



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

Nebraskans for Peace

MARCH / APRIL 2018 VOLUME 46, NO. 2

Israeli Author Miko Peled Coming to Omaha, Lincoln & Des Moines



Miko Peled, internationally-known Jewish-Israeli author of *The General's Son*, is coming to Lincoln, Omaha and Des Moines. Jews, Christians and Muslims alike will be interested in what he has to say about the issues of Israel and Palestine. Peled's background gives him a rare inside view of the formation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent repercussions for us all. He grew up in Jerusalem within the group that formed and ruled the early country of Israel. He is the son of a prominent Israeli general in the 1967 war and grandson of a signer of Israel's Declaration of Independence. Both were instrumental in creating the Israel we know today.

Peled courageously advocates for peace between the Palestinians and Is-

raelis. He offers real solutions for peace.

Although Miko Peled had a unique vantage point to see the story of his beloved Israel, he had to reach out to see the other side of the story, which is Palestine's. Most of us only know half of the story. Come hear "The Rest of The Story" of Israel's founding and the present-day situation in the Holy Land.

Nebraskans for Peace, NFP's Palestinian Rights Task Force, the Unitarian Church of Lincoln's Social Justice Committee and Des Moines' Middle East Peace Education Coalition are hosting these events with Miko Peled.

The three cities and dates are:

Omaha, NE, Tuesday, April 10; 7:00–9:00 p.m.; St. John's Church (in the Sanctuary) on the Creighton University Campus; 2500 California Plaza—FREE PARKING on the top level of the 24th Street Parking Garage. For more information contact Sandie Hanna at 402-578-5729.

Lincoln, NE, Wed. April 11; 7:00–9:00 p.m.; Unitarian Church of Lincoln; 6300 A Street ; For more information contact Eileen Durgin-Clinchard at 402-435-3317.

Des Moines, IA, Thursday, April 12; 7:00–8:30 p.m.; State Historical Museum of Iowa; 600 E. Locust St.; For more information contact Kathleen McQuillen at 515-710-9902.

A \$10 free-will offering is suggested.

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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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36th Annual Interfaith Peacemaking Workshop



Featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning
columnist Leonard Pitts, Jr.

“When We Stand With Others”

Sunday, April 15, 1:30 p.m.

First United Methodist Church

2723 N. 50th Street (50th & St. Paul Streets)

In a career spanning more than 35 years, Leonard Pitts, Jr. has been a columnist, a college professor, a radio producer and lecturer. But if you ask him to define himself, he will invariably choose one word—writer. Pitts is a writer of one of the most popular newspaper columns in the country and of a series of critically acclaimed books. In 2004, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for commentary.

Pitts will step out of his writing-zone to become a speaker for his second appearance at the Interfaith Peacemaking Workshop. He presented “Eating (Jim) Crow—Divisions Created by Race and Divisions Created by Poverty” at the 2015 workshop. His 2018 presentation, “When We Stand With Others” will be equally compelling.

For the 36th Annual Workshop, Pitts will examine ‘witness bearing.’ He will explore the experience of standing with those we don’t know for peace and justice. ‘Standing With Others’ addresses what happens in the lives of those around us when we don’t speak out. The current lack of civil discourse in the United States challenges all those with a heart of peace. Rather than watch idly while standing by, Pitts offers insights into a different way of being in the world... and how to be peacemakers in the face of insults and innuendo. He will share how we can communicate the traumatic stories of injustice and stand up for our fellow human beings.

Midlands Voices: In Eastern Nebraska, We Are Nuclear Prisoners

The following “Midlands Voices” guest editorial by NFP State Board Member Paul Olson appeared in the February 14, 2018 Omaha World-Herald.

Thanks to *The World-Herald* for its January 31 commentary, “With nuclear weapons, we’re getting too comfortable thinking the unthinkable.”

Authors Richard A. Clarke and Steven Andreasen are right, but it was not always so and need not be.

During the 1980s, I lectured to groups at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln. One of these lectures concerned the nuclear arms race and targeting of eastern Nebraska as described by contemporary war-fighting experts. I showed images of the destruction areas likely in Nebraska if the Nebraska Air National Guard base in Lincoln or Strategic Air Command (now U.S. Strategic Command) were hit and talked of blast and fallout effects.

After I talked, a prisoner came up and said, “I am not too good in the head; I cannot read, but I understood what you said.” He knew that, as a prisoner, he had no chance of escape. War would be a death sentence. That was in the 1980s, when the nuclear weapons freeze and START negotiations were de-escalating tensions.

In the present situation of contemplated nuclear war, we in eastern Nebraska are all prisoners. Our military facilities are prime targets. We should worry as our government officials become easy about thinking the unthinkable.

People of significant moral stature and analytic ability tell us to be uncomfortable. For instance, Pope Francis recently condemned the very possession of nuclear weapons and deterrence plans—saying that these create false security



An unarmed Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile launches during an 2016 operational test.

and that “international relations cannot be held captive to military force, mutual intimidation and the parading of stockpiles of arms.” His position stands in marked contrast to the United States’ 2017 vote in the United Nations, where 122 nations but not the United States or other nuclear powers supported nuclear weapons’ abolition. Francis describes “the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices” and “the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error... [T]he threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned.”

The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (written and published by nuclear experts) recently moved the hands of its “Doomsday Clock” closer to midnight than at any time since 1953—at the height of the Cold War—and stated: “In

2017, world leaders failed to respond effectively to the looming threats of nuclear war and climate change, making the world security situation... as dangerous as it has been since World War II.” As evidence, the *Bulletin* cited North Korea’s nuclear program, Russia-United States tensions, disputes over the South China Sea and nuclear expansion in Pakistan, India and possibly Iran. A recent UNL study projected that one nuclear blast sufficient to wipe out Los Angeles would provoke global ‘nuclear autumn,’ devastating food production and precipitating world famine.

Few in Congress or the executive branch have exercised the 1980s-style leadership of Presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. Efforts to de-escalate tensions in nuclear zones meet with congressional contempt such as that expressed by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., when the North Koreans and South Koreans decided to get together on a Winter Olympics team.

The United States and the other nuclear states of the world promised, under the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to eliminate their nukes. But we have not kept our word—and the threat has proliferated. We need leadership from religious and moral leaders and from Congress. We need an immediate renewal of nuclear arms reductions talks, with the call for them led by Nebraska Republican Reps. Don Bacon and Jeff Fortenberry, whose constituents reside directly around StratCom’s command center for nuclear war, and accordingly have the most to lose.

The Doomsday Day clock stands at two minutes to midnight. From those of us who pray, we need prayers.

U.S. Should End Role in Yemen's Civil War

On March 20, the U.S. Senate took up consideration of Senate Joint Resolution 54 calling for an end to U.S. involvement in the civil war in Yemen. The resolution was ultimately defeated on a 55-44 vote that crossed party lines (though both of Nebraska's Republican Senators—Deb Fischer and Ben Sasse—voted in opposition). As the op-ed below by Peace Action President Kevin Martin and International Relations scholar Lisa Schirch hideously details, however, the U.S. government—having learned nothing from the quagmires of Afghanistan and Iraq—is yet again engineering a humanitarian tragedy in the Mideast. This article was originally published in the March 17, 2018 edition of the Virginian-Pilot, Virginia's statewide newspaper.

Half a world away, our tax dollars are fueling what the United Nations is calling the worst humanitarian crisis on the planet. Three years into a brutal U.S.-backed, Saudi-led intervention in Yemen's civil war, more than 22 million Yemenis rely on humanitarian aid, more than 8 million, roughly the population of Virginia, are on the brink of starvation.

Now, U.S. Senators Bernie Sanders, a Vermont Independent; Mike Lee, a Utah Republican; and Chris Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat, have introduced bipartisan legislation to end America's complicity in this disaster, legislation to force a vote in the Senate to remove U.S. forces from Yemen's civil war.

For three years, the U.S. has been providing significant military and political support for the intervention. U.S. Air Force pilots are conducting midair refuelings of coalition bombers, U.S. intelligence analysts are sharing targeting coordinates with their Saudi counterparts and U.S. diplomats are whitewashing the regular human rights violations and war crimes committed by the Saudi coalition.

Thousands of civilian deaths in Yemen have been attributed to the indiscriminate Saudi-led bombing campaign. The coalition has even dropped U.S.-made cluster bombs over civilian areas, an indisputable war crime.

Even more deadly than the bombings themselves is the coalition's apparently deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid. The coalition's blockades of Yemen's ports regularly prevent or delay the delivery of food, water and medical supplies, and coalition airstrikes on hospitals, food distribution centers, water treatment plants, roads and bridges have made the delivery of the aid that is allowed into the country much more difficult. According to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), some 63,000 Yemeni children died in 2016 of preventable causes usually tied to malnutrition.

Without a doubt, pulling U.S. support for the war would save lives. The Saudi coalition would be unable to fly as many bombing runs, and it would lose much of the political cover provided by the United States that has made the brutal bombing and blockading of Yemen politically viable for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That in turn could force the coalition to negotiate in good faith with Yemen's Houthi rebels for the first time since the start of the war. Ultimately, the U.S. goal in Yemen should be the facilitation of a diplomatic solution to end the war, not the pursuit of an imaginary military solution to win the war, nor the maintenance of a counterproductive relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Alleviating the humanitarian crisis and advancing prospects for diplomacy in Yemen is more than enough reason to end U.S. support for the war. But for senators considering their position on the upcoming vote, the fact that Congress never authorized the U.S. role in the war is just as relevant.

The War Powers Act, invoked by the Sanders-Lee-Murphy bill, is crystal clear: The president cannot send U.S. soldiers into hostilities or situations where hostilities are imminent without authorization from Congress or an emergency caused by an attack on the United States. The coordination and participation of soldiers in the movement of foreign forces without those conditions, which is clearly what's happening in Yemen, are also expressly prohibited.

Also relevant for senators is public-opinion polling on the issue. According to a Committee for Responsible Foreign Policy poll published in January, 70.8 percent want Congress to pass legislation to curb overseas military action, 67.4 percent don't approve of congressional leadership allowing U.S. military involvement overseas without authorization from Congress and 51.3 percent say they would be less likely to vote for the members of Congress if they do not work to withdraw U.S. forces from the war in Yemen.

Because it invokes the War Powers Act, the Sanders-Lee-Murphy bill has a privileged status, meaning it is guaranteed a vote in the Senate and only requires a 51-vote threshold to pass. That vote is expected next week. Virginians concerned with their tax dollars being used to fund this unauthorized, brutal war can take action by contacting U.S. Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner of Virginia and encouraging them to support this vital legislation. Millions of lives and the future of congressional oversight on war are on the line.

Lisa Schirch has been a professor of international diplomacy for 22 years and works around the world on international relations. She lives in Harrisonburg. Kevin Martin is president of Peace Action, the nation's largest grassroots peace organization. He lives in Silver Spring, Md.

Yemen's Houthi Rebels Propose Peace Initiative

The deadly civil war in Yemen has all the classic elements of religious conflict, haves vs. have-nots, and geo-political machinations... All of which has led, in the words of international aid workers, to “the world’s largest humanitarian crisis” with “famine of biblical proportions” and mass civilian casualties. The civil war is a proxy battle between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran, with each regional superpower supporting its Yemeni allies in a fight pitting poor Houthi Shia rebels against a government backed by the wealth and firepower of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates). Despite an unrelenting bombing campaign and blockade on humanitarian aid by the superior Gulf coalition forces, the four-year-long war has largely ground to a stalemate—with neither side able to gain the upper hand militarily, but the toll on the civilian population poised to turn catastrophic.

This past January, however, the “Head of the Higher Revolutionary Committee” of the rebel movement—Mohammed Ali Al Houthi—abruptly proposed “an initiative to end tragedies caused by the aggression on Yemen” to the United Nations Security Council. The six-point proposal very sensibly calls for:

- 1) Establishing a reconciliation committee;
- 2) Using elections as a mechanism to select parliament spokesperson and members to represent the people and the country’s political powers;
- 3) Establishing international guarantees to start reconstruction and compensation;
- 4) Preventing any aggression on Yemen by foreign countries;
- 5) Declaring amnesty and releasing



Mohammed Ali Al Houthi, “Head of the Higher Revolutionary Committee” of the rebel movement.

- prisoners from all parties;
- 6) Putting any contested issues to referendum.

This proposal, incredibly, has received almost no media attention and therefore no public consideration. In the wake of the March 20th Senate vote authorizing continued U.S. engagement in the civil war on the side of Saudi Arabia and its Gulf coalition allies, the need for a diplomatic initiative to end this burgeoning humanitarian crisis has become more critical than ever. The U.S. government has already helped inflict untold misery on the people of Yemen by actively assisting Saudi Arabia in the prosecution of this war. Failure to seize on this Houthi initiative to diplomatically resolve the civil war, though, will be dooming the people of Yemen to a hell on earth and forfeiting what little moral standing our national government still has in the world.

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Education Funding & Property Taxes...

Fully Fund TEEOSA or Blow It Up!

by Sally Herrin

Education funding and property taxes have for decades constituted the great Gordian knot of public policy in Nebraska. Today as in 1990, when the Unicameral passed LB1059 to create the “Tax Equity and Educational Opportunity Act” (the Nebraska state aid to education formula) overriding Governor Kay Orr’s veto, Nebraska relies more heavily on local sources (at 53.8 percent) than almost every other state in the U.S.; most of that local funding comes from property taxes. The State of Nebraska shoulders less than one third of the cost of K-12 education, ranking 49th in the U.S. at 32.1 percent. The average state contribution nationally is 45.6 percent.

By far the largest source of K-12 funding in Nebraska is property taxes at a

whopping 47.9 percent, more than double the meager 23.7 percent kicked in by the state aid formula under TEEOSA today. Of the three revenue streams—sales, income and property taxes—economists generally consider property taxes the most regressive form of taxation, because property value is least indicative of actual ability to pay. This is particularly true for many ag producers who have seen land valuations rise steeply, even double and more, following some years of decent corn prices (mostly generated by the renewable fuels standard, a major corn demand stimulator and positive rural economic development/tax base driver). Farmers and ranchers continue to operate on very thin margins, earning on average between 2 percent and minus 2 percent return to equity from on-farm activity as U.S. farm families have done for most of

the past four decades.

TEEOSA has failed to provide meaningful property tax relief. LB1059 promised state support from all sources at 45 percent of the general fund operating expenses of school districts, promised to broaden the tax base for the public school system by dedicating part of state income tax revenue and through limits on general fund budget growth of districts, promised to keep pace with increasing costs of the K-12 system and assure each district a foundation support level for operation, finally promised to assure a greater level of educational equity for all Nebraska students in all districts and a greater level of equity in property rates.

In practice, all TEEOSA funding today goes to Class A and about half of Class B schools. The two thirds of K-12 students distributed across one third of the land mass of the state get all the state aid, and the one third of K-12 students who attend school in the remaining two thirds of the state get no TEEOSA at all.

Section 4 of LB1059 established income tax rebates to take some pressure off property taxpayers, at a rate of 20 percent of state income tax revenue, minus credits and refunds, and attempted to return most revenue to the district where it originated. Today, that rate is just 2.3 percent.

This situation has been largely engineered by the tireless lobbying efforts of corporate Omaha and the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and the winners—the school districts which benefit from the status quo. In 1996, 84 organizations including parents, teachers, school administrators, farm groups, small bankers and even a rogue small town chamber of commerce mounted a citizens petition effort to do what TEEOSA did not, but the measure was split into two parts, thanks to Attorney General Don

Your Foundation Speaks

by **Loyal Park, Nebraska Peace Foundation President**

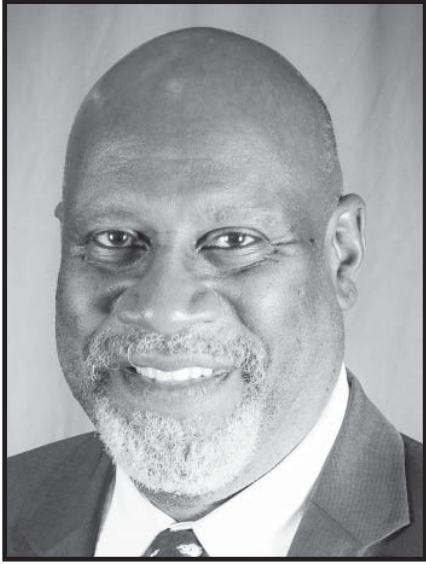
Nebraska Peace Foundation will be participating again in **GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY**. This year that day is May 31st. Also this year Lincoln Community Foundation has received additional promotional funding which will provide an even larger ‘match’ amount added to all amounts donated.

I am recommending you channel all your donations for NFP through Nebraska Peace Foundation so we will receive this ‘match’ amount added to all donations even if you are not able to benefit from the tax deductibility. **GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY** donations will be accepted starting May 1. More information will be given here next month.

Nebraska Peace Foundation is here to help you save on taxes and at the same time support Nebraskans for Peace. Any questions, just give me a call (402) 489-6662.



‘Calling In vs. Calling Out’



by A Jamal-Rashad Byndon

Over the years, I have acquired a level of racial consciousness that forces me to speak in a candid fashion about the conditions in communities and the state of Nebraska. It is amazing how many people are afraid or reluctant to ‘speak truth to power’ because they are hostage to social civilities that say it is impolite to discuss racial anomalies. The ‘colorblindness’ professed in our nation’s legal principles (e.g. ‘one person one vote,’ ‘equality under the law’) makes it hard for many white people to acknowledge the disparities and disproportionate racist facts in our public and private institutions and organizations.

The recent upsurge of interest in confronting sexual harassment is a perfect illustration of our historic unwillingness to admit that our actions haven’t matched our stated principles. After millennia of male sexual misconduct, suddenly, overnight, there’s now a predisposition to believe women’s stories because for so many years they were ignored and the burden of proof was placed on the victims to prove those sexual assault and harassment allegations. Perhaps the tide is at last turning. I recently remarked to a female colleague that, given how long this sexual misconduct has been allowed to knowingly go unchallenged in the U.S., the hashtag “#MeToo” might be more accurately be titled,

“MeTooSoWhat.” She responded that the term sounded harsh and didn’t not reflect my quest for social justice. Concerned it would be a conversation stopper, she suggested a better alternative might be, “#MeTooWhatNext?”

For years in the field of social justice and equality work, many people of color and low-income folks have complained about the oppressiveness of institutions and individuals. Like women, they have been repeatedly ignored by the dominant culture. Moreover, the so-called equal opportunity watchdogs and oversight systems created to address the oppression have been so defanged as to be toothless bulldogs. Hence the gap between the ‘have-a-littles’ and ‘have-too-much’ has grown larger, as the U.S. Census Bureau, Pew Research and other demographic reports have documented.

Just last month, some women began pushing the notion that they should be able to sue institutions for not paying a fair wage compared to their male counterparts. They effectively argued that there should be some ‘reparations’. For years Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) tried to introduce legislation in Congress to start the conversation and discussion about reparations for black people for slavery. However, it never gained any steam, in spite of the fact the United States paid reparations to Japanese-Americans who were forced into internment camps during World War II, and some token payments have been made to Native American tribes. Other countries have been forced to pay reparations when there is clear evidence of historical wrongdoing.

All of which brings us back to the notion of racial equality as opposed to gender or sexual parity. There are enough rights and resources to go around for everybody, and these conversations or efforts are not based upon a zero-sum game. We can achieve all levels of equality without someone unfairly losing their rights. But the process is going to require relentless, unending effort.

For instance, local, state and national nonprofits invariably start out with all of the right or good intentions only to evolve into a

self-promoting managerial class for the elites. It’s the height of presumption (and dysfunction) when these organizations appropriate the right to speak for others’ plights, without allowing these groups to be at the table. I am, and have been, a member of the board of several nonprofits over the years. It is disingenuous that for many of them, none of the people or individuals who they claim to advocate for are on their boards or in management positions.

It would be equally absurd—and unjust—for me to start a nonprofit feminist organization where all of the board members and management staff are male. Many would justifiably challenge our work and mission for such a serious omission. And when such behaviors occur, we must resort to ‘calling in vs. calling out’.

In February, during Black History Month, I was invited to speak in four separate post-secondary education classes about race issues. In each of these courses, the professor was white and had the cognizance to invite a person of color to speak to the class to establish some academic credibility.

In one of the classes, I noted a few of the graduate students staring at me as if I was from the future or another world. Many of us know that look when whites see people of color for the first time. Having taught in what, for all practical purposes, were segregated institutions, it was an all-too-familiar experience in Nebraska. During each of these appearances, though, I got the same parochial question: “What can I do as a white person to help people of color?” I confess I’d hoped for something more thought-provoking. However, when students live in an insular environment—or suffer from white fragility—this is often the best that local institutions can offer.

These questions often come from someone who, neither aware nor awake, has just heard a ‘Cliff Notes’ introduction on race. There are too many naive white students who have never encountered a real praxis African American teacher or scholar... who

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What's HOT in Global Warming?

by Professor Bruce E. Johansen

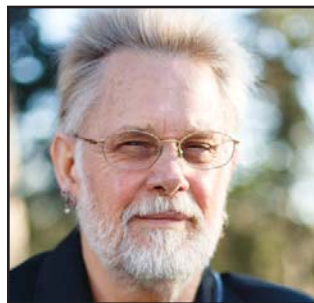
'Methane Burp': Past as Precedent?

Now comes the ultimate global-warming horror story: warming oceans provoking the gasification of now-solid carbon-dioxide and methane deposits in the oceans, setting up an unstoppable feedback loop that heats the atmosphere beyond human endurance. This will not be tomorrow's news, but we are taking the first steps down this path.

During past periods of rapid warming, methane in gaseous form has been released from the sea floor in intense eruptions. An explosive rise in temperatures on the order of about 8 degrees C. during a few thousand years accompanied a methane release 55 million years ago, called the Palaeocene/Eocene Thermal Maximum. Evidence abounds that "Just a small amount of warming could kick-start a positive feedback loop between hydrate release and further warming, sending global temperatures soaring." Following the temperature spike 55 million years ago, the Earth eventually recovered its temperature equilibrium—but it took roughly 100,000 to 200,000 years to do so.

A Sharp Warming in a Short Time

This period has assumed a crucial position in climate studies because atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are believed to have reached 800 to 1,000 parts per million at its peak—the level



that will become prevalent by the end of the 21st century at present rates of increase. The warming triggered 55 million years ago was quite spectacular. Scientists drilling in the Arctic have discovered that temperatures in the Arctic Ocean rose suddenly to as high as 68 degrees F. (20 degrees C.). "What no one expected was how much warmer it really was. That is a huge surprise," said Andy Kingdon of the British Geological Survey.

The study of methane clathrates has become more popular in recent years, as evidence accumulates that their release, especially from oceans, may occasionally have been a major, sudden driving force in Earth's past climate cycles. James P. Kennett, et al. studied climate re-

reach any sort of consensus on causes of the Earth's paleoclimatic 'methane burps.' No one yet knows why a trillion tons of methane may have been released so suddenly from solid methane hydrates around the world in times past, reacting to and, in turn, accelerating sudden (in

"Just a small amount of warming could kick-start a positive feedback loop between hydrate release and further warming, sending global temperatures soaring."

conds for the last 60,000 years off Santa Barbara, California and parts of Greenland, finding that "surface and bottom temperatures change in concert." These findings support assertions by E.G. Nisbet [*Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences* 27(1990):148] that massive release of oceanic methane from clathrates has played a significant role in rapid warming during the past, even without added provocations by human combustion of fossil fuels.

geologic time) global warming of 4 to 10 degrees C.

The sediment cores drilled by Miriam E. Katz, et al. contained remnants of small marine organisms called foraminifera, which preserve a record in their shells of carbon levels in the ocean. The shells tell a story of an extreme warming (possibly more than 10 degrees F.) in the ocean over a short time, which killed more than half of the foraminifera. The sedi-

Scientists have yet to

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It's Time To Outsmart & Solve Climate Change

by Mark Welsch
NFP Omaha Coordinator

We know how to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions around the world. It is really simple. The only thing stopping it is that it needs members of Congress to understand that the majority of the people in the U.S. already want them to take action.

Our solution to climate change? Democracy. We need you on our team. With more people on our team, we will be able to convince our elected officials of the urgency that is needed to stop climate change from getting much worse.

First let me give you a short explanation of our solution, then how you can help. If you are a business owner or a local elected official you can have a special role in the solution.

How Carbon Fee and Dividend Works

1. Place a steadily rising fee on fossil fuel.

To account for the cost of burning fossil fuels, we propose an initial fee of \$15/ton on the CO2 equivalent emissions of fossil fuels, escalating \$10/ton/year, imposed upstream at the mine, well or port of entry.

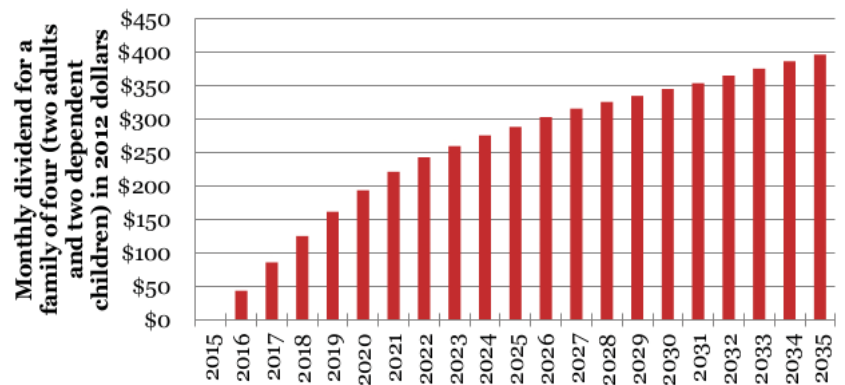
Accounting for the true cost of fossil fuel emissions not only creates a level-playing field for all sources of energy, but also informs consumers of the true cost comparison of various fuels when making purchase decisions.

2. Give 100% of the fees minus administrative costs back to households each month.

100% of the net fees from the carbon fee are held in a "Carbon Fees Trust" fund and returned directly to households as a monthly dividend.

About two-thirds of households will break even or receive more than they would pay in higher prices. This feature will inject billions into the economy, protect family budgets, free households to make independent choices about their

Monthly Dividend by Family



energy usage, spur innovation and build aggregate demand for low-carbon products at the consumer level.

3. Use a border adjustment to stop business relocation.

Import fees on products imported from countries without a carbon fee, along with rebates to U.S. industries exporting to those countries, will discourage businesses from relocating where they can emit more CO2 and motivate other countries to adopt similar carbon pricing policies. Building upon existing tax and trade systems will avoid complex new institutional arrangements.

Firms seeking to escape higher energy costs will be discouraged from relocating to non-compliant nations ('leakage'), as their products will be subject to import fees.

That's it. Just three simple parts that need to be put into a law passed by Congress. Once the U.S. passes this law, because of our key part in international trade, all of our other major trading partners will pass very similar laws. They will do that because of our border adjustment that will make their country's products more expensive after they arrive here in the U.S.

This is a big, yet simple solution that meets the scale of the climate problem in the time frame that we need it to. Lead-

ing scientists, economists and businesses support it as a key option for federal action on climate change because...

- 1. It's Effective:** A national solution to reduce our carbon emissions, fast.
- 2. It's Nonpartisan:** Both Republicans and Democrats support it.
- 3. It's good for people:** Creates jobs and puts money into people's pockets.
- 4. It's good for business:** Fair, predictable and easier to plan for the future.

It's good for the economy AND even better for people.

A study from REMI shows that carbon fee-and-dividend will reduce CO2 emissions 52 percent below 1990 levels in 20 years and that recycling the revenue creates an economic stimulus that adds 2.8 million jobs to the economy.

A structured rising price on greenhouse gas emissions will focus business planning on optimizing investment priorities to thrive in a carbon-constrained world.

Additionally, Carbon Fee and Dividend is projected to prevent over 230,000 premature deaths over 20 years from improved air quality. That is why companies like Exxon-Mobil, and conservatives like George Shultz and James Baker (from President Reagan's cabinet) support this concept.

conclusion on page 10

Climate Change, conclusion

It's your climate. Let's get started. Here is how you can help.

Here are three easy ways you can make a difference today.

Join a live informational session, every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. MT, 7:00 p.m. CT. You may sign up at www.cclusa.org/intro. There is a recording available if the live, interactive time above doesn't work for you.

To help, the first step is to contact your local chapter. Citizens' Climate Lobby has 450-plus chapters taking regular monthly actions. Nebraskans for Peace started three of them in Nebraska. We now have four—in Omaha, Lincoln, Chadron and Bellevue. If those are not close to you, we can help you start a new chapter in your community. For more information about these chapters, contact Mark Welsch at 402-453-0776 or NFPOMaha1970@gmail.com

How Our Teamwork Works

Our shared responsibility is to build consensus in Congress. Citizens' Climate Lobby supporters:

1. Actively work with Republican and Democratic members of Congress.
2. Helped start the House "Climate Solutions Caucus," which works towards solutions in a bipartisan fashion.
3. Unite supporters from across the U.S. who work locally towards a common goal.
4. Show respect to everyone, and listen in order to understand other viewpoints.

We can work with Tea-Party Republicans like Rep. Mia Love from Utah's District 4. She said, "CCL comes in and they say this is a problem that we have and we're wondering if you can help us solve this problem—instead of you're the problem. It not only changed my mind about my involvement, but really changed my heart about what we should be doing."

Of the people. By the people. For the

planet. Our supporters are ordinary folks pulling together to make extraordinary differences.

As a supporter, you may:

- Meet with your member of Congress
- Engage leaders in your local community
- Interact with your local media
- Lobby in Washington, D.C.
- Connect with other supporters at your local CCL meetings

Business Owners, Elected Officials and Other Community Leaders

If you are a business owner or local elected official, you can have a slightly different role to play. Because you represent a larger number of people, you have a little more influence with our elected officials than other people.

Support from Community Leaders (individuals or organizations, a.k.a. "Endorsers") to act on climate change is critical to building political will and amplifying our message to Congress.

Endorsers can come in many forms (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, faith leaders, mayors, newspapers, city resolutions) as can Endorsements (e.g. a signed Leader's Letter, a municipal resolution, a newspaper editorial, Public Position).

Please contact me to learn more about how this is important, and how you can be an important and influential part of the solution by simply signing a form supporting our Carbon Fee and Dividend, or our form that asks Congress to work more quickly to find the solution (if you aren't convinced that Carbon Fee and Dividend is the answer—but know that something needs to be done).

Please contact me to talk about the key role you can have to solve the climate change problem. Mark Welsch, NFPOMaha1970@gmail.com, 402-453-0776 or P.O. Box 6418, Omaha NE 68106, [Facebook.com/citizensclimatelobby](https://www.facebook.com/citizensclimatelobby) www.citizensclimatelobby.org

CLIMATE, CALIFORNIA & FOOD SECURITY

Two thirds of the nation's produce is supplied by the more than 400 commodity crops grown in California. A report from public radio in Sacramento March 2nd told of a study that concluded that by 2050, climate change—drought and heat waves—could decrease the yield of some crops in the state by up to 40 percent.

A research team analyzed 89 studies and published their results in the journal *Agronomy*. The team was led by Tapan Pathak, formerly with UNL's School of Natural Resources. The report said that "the increased rate and scale of climate change is beyond the realm of experience for the agricultural community." That could translate, public radio reported, into food security issues at the state and national level.

IN 15 MINUTES, YOU CAN DO THIS FOR THE CLIMATE

Live in Representative Jeff Fortenberry's District? Please let him know you would like him to co-sponsor "The Challenges and Prizes for Climate Act of 2018," HR 5031. The bill would appropriate \$10 million for prizes for five categories: carbon capture, energy efficiency, energy storage, climate resiliency and data analytics for public understanding. The bill has equally bipartisan sponsorship—half D's and half R's.

Previous similar contests have resulted in an advance in hydrogen fuel cell car refueling technology and acceleration of the advance from incandescent light bulbs to LEDs.

— Marilyn McNabb

Education Funding & Property Taxes, conclusion

Stenberg, and was defeated 3-1, thanks largely to the three quarter million dollars spent by business interests to defeat initiatives 411 and 412. (In that same election, Initiative 409 passed, perhaps because of high voter turnout generated by the education financing controversy, creating term limits for state senators, a disaster for this state and the gift that keeps on giving for fat cats like Governor Ricketts and his good friends the Waltons and Kochs.)

And so we come to 2018, and a new citizens' petition is circulating, "Income Tax Credit for 50 Percent of School Property Tax Paid Initiative," and must collect almost 85,000 valid signatures by July 6 of this year. In the Unicameral, three bills jockey for supporters. LB947—the "Property Tax Cut and Opportunities Act"—is the Governor's proposal, brought forward as priority bill by Senator Jim Smith. This bill offers modest credits against state individual income tax for property taxes paid (with a trigger tied to revenue growth in the second year), \$5 million for job training, and a sharp cut in the income tax rate for corporations with receipts of \$100,000 or more. According to the fiscal note, passage of LB947 would mean an annual loss of a quarter billion dollars in revenue in five years and nearly a half billion dollars lost annually in ten years. From the point of view of those who would starve government—including many schools—out of business, the Governor's bill makes perfect sense. To ordinary Nebraskans, not so much.

LB1084 the "Property Tax Limitation Act" is an omnibus bill which puts 'soft' limits on K-12 property tax requests and requires the Nebraska Department of Education to conduct a study on education funding, but its main intent is to broaden the base for education funding by going pretty much everybody's ox: LB1084 would raise the state sales tax by .5 percent to 6 percent, raise cigarette taxes by a dollar a pack, impose new taxes on a wide array of services and

on soda, candy and bottled water, it would repeal a host of exemptions from motor vehicle trade-ins to the costs of some school, political and not-for-profit events, and (my personal favorite) it would impose a new surtax, over and above all other taxes, on the wealthiest Nebraskans of 2.5 percent for those with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) between \$500,000 and \$1 million and 5 percent for those making \$1 million or more. The proceeds of these changes would go into the "Property" Tax Credit Cash Fund. This bill is Senator Tom Briese's priority bill and has yet to come out of Revenue Committee, but in four years could raise aid to K-12 schools by a bit under a half billion dollars annually.

By contrast, LB1103 is simplicity itself. Senator Friesen's priority bill would provide a minimum level of state aid to every school district in Nebraska. Districts already receiving state aid would be unaffected, while each unequalized district would receive 25 percent of the basic funding amount set out in the formula needs computation for that district. This bill is likewise still in committee, and could mean as much as \$192 million a year in funding to targeted districts.

Costs per pupil range widely from \$9,202.76 in Gretna Public Schools to \$32,171.87 in Lynch Public Schools in school year 2014-15, according to the Open Sky Policy Institute. Average Nebraska per pupil cost was \$11,619.34. In August 2015, the Legislative Fiscal Office reported ("Historical and Current Nebraska K-12 School Data"): "Costs don't change significantly if the number of students per class decline. On the other hand, the larger growing districts are adding new buildings and staff to account for their growing enrollment. If declining districts grow at inflation and growing enrollment districts grow at inflation plus enrollment growth, the overall statewide spending will always grow faster than inflation plus enrollment growth."

The bottom line is that school dis-

trict spending per \$1K of Nebraska GDP has been trending downward since 1994, from just under \$35 to a bit under \$30 in 2015—a decline of 14 percent. State-funded spending for special education (the second-largest source of support for public schools) also declined by about 30 percent between 1990 and 2015.

Anything the Legislature does could well be up-ended if the petition drive succeeds in putting the 50 percent income tax credit initiative on the ballot in November. LB1084, like the 411/412 campaign in 1996, has the support of both the Nebraska Farmers Union and the Nebraska Farm Bureau—two groups most often politically opposed. If the Legislature and the Governor do not deliver in some meaningful way this session, disappointment and desperation may build a populist head of steam and pass the initiative.

The Legislature could try fully funding TEEOSA, as many have argued. TEEOSA, like Christianity as George Bernard Shaw suggested, might be a very good thing if ever it were put into practice.

Frankly, I don't think one more corporate giveaway will do this time. Near as I can figure, one way or another, the state is going to have to kick in another half billion dollars in state aid to K-12 schools. To do so without gutting Health and Human Services, the Department of Corrections or the university system, we are going to need more revenue, period.

Sen. Justin Wayne, who has spoken of "blowing up TEEOSA," has introduced LB728, to create a new state income tax tier at \$2.5 million or more to pay 7.84 percent. Right now any individual who makes \$29K is taxed at 6.84 percent—the same rate as the Ricketts and the Buffetts—though in practice the very wealthy pay far less. LB728 could generate \$11 million annually, not an enormous sum, but it's a start. It is time, and past time, for the Nebraskans best able to do so to pay their fair share.

What's HOT, conclusion

ment core also contains evidence of an underwater landslide which scientists believe took place as melting methane clathrates “warmed dramatically, breaking apart into water and methane gas, and bubb[ed] ferociously out of the sea floor.”

An Analogue to Today?

Methane bursts during a past warming transition may provide a guide to future Arctic climate change. Earth's climate can sharply warm or cool very quickly. Massive shifts have taken place in paleoclimate very quickly “About 11,600 years ago, at the end of the Younger Dryas cold period,” wrote E.G. Nisbet and J. Chappellaz in *Science*, “the planet warmed very suddenly, with strong increases in atmospheric greenhouse gases, especially methane.”

Researchers who have drilled into sediment layers near the east coast of Florida found evidence that melting methane clathrates thawed suddenly

(over the course of a few thousand years) about 55 million years ago, initiating a sudden episode of global warming which ended with crocodiles and palm trees in the Arctic. At the peak of this episode, greenhouse-gas levels in the atmosphere were between two and six times as high as at present. Lisa Sloan, a paleoclimatologist at the University of California (Santa Cruz) and Gerald Dickens, a paleoceanographer at James Cook University in Queensland, Australia (two of several scientists who conducted the study) reported the findings at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union late in 1999.

“The case is getting stronger that global warming is associated with large hydrocarbon releases, and here's an example where it seems to have happened in the past,” said Roy Hyndman, a senior scientist at the Pacific Geoscience Centre of the Geological Survey of Canada (Munro, 2004, A-10). “If you put a lot of methane or other hydrocarbons into the

atmosphere you can get abrupt and very large global warming and that's what we're doing now,” said Hyndman. “The amount we are putting in now is huge in the geological context, very large.”

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Bruce E. Johansen, Frederick W. Kayser Professor at the University of Nebraska—Omaha, is author of Climate Change: An Encyclopedia of Science, Society, and Solutions (2017).

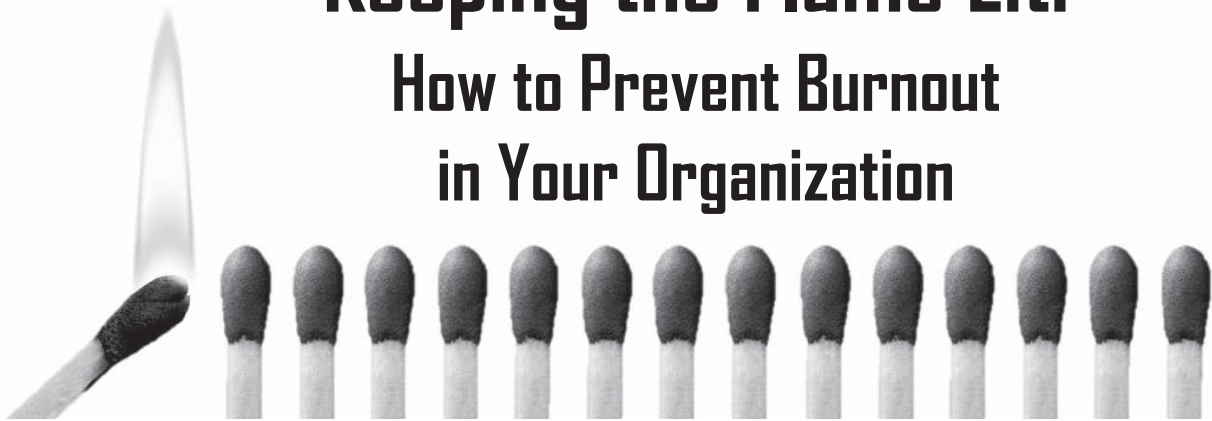
True Stats About Global Warming

While Trump & Co. have been fantasizing that global warming is dead (or never existed at all), temperatures have been setting new highs in the Arctic. Seth Borenstein reported for the *Associated Press*: “It's been so unusually warm that the land weather station closest to the North Pole—at the tip of Greenland—spent more than 60 hours above freezing in February. Before this year, scientists had seen the temperature there rise above freezing in February only twice before, and only ever so briefly. Last month's record-hot temperatures at Cape Morris Jesup have been more like those in May, said Ruth Mottram, a climate scientist at the Danish Meteorological Institute.”

Arctic weather stations averaged 8.8 degrees (4.9 degrees Celsius) warmer than normal for the [winter] season that just ended [December 1–March 1]. The air above the Chukchi and Bering seas near Alaska averaged about 20 degrees (11 degrees C.) warmer than normal for February, the data center reported. “The extended warmth really has kind of staggered all of us,” Mottram said.

Source: Borenstein, Seth. “Arctic Not So Chill This Record Warm Winter.” *Associated Press* in *Washington Post*, March 6, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/not-so-big-chill-arctic-finishes-warmest-winter-on-record/2018/03/06/f07cfa9c-2181-11e8-946c-9420060cb7bd_story.html

Keeping the Flame Lit: How to Prevent Burnout in Your Organization



by Sierra Kart

**They/their is used as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun in this article. Some people choose to use 'they' because they don't feel comfortable identifying as a man or woman.*

Activists and volunteers are the backbone of all nonprofit organizations. Yet in times of great change, it's easy for individuals to tire and burn out. So how can organizations prevent burnout in their volunteers?

The "Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference" (MBLGTACC) is a good example of what a successful nonprofit can look like. MBLGTACC serves to educate and empower LGBTQIA+ college students, faculty, and staff at a different midwestern college each year. After two years of planning, the UNO MBLGTACC committee hosted an estimated 2,000 people at the conference this February.

The process of planning a large event can be taxing. For Jasmine Flores, a first-year secondary education major at UNO, it was overwhelming at times to serve as MBLGTACC's volunteer coordinator.

Despite the advice of advisors and fellow committee members, Flores didn't actively attempt self-care. They* felt the effects of burnout soon after.

"I would spend days just depression-like, exhausted, not doing anything," Flores said. "And I would get so

in my head about emailing people and I just couldn't do it."

Kana Skay, a 6th-year sociology major at UNO, knows all about burnout. Their senior sociology thesis was called "Dissent and Struggle at the Margins: LGBTQ Activists, Mental Health, and Disengagement." At MBLGTACC, they hosted a workshop on the topic.

According to Skay's thesis, burnout is defined as exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficiency regarding one's job or work environment. Their research shows that volunteers who felt burnt-out were not more likely to disengage from their volunteer work or activism.

Skay theorizes that many activists don't disengage after burning out because they don't want to lose access to their community or intertwined resource network.

According to Skay's research, preventing burnout was not about individual mental health. Instead burnout was prevented by social support. Results depended on who was supporting an individual.

Flores echoed this idea when reflecting on the past year. They believe they could have prevented their own negative feelings by trusting and confiding in their advisors and committee members more.

Even though volunteers and activists may not disengage after burning out, Skay thinks it is important to care for

them regardless. They gave nonprofits the following advice to prevent their volunteers from burning out.

First, notice who is doing the most work and who may be getting stretched thin. Leaders should properly train and delegate work to be spread among many people to avoid burnout.

Second, approach health and healing in a more community-based way. Create support groups for grassroots activists and volunteers. In these groups people can discuss their labor, sort through feelings, and form action plans to address issues.

Third, compensate volunteers even if you can't pay them. Thank volunteers for their free time and labor by providing lunch, career growth opportunities, or resume-building activities.

Despite the stress, Flores was grateful for the opportunity to create an important event for their community. When they saw conference-goers having fun and enjoying themselves, Flores felt every moment of work was worth the result.

Flores directed their last piece of advice to other activists and volunteers facing burnout.

"Realize that the people around you are there because they love you," they said. "You can lean on them in rough times. You don't have to go through anything alone and it doesn't make you weak to ask someone for help."

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'Calling Out,' conclusion

have never been exposed to anything but an uninterrupted stream of majority white culture. That has to end. As the late famous Jazz musician Miles Davis said, "When the tap (faucet) is running—you turn it off."

In a presentation to the annual Nebraska Social Work Association, one student started out the question by letting me know that he was a white male, and he really wanted to help. What do you say to such a person who starts out telling you about his racial appearance? Meanwhile, I am trying to keep a straight face in front of 20-plus participants in this classroom. At times, any astute African American who is conscious does suffer from this white supremacy fatigue that is endlessly promulgated within public places in this state.

It's not my goal to 'call out' particular organizations and institutions in this state for

inadvertently (or intentionally) proliferating this majority white mindset. But where is this nightmare going to end for people of color? Are there enough good white folks who can help do this heavy lifting for racial equity in our communities... who will ensure that we 'call in' those who need not only assistance, but who can represent and speak for themselves?

African Americans make up 28.4 percent of the inmate population in the Nebraska Department of Corrections, yet, they are only 5 percent of the state population. Latinos comprise just 10 percent of the population, but 13.2 percent of the inmates. In contrast, 88.9 percent of the state population is white, but whites make up just 52.7 percent of the inmates. We cannot ignore poverty, historical traumas and other destructive factors that destroy families and creates this school-to-

prison pipeline. That said, we should not have institutions or individuals causing harm on communities and families while using public funds.

In the movie "The Black Panther," there is a line where one of the African characters called the only good white guy (a CIA operative) a "colonizer." One of my seven white friends told me that after viewing the movie, she was discussing it with a friend and a white stranger came up to her and called the movie racist because of that term. Such comments illustrate how out of touch many are with the current and historical conditions in society.

It is about time we get rid of Confederate symbols and other artifacts that support the notion of current and historical oppression. We must begin the cathartic transformation of society by making sure that all adults and children are eating at the table of plenty. Anything less is not acceptable.

and stop segregation. It called police brutality a primary cause of the uprisings.

The report was issued in 1968, 50 years ago, and became a bestseller. Sixty years later, Harris and Allen Curtis, president of the Milton Eisenhower foundation, have issued a sobering follow-up:

- “The percentage of people living in deep poverty—less than half of the federal poverty level—has increased since 1975. About 46 percent of people living in poverty in 2016 were classified as living in deep poverty—16 percentage points higher than in 1975.” (summary from the *Washington Post*)
- “Three decades after the Fair Housing Act of 1968 passed, black homeownership rose by almost 6 percentage points... gains wiped out from 2000 to 2015 when black homeownership fell 6 percentage points” because of the disproportionate effect of the subprime mortgage crisis on people of color.
- “[B]ecause of a lack of court oversight and housing discrimination... the court allowed school districts to move away from desegregation plans” and “housing discrimination forced black and Latino families to move into largely minority neighborhoods” so that “[i]n 1988, about 44 percent of black students went to majority-white schools nationally” and now “[o]nly 20 percent of black students do... today.”

Harris and Curtis write about what their study found:

The African American unemployment rate has continued to be nearly double that for whites. Latino unemployment remains disproportionately high, as well. Labor union membership has shrunk from about 25 percent of private jobs to about 6 percent. Inequality of income in our country has greatly worsened... Fifty-two percent of all new income in America goes to the top 1 percent.

African American workers earn about 82.5 cents on every dollar earned by white workers, are 2.5 times as likely

to be in poverty as whites, and have a median family wealth about a tenth of that of the average white family.

At first the Kerner Report was taken seriously and some changes occurred in school desegregation, housing and education. Some still obtain. Education for people of color has improved though not employment percentages. One sees more mixed race couples and friendships. The professional class composed of people of color has expanded. In Nebraska, laws against mixed race marriages have been repealed; restaurant signs saying, “No Indians or Dogs Allowed” have disappeared. I haven’t heard Latinos or African Americans called racist epithets recently.

Yet, the imprisonment rates for people of color are entirely disproportionate here (as the ACLU suit will soon make clear); housing is deeply segregated in Omaha and is rapidly re-segregating in Lincoln. Fremont has its racist immigrant laws directed against Latinos. The black community in Omaha has lost its business district and become a food desert. Though Nebraska’s population is about 20 percent people of color and quickly increasing, only about 12 percent of whites live in poverty, about a third of African Americans and Hispanics live so and about 45 percent of American Indians. Between 15 and 25 percent of African American, Native American and Asians lack a high school diploma and nearly 50 percent of Hispanics. People of color have higher levels of unemployment and fewer own their own homes. Great disparities exist in longevity, health care and health insurance. And so Fred Harris calls on us once more to change after 400 years of legally and illegally imposed apartheid.

We need laws to guarantee integrated home ownership, policing and corrections parity, living wages for all employed people and near full employment. We need people of color in our local elective and appointive offices. We need Nebraska history to tell the full story about the history of lynchings, of land and labor theft and abuse in our state that has made people of my color pros-

perous beyond our deserts and people of a darker color marginal, regardless of merit. Think how much beauty we have lost, how much talent, how much love.

Recently, a white nationalist student calling for race hate surfaced at UNL with his social media rantings. The UNL athletic teams rightly responded with t-shirts telling us that hate would never win. But hate has already won. In the ’70s, ’80s, ’90s, ’2000s, and ’2010s, Nebraskans voted overwhelmingly for haters for president. One is now our commander-in-chief. When, since Norbert Tiemann, have we had a governor who risked his office for civil rights? The Southern Poverty Law Center lists the following organized hate groups in our state: Statewide: Great Millstone (Black Nationalist); The Daily Stormer (Neo-Nazi); Vanguard America (Neo-Nazi); Fairbury: Third Reich Books (Neo-Nazi); Lincoln: National Socialist German Workers Party (Neo-Nazi); Omaha: Global Faith Institute (Anti-Muslim); Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ (Black Nationalist); The Right Stuff (White Nationalist); Scottsbluff: Mission to Israel (Christian Identity). They are just the tip. Add the pusillanimity of our major politicians and their dog whistles to their ignorant followers. We have not changed things since Kerner because we like racism and are not frightened by it.

We should be frightened. As people of color approach 50 percent of our population, the great national security issue will be whether we live in a country where all peoples have a sense of dignity and opportunity, where social groups know and care for each other as citizens and neighbors, where freedom is in the air for everyone. Vladimir Putin and his co-workers bought more than 3,000 Facebook bots—most of them designed to enhance racial and religious divisions among us. Hate wins now. Hate will win in the future if we do not do better, if our political leaders do not do better, if our religious leaders do not do better, if we do not care about our neighbors enough to seek justice for them. This is a national security issue. It is our lifeblood.

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Speaking Our Peace

by Paul Olson, NFP President Emeritus

Healing Our Divided Society

There is No Peace without Justice

In 1975, Betty and I had an organizational meeting at our home at 2535 A for “Fred Harris for President.” A U.S. Senator at the time, Fred was then married to a beautiful Comanche woman, LaDonna, who worked on Indian opportunity, education, the environment and the development of Indian business. Her friend was a Comanche student of mine with connections to Henderson, Nebraska. In our house discussion, Fred said that he was running on issues of economic democracy, break-

ing up the nation’s largest corporations, and creating a new “populism” crossing racial lines and uniting white workers, Native Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans. We liked his platform then. We like it now.

About 50 years later, the former Senator has written part of another book based on the same principles, *Healing Our Divided Society: Investing in America Fifty Years After the Kerner Report*. Harris was a member of the

“Kerner Commission” appointed by Lyndon Johnson in 1967 to examine U.S. ’60s racial unrest. It issued a report calling white racism the root of America’s racial divide and predicting that we were “moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” The report called for the U.S. government to create better jobs for people of color, construct decent and integrated housing,

continued on page 15