaders who will continue working towards a more just and peaceful world!

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Nebraska Report

The Nebraska Report is published four times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

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Printing: Fremont Tribune

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Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: Nebraska Report, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501-3466.

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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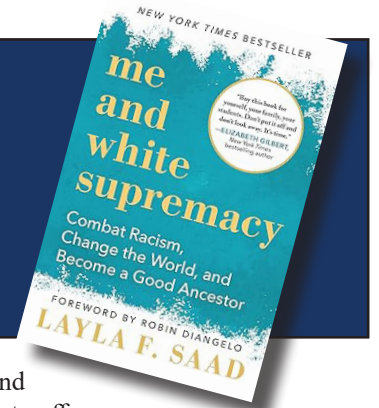
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Good Ancestor Circle Book Discussion



Nebraskans For Peace and Stand In For Nebraska are partnering to offer

a Good Ancestor Circle for white and white adjacent people to reflect on their attitudes and behaviors in a society advancing white dominance. Anyone who wants to reflect on their own identity and behavior in society is warmly invited to join, knowing that the group will primarily be focused on how norms set and internalized by white people shape individual behaviors. This group will read the book *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad, which includes reflection prompts and suggestions for being a good ancestor.

The group will meet weekly **from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on May 1, 2025, and end on June 5** to discuss the book, share reflections, and insights, and support each other as we navigate the challenges of this kind of work. There is no cost to join, although a donation is recommended.

Joining the group offers participants a supportive environment to connect with others who are actively engaged in self-reflection and on a similar journey. Together, we can support one another, continue to grow, and increase personal responsibility for living in alignment with one's values. Being part of this circle will empower participants to set intentions, move towards those intentions, persist through challenges, be inspired by and inspire others, improve their relationships with themselves and others around them, and be good ancestors.

The group will follow the Circle Way, where members are encouraged to participate and take turns offering an item and/or quote to focus on for the week. In other words, this is not a lecture course in which an expert provides the answers.

To sign up and join the Good Ancestor Circle, fill out this form (<https://form.jotform.com/250647966841166>) by April 23rd and obtain a copy of Layla Saad's *Me and White Supremacy*. The book is widely available in libraries and bookstores. If you want to purchase it, we recommend going to a local bookstore or the online retailer Libro, which provides digital books through locally-owned bookstores. You'll also need a notebook to write reflections and responses to the book's prompts. Just think of the power, grounding, and ease of having those ancestors and other community members by your side.

For the sake of community building, participants are asked to commit to attending all the sessions unless unforeseen circumstances arise. Again, you can sign up here <https://form.jotform.com/250647966841166>.

2025 Death Penalty in Nebraska Update

This article is the second in a series exploring the death penalty, following up on our previous overview of its status both nationally and internationally. In this piece, we'll focus on the current discussions and legislative actions surrounding the death penalty in Nebraska. As the state grapples with this controversial issue, key developments in the legislature are shaping the future of capital punishment within its borders.

Greetings to all Nebraskans who yearn for peace and human dignity in our great state and beyond!

The baleful stain of capital punishment, an ineffective holdover from a more barbaric era of human history, continues to be a power our state government claims for itself by statute. Fortunately, Nebraska's death penalty exists in a sort of "legal limbo" at the moment, as the state is unable to obtain the lethal injection supplies it needs for its only legal method of carrying out executions—though efforts are being made in the halls of power to put more options on the table.

Sen. Loren Lippincott (LD38) of Central City has reintroduced legislation (LB432) that would allow the state another option for carrying out executions: strapping down the condemned, affixing an airtight mask upon their face, and pumping pure nitrogen gas into the mask until they suffocate for lack of oxygen. In an attempt to make the process seem more clinical and less like a premeditated strangling, proponents of this method call it "nitrogen hypoxia." This method of killing is already on the books in several states (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma), though only Alabama has put it to use thus far.

Our organization, Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, mobilized opposition to this bill and brought numerous testifiers to speak against it at its January 31 hearing before the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature, including testimony from representatives of NADP, ACLU

Nebraska, the Nebraska Criminal Defense Attorneys Association, and the Nebraska Catholic Conference. There were 78 online comments submitted in opposition, and only ten in favor. Nobody offered in-person testimony in favor of the bill!

Most of Sen. Lippincott's comments during his opening and closing rested on his experience during a pilot training exercise in which pure nitrogen gas was pumped into his flight helmet to simulate the lethargic sensation of flying without cabin pressure at low-oxygen altitudes. However, those participating in the exercise surely knew they were in no danger—whereas those strapped to a gurney and surrounded by a team of killers must certainly experience it differently! Sen. Lippincott also referenced a scene from a movie.

Identical legislation introduced by Sen. Lippincott in the previous legislative session failed to advance out of committee and was never considered further. We at NADP hope very much that this shameful bill suffers the same fate, but if the committee should vote in favor of advancing the bill we do know it would at least face a filibuster during floor debate.

Also reintroduced in this session was a measure brought by Sen. Terrell McKinney (LD11) of North Omaha. As written, LR15CA aims to place a question on the 2026 general election ballot that would ask voters whether the state constitution should be amended to prohibit the death penalty. During the same January 31 hearing, LR15CA drew a wide variety of strong testimony in support and no opposition! Proponents expressed a wide variety of reasons why the death penalty has no place in our society, and online comments submitted also skewed heavily in favor of the bill—92 in support, with only 14 in opposition.

As of this writing, it has been over a month since the hearing, and neither bill has received a committee vote yet.

Although we would love to see LR15CA advance to the floor for thoughtful debate by the legislative body at large, we are hopeful that the Judiciary Committee also abandons LB432. After all, the status quo in our state may not be ideal, but it has now been over six years since our last execution—and unless LB432 passes into law, the state will continue to find it difficult to kill again.

Those two bills are our primary concern so far this session, but there are two other bills we are supporting that are scheduled for hearings before the Judiciary Committee on March 14. Also introduced by Sen. McKinney, the purpose of LB44 is to extend the window that a young adult inmate is eligible for postconviction relief to one year after their 21st birthday. Sen. George Dungan (LD26) of northeast Lincoln introduced LB448, which provides additional new legal avenues for convicted inmates to pursue claims of actual innocence. If passed, either of these bills could help a defendant avoid the death penalty under certain circumstances. Online comments may be submitted for consideration until 8:00am on the morning of the 14th.

To receive updates on these bills, feel free to head over to our website at nadp.net to sign up for our email list, and consider adding us on your chosen social media platforms. To offer more direct support for this difficult work, we would be grateful if you would consider becoming a donor—our 501(c)4 in particular is what allows us to take official positions on specific legislation. Finally, if you feel compelled to serve, interest in joining our Board of Directors can be expressed via info@nadp.net.

With gratitude to all Nebraskans for Peace, Alex M. Houchin, Community Development Coordinator

Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Because the system isn't

BROKEN

by Schmeeka Simpson

IF YOU'RE SCARED, GO TO CHURCH

Hi Everyone! Welcome Back! It's 2025, and if you are reading this... YOU HAVE SURVIVED the election. So here we are all together... friends, family, and foes, in the early part of this new administration, and everything many feared would come true... has. There is global instability, wars and rumors of wars, preventable natural disasters, immigration sweeps, the rollback of civil rights gains and strides, disrespect and disenfranchisement of veterans and farmers, Women and children, the unprecedented loss of jobs, stocks, wealth, medical services, grants, and global allies. And the U.S. is just getting started!

“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin” - Hebrews 12:4

I KNOW y'all want me to bash and trash what is happening right now, but I'm not. It is what it is. I can only focus on the things that I can control.

I am part of the 92% that told this state/country/city what would happen. Before the election, I orchestrated a town hall about the dangers of Project 2025 out of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation. We set up rides to the polls and voter education classes in 11 counties in about 12 days in Nebraska. I lost entire days of sleep, my job was threatened, my motives were questioned, and I sacrificed personal finances that I didn't have to educate rural communities, Native Reservations, and the inner city so we could fight this together. One of the canvassers I employed accompanied me across the state and worked so hard giving out educational materials in rural Nebraska that he had a stroke the day after we got back! (Love you, Ken, and thank you for your service!)

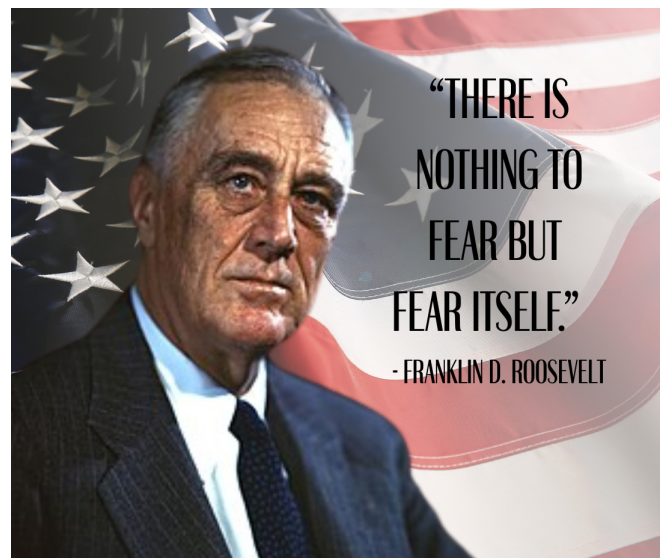
So, no. I am not surprised about what is now transpiring and am no longer fearful. I did my part. Now, I am decidedly resolute to watch the grandsires of the racists, sexists, and fascists that created this country destroy it from the inside out. **I like my popcorn with butter**

and Lawry's seasoned salt, ladies and gentlemen, because I have nothing else to complain about.

To be honest, 2025 is a karmic, poetic, comedic tragedy to many in this country and across the globe. The hateful spirit this country was built on is now its undoing, and watching this in real-time... is a chef's kiss. Leopard meets Face. You don't like that sentiment? That's ok. I am the daughter of enslaved people who were hated, hunted, and unheard, and I still live in a Redlined Community that lacks vital infrastructure and resources. I emerged victoriously from the school-to-prison pipeline and have survived dislike, racism, poverty, and sexism every damn day of my life in this country. I don't care anymore because what exactly do I have to fear?? Death?? Death by what... Racism? Death by Poverty? **Death by Idiocracy?** Ha!

Name one injustice being committed in this country now that hasn't been committed to POC since the first Presidential Inaugural ceremony. POC has been there and done this, generationally speaking, since 1619. We have already died a thousand deaths.

WELCOME TO THE SYSTEM THAT AMERICA BUILT. Unfortunately, WE ALL may have to sit in the spiritual hot seat and stay awhile. As a country, we gluttonously ravish resources while being complacent with incremental righteous change on every level. We allow just enough change to assuage our guilt while we reap the literal fruit of others' labor. We have allowed the illusion of the American Dream based on others' living nightmares to sicken and infect our spirits. We all are guilty to some extent of not caring about an issue until it impacts us. Regardless of what side of the political aisle you are on, when was the last time you or I picked a zillion strawberries in 90-degree heat for slave wages and then watched folks use that as a rallying cry to stop immigration?



The United States is not going backward, friends; it's being exposed like a Polaroid picture, showing its true colors like a Kodak camera commercial. This system is NOT BROKEN; it's working the way it was initially designed. **How could it even get to this point if it wasn't??** The System isn't broken because it's the system's job to do the breaking. It was intentionally designed to break people, our futures, spirits, minds, and connections to everything humble and holy, and it works splendidly.

So, my question, especially to my non-POCs reading this article, is... Are YOU scared? Are you waking up every day in anxiety and fear? Are you feeling helpless and scrolling aimlessly through one bad news report after the other? Why??

What exactly are you scared of? Losing wealth and privilege? Going bankrupt and being poor? Giving up your vacations, big houses, new cars and trinkets? Not having medical care or social services? Are you scared of losing the U.S. bipartisan originated immigrant slave labor class who is burdened with taxation with no representation, working the fields, cleaning the houses, with few benefits, while also simultaneously being part of the largest population of health care practitioners that keep us healthy? Is it all the above?

How ironic is it that even the THREAT of being treated less than human (in a country that historically produced the WWII blueprint on inhumanity) has **folks crying in fear of the unknown but easily predicted?**

WELL STOP IT! RIGHT NOW! Stop being scared and crying and trying to trauma bond with other people in other countries to manipulate them into saving us from ourselves. This is not the time for that! Stop using fear as the excuse to grieve the U.S. illusion of benevolence while truly just grieving the loss of benefits. Stop using fear to avoid facing the reality and responsibility of the millions **that this System has Broken** from its self-proclaimed greatest hey days until

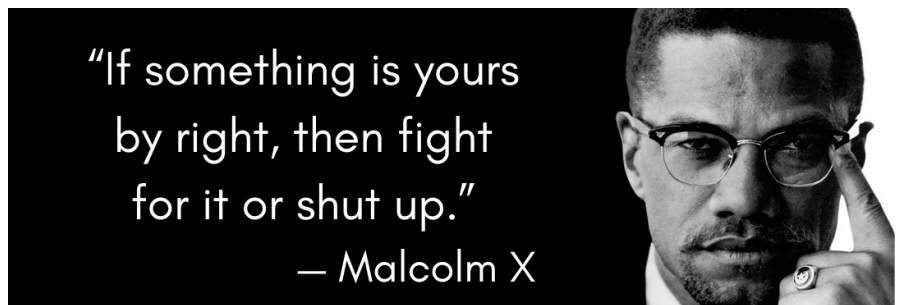
now. This is the time to Make Accountability Great Again for EVERYBODY. This is the time for Raw Truth, change, and COURAGE, not feeding into fear.

Fear will immobilize you and block you from creating and expressing yourself. Fear will prevent you from thinking out of the box. Fear will degrade your morality and have you COMPLYING IN ADVANCE like cowards to directives you know you should be ignoring or fighting against! Fear will cause you to tuck your tail and run when you are supposed to be standing on business and drawing lines in the sand!

Fear will replace love and reason in

know why you don't have a plan... you thought you were safe, didn't you? Tsk. Tsk. Well, this is our come to Jesus moment, isn't it? Let the Church say Amen!

Are you scared of food prices rocketing? Now is the time to start that garden you have always wanted, or don't want to start, but need to start. Are you scared of losing power? BUY CANDLES, solar-powered devices, and generators. Are you scared of prescription prices going up? Well... STOCK UP where you can! Learn holistic remedies that can aid in healing and prolonging life force. Befriend a physician or a nurse! Are you scared of losing wealth? Now is a good time to learn how to barter and trade to circumvent the



your mind and soul. Fear will have you turn on your neighbor and family. Fear, unchecked and unregulated, will eat you alive and turn you into something you never imagined. Fear will suck the life out of you, make you sick, inept, and eventually useless to everyone but your adversaries.

Now is the time for COURAGE, CLEAR HEARTS, MINDS, AND LOVE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS. Now is the time to take the power out of fear through preparation, information, and connection to the community. Now is the time to PLAN and EXECUTE PLANS. If you don't have a plan... why not? Do you at least have concepts of a plan?? Where the hell is the People's version of Project 2025!! WHY DON'T WE HAVE A PLAN FROM AND BY THE PEOPLE AFTER WATCHING CENTURIES OF INJUSTICE ON THE PEOPLE?? The U.S. has been shafting people since 1619! Oh, I

fiat dollar bill. Are you scared of losing abortion access? Research what our ancestors did. Will these steps solve every problem? Of course not. Doing something, however, will always be better than doing NOTHING. At least help your neighbors and community members. Do you want to know where you would have stood during WWII, Germany or the Civil Rights movement? LOOK IN THE MIRROR.

Specific communities still exist without healthcare, electricity, and running water. So, if you are scared of something, find an elderly Black or Native woman and ask her how she did it. **Then pay her for her time.**

But what we are NOT going to do is cry, complain, and do nothing because of fear. We will not fearfully wait for someone else to save us, either! That's how we got into this mess! If you love

conclusion on page 12

WITNESS PALESTINE

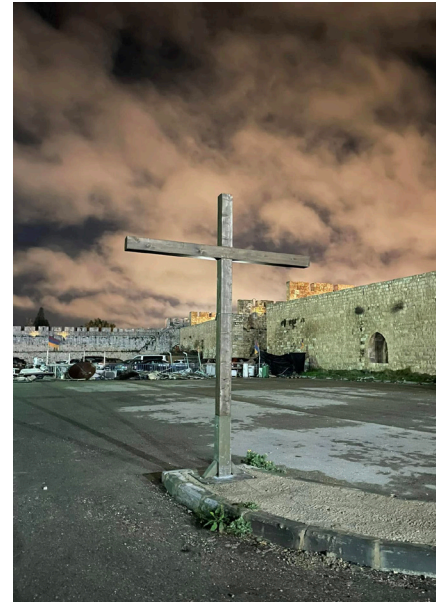
A Journey of Solidarity, History, and Resistance

The following article is a reflection of a recent trip to Palestine, written by Sharon Conlon, a member of the Palestinian Rights Task Force.

Think about going to Palestine, seriously. It's doable, interesting, relatively affordable, relatively safe for internationals, supports the Palestinian economy and most of all, meaningful. (Non-Palestinians are privileged to travel to Palestine.)

I'm talking about going with a tour group.. I'm not travel savvy enough to plan my own itinerary. Various organizations offer tours and you can find them leaving most any month of the year: Eyewitness Palestine, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), Com-

munity Peacemaker Teams, Indiana Center for Middle East Peace (ICMEP) Pilgrims of Ibillin, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAD) (UK) and more. They have themed tours also. My first tour was centered around incarceration, prisons and military courts. Others examples are tours of: artists, people of color, olive harvest. Some offer scholarships and financial aid. If you want to stay longer and volunteer, internationals are needed to observe, your presence signals the occupiers that they are being watched and documented. You will also be working doing what's needed or what matches your skills. Organizations like the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program, Tent of Nations, and others have you stay weeks, months, whatever



A cross stands in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem while members of "Sav The ArQ" provide a constant presence protecting and preserving the quarter.



Left to right: James Knowles, Sharon Conlon, Thanh (Sabeel), Caitlin Finn, Issa Amro, Mary Ensz, Omar Haramy (Sabeel), and Carol Ekdahl-Garwood in Hebron while visiting Issa Amro, cofounder and former coordinator of Youth Against Settlements

you can do.

On these tours you'll have Palestinian licensed tour guides. They do a lot of tours where the delegates just wanted to see the holy sites and save their souls. When they get to lead Palestinian solidarity tours, they have delegates that want to save the Palestinians. (I'm not talking white saviors). Palestinians there are grateful that we listen, we care and want to advocate for ending the occupation and changing our own government's policies.

From January 17-27h five of us went to Palestine together leaving from Omaha's Eppley Airport. Caroll Garwood is from South Sioux City, Nebraska, and she led our Omaha delegation consisting of Mary Ensz, Caitlin Finn, James Knowles and Sharon Conlon.

Sabeel hosted our tour. Sabeel is an Palestinian Christian ecumenical theology organization in Jerusalem. You may be familiar with FOSNA, Friends of Sabeel North America. It supports the work of Sabeel by fundraising, advocacy and... Sabeel arranged the transportation, meals, lodging, speakers, even the tips. All supporting Palestinian businesses.

The 5 of us flew in and out of the Queen Alia International Airport (Amman, Jordan) and crossed into the West Bank. We were there the week the Ceasefire began. Ordinarily there are some 500 checkpoints, but that week there were 889 recorded checkpoints, roadblocks, fences, road obstructions so travel took even longer with delays. Life for Palestinians is unpredictable, everything is uncertain. We didn't know if speakers could get to us or if we could get to them.

I'll tell you one of my lasting memories there. Carol, James, Caitlin, and Mary will have their own. Sheikh

Jarrah and Silwan are two Palestinian neighborhoods on different sides of Jerusalem's Old City walls, both have been continuously inhabited for over 3 millennia, with varied cultural and religious histories. Israel has long coveted both. We visited Fakhri Abu Diab and his wife Fatima, an older couple, he's a retired accountant. Fatima had fixed us a delicious lunch and we all ate sitting in front of their little metal-sided tin can of a house the size of a very small garage. We sat right next to the rubble of their bulldozed former home, less than 6' away. Fakhir showed us pictures of the house before Isreal busted through their gated wall with their bulldozers and razed it.

He had a small fountain and greenery everywhere it would grow and a tree that canopied the house. Now there is nothing but construction debris, a daily reminder of what was. But the saddest part for me was the impact on Fatima. Her little matchbox tin house can't hold her 16 grandchildren and they can't all be together at their grandparents house anymore. Israel wants their land, wants them gone, destroys their homes and with it these grandparent's future days with their children and grandchildren. Israel stole from them the opportunity to nourish their Palestinian culture with their loved ones. Israel destroys more than homes, they destroy dreams and memories. Israel uses the excuse that they want Silwan to build public gardens (and the city of David), as Fakhri says, "we want gardens too, but not on our houses." Israel continues to demolish the homes in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah for more illegal settlements.

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Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian Al Jazeera reporter killed in 2022 by an Israeli sniper while wearing her "PRESS" jacket

What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

Heat, Fire, and Hokum

Several years ago, when the mass media first caught onto the idea that global warming (or “climate change”) might be dangerous, this assertion was nearly always phrased in the future tense. There was talk of “tipping points,” a future, it was said when the progressive nature of warming would allow no turning back.

In 2024, however, more than at any other time, tipping points weren't mentioned as something that might trouble us at some future time. Climatically speaking, the former future has arrived. World temperatures had reached new highs for ten years in a row, and all sorts of violent weather had become so ordinary that a number of non-scientists are taking them for “normal.” In this class, there has been that veteran climate denier Donald John Trump, who, in the Oval Office or on the stump, brags about how smart he is. He has always had one four-letter word for temperatures racing upward: “HOAX.” Who needs science when we have Donald Trump as our climate doctor?

It is very likely that Trump was not listening as the new year dawned when a large number of climate-watching organizations provided data strongly indicating that 2024 had been the hottest year on record—again. This was not the hottest year since measurable records had been kept or the thermometer invented. Those records have been left in the ashes. It was likely the hottest year since humans left



footprints on the Earth – perhaps 125,000 years ago. Not only that, but 2024's temperatures exceeded the 1.5 C. maximum set by the Paris Accord eight years ago, which was supposed to have been the point at which the temperature curve had to stop rising if we were to turn back the march to catastrophe.

“Climate-change alarm bells have been ringing almost constantly, which may be causing the public to become numb to the urgency, like police sirens in New York City,” Woodwell Climate Research Center's Jennifer Francis,” told Seth Borenstein, veteran climate reporter with the Associated Press. “In the case of the climate,” said Francis, “The alarm bells are getting louder.” Last year, 27 weather disasters in the United States caused \$1 billion in damage each, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

...there has been that veteran climate denier Donald John Trump, who, in the Oval Office or on the stump, brags about how smart he is. He has always had one four-letter word for temperatures racing upward: “HOAX.” Who needs science when we have Donald Trump as our climate doctor?

records. The cost of these added up to \$182.7 billion. Hurricane Helene alone cost \$79.6 billion. In the 1980s, the United States had one million-dollar weather disaster every four months. In the fall of 2024, that average was one every three weeks: a factor of about six to one, Texas Tech climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe told Borenstein via email.

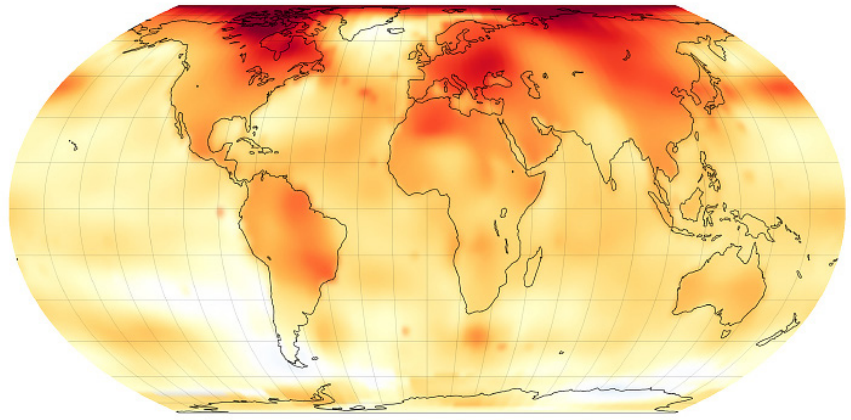
The numbers may be numbing, but they also can indicate crisis in the lives of human beings, animals, and plants. As I was writing this, large parts of California's massive valley in and around Los

Angeles were going up in flames. Each home, business, or other human endeavor destroyed in these fires represents the hopes and dreams of many people. In this case, the significant contribution of climate change is wind—searing blasts usually downslope from the east as strong as 100 miles an hour, a hurricane of embers jumping from structure to structure, forest to forest.

A 100-mile-an-hour Santa Ana is very unusual in Southern California, as are wildfires in January. That's usually the rainy season. The dry season is generally in the summer. This year, the area had had almost a year-long drought. As I read the reports of the searing out-of-season fires, I kept turning to the words of Robert Frost's "Fire and Ice" in my mind. "Wildfires are burning hotter and moving faster. Storms are getting bigger and carrying more moisture. Soaring temperatures worldwide are leading to heat waves and drought," wrote David Gelles and Austyn Gaffney in *The New York Times*.

The violence of extreme heat (at times before or after intense rainfall) kills people and destroys their homes and businesses with little respite. Several thousand Muslim pilgrims died in Saudi Arabia last summer. In the United States, heat-related deaths set records as temperatures rose. "We are in a new era now," former U.S. Vice President Al Gore told Gelles and Gaffney. Gore has warned of climate change's dangers since at least the 1980s. At one point, he mounted a ladder during a film he made on the subject to illustrate how rapidly the proportion of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has been rising in recent times.

Throughout most of humankind's tenancy on the Earth, 180 parts per million of carbon dioxide have indicated an ice age, and 280 p.p.m. a blistering, centuries-long heat wave. This year, the proportion of CO₂ will certainly break through 425 p.p.m. Thermal inertia delays the effects of heat or cold indicated by these numbers for 50 to 100 years—enough of a difference to take us back roughly to the invention of the Model T.



NASA: earth-wide heat record, late 2024

Another self-proclaimed expert seems to be Elon Musk, now a multi-billionaire campaign buddy of Trump, who said in the Times piece quoted above that "Climate change is real, just much slower than the alarmists claim."

Extending the record even further with ice cores, carbon dioxide concentrations are the highest in at least 800,000 years.

"We're going to continue to have records be broken because the baseline temperature is constantly moving up," said Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City. "The cause of that warming trend over the last 50 to 60 years is dominated by our changes to greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide and methane," Schmidt said.

There's something about being rich that seems to make certain people feel as if they are experts on the future of

the planet. We have already heard from Donald Trump in this regard, over and over with nauseous simplicity. Another self-proclaimed expert seems to be Elon Musk, now a multi-billionaire campaign buddy of Trump, who said in the *Times* piece quoted above that "Climate change is real, just much slower than the alarmists claim."

To Musk, the loss of homes in the hundreds of thousands to fire is a result of "non-sensical regulation" and "bad governance"—none of this having anything to do (in his published statements) with carbon dioxide and methane levels, intense drought, or 100-mile per hour winds lighting up embers on relative humidity of 5 to 10 percent. Nor is it even about controlling greenhouse gas emissions, including their rising levels. In the real world, Mistery Trump and Musk et al., The future has arrived, with the ultra-rich, self-endowed experts on everything mouthing cliches.

*Bruce E. Johansen has written and published several books on this climate change during the past 25 years, the most recent of which will be *Nationalism and Nature: War and Warming*, due out in October from Springer publishers in Frankfurt, Germany.*

“We’re not asking for a perfect world—just a livable one.”

by Victoria Bogatz



The youth environmental groups. Omaha Students for Sustainability and Sustain UNL, organized a press conference on Feb. 26th with organizations like NFP and the Nebraska Sierra Club to show support for LR 22CA. Photo credit: Jacki Petrow

Pure water. Clean air. Healthy soil. A livable environment.

These things should be guaranteed as integral to the well-being of our beautiful state as a well-functioning government or the Earth spinning on its axis. Yet, for decades, the workings of fossil fuels and carbon emissions have made things like a clean environment precarious. According to NOAA, climate change has exacerbated the frequency and intensity

of extreme weather events to the point where, in 2024 alone, extreme weather cost Nebraska \$2 billion in damages. Climate change is costing Nebraska business. It's costing us health. It's even costing us lives. And it's making countless Nebraskans wonder: what will happen when the droughts keep killing our crops? When the heat waves keep forcing us indoors? When the summer storms keep destroying our homes?

That's why it's crucial that the Nebraska legislature adopts LR 22CA, also known as the Green Amendment. LR 22CA, introduced by Senator George Dungan, states that "all people have a right to a clean and healthy environment" and that "the state, and each subdivision thereof, shall serve as trustee of the natural resources of Nebraska." The Green Amendment would promote policies to stabilize our climate—stability that Nebraska desperately needs. While Nebraska does have some provisions related

to the environment in its constitution, there is no outright armation of what we all know to be true: that every Nebraskan deserves access to a safe, healthy environment. The Green Amendment would change that.

The Green Amendment would also unlock actions to protect Nebraska’s life-giving natural resources. Three states, including New York, Pennsylvania, and Montana, have versions of a Green Amendment. In Montana, a group of young people used this once-symbolic amendment to push for real climate action in their state. In *Held V. State of Montana*, 16 youth plaintiffs sued the Montana state government for its inaction on climate change, stating that not acting on such a crisis restricted access to a clean environment and was unconstitutional. They won.

This example from Montana shows what a driving force a Green Amendment can be—legally, politically, and socially. Just like in Montana, the passage of the Green Amendment would allow young Nebraskans to start uniting around climate action. It would allow us to use the court system to hold corporations and the government accountable for climate action. It would empower Nebraskans of all ages to work with our communities and local governments for a sustainable future. We’re already starting. The youth environmental group Omaha Students for Sustainability organized a rally on February 26th with organizations like the Nebraska Sierra Club to show our support for LR 22CA. Dozens of proponents testified at the hearing before the Natural Resources Committee later that day, and their testimonies made it clear that the Green Amendment will not only promote climate action but also demonstrate how much the government cares about the futures of young Nebraskans.

Such forward-thinking legislation is more crucial now than ever, especially with Nebraska’s oft-discussed “brain drain.” The University of Nebraska-Omaha reported that in 2022, roughly 31,600 people 25 years and older migrated out of Nebraska. Young people consistently leave our state for reasons ranging from

a lack of economic opportunity to political discontent. Passing the Green Amendment would be a significant step towards stopping this brain drain. Cementing the legal right to a clean environment would show young Nebraskans that their elected officials, no matter their party, prioritize the future of our state and its people.

I don’t think anyone disagrees that all Nebraskans deserve a clean and healthy environment. They may disagree on how to achieve that goal. Not everyone, understandably, thinks it should be up to the government to create a perfect world. But we’re not asking for a perfect world. We’re asking for a livable one, and I think the government is responsible for providing at least that. I urge the Natural Resources Committee to move the Green Amendment forward. It’s time that the Nebraska legislature addresses the climate crisis. It’s time we take action to safeguard the future of our state’s environment and the young people inheriting it. Let’s pass LR 22CA and tackle the climate crisis—together.



Sheridan Macy, an attorney who researched and wrote an article about a Green Amendment for Nebraska speaking at the Press Conference on the Green Amendment. Photo credit: Jacki Petrow



Students prepare for Feb 26th hearing on LR 22CA. Photo credit: Jacki Petrow

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Because the system isn't broken, conclusion

yourself, love your family, love your community, and love your country, resolve yourself to be courageous, unwavering, and thoughtful in your everyday life while at your job, while you spend your dollars, and while you contemplate your future. Tell yourself TODAY AND EVERYDAY... I will move with courage and love to protect myself and my community; I WILL MOVE WITH COURAGE AND LOVE TO PROTECT MYSELF AND COMMUNITY. Period, because it's boots straps time.

All Power to the People.

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