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WWFOR seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, equality, peace and justice. It links and strengthens FOR members and chapters throughout Western Washington in promoting activities consistent with the national FOR statement of purpose. WWFOR helps members and chapters accomplish together what we could not accomplish alone.

SAVE THE DATE

WWFOR 2023 FALL RETREAT on Zoom Nov 11, 2023, 9:30 to 12:30 PST

Further details on presenters and information on registration will be on wwfor.org by mid-October

Planes, (fancy) trains and automobiles won't help us meet our climate goals.

by Mary Paterson | July 5, 2023 (reprinted from *Real Change*, the Seattle Homeless paper by permission of the author)

Real Change began an important discussion this spring about how our state legislators and governor are ignoring the need for East-West passenger trains between Seattle, Auburn, Ellensburg, Yakima, and Spokane ('It's Just Negligence...', March 15, 2023). Modernizing our existing rail routes — think Amtrak for the 21st century — can help us reduce “vehicle miles traveled” and slash our emissions by 2030, which we must do according to warnings from scientists about climate change.

Trains on our existing rail network are a climate solution hiding in plain sight. They'd also help relieve traffic on our roads along East-West and North-South corridors.

On June 20, the Joint Transportation Committee in Olympia discussed a “draft final report”

evaluating what Gov. Jay Inslee and others are calling the “ultra” high speed rail project, a super-fast train that would connect Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. Proponents envision speeds of 220 mph or more. That's faster than many of the high-speed trains in Europe and much faster than the well-known “Acela” Amtrak train on the East Coast or the privately owned “Brightline” train in Florida. “Ultra” is not a term recognized by the Federal Railroad Administration, which defines high-speed rail as trains traveling at 90 mph or more. But the governor and backers in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia use the term “ultra,” perhaps as a way of selling the idea to the public.

Don't we all love the idea of traveling between Seattle and Portland in one hour?

Well, yes, maybe, until we start getting real about how much it would cost and how long it would take to get an ultra-fast train in Washington.

The consultant presentation to the Joint Transportation Committee noted that the ultra-fast rail project is still in the “conceptual” phase, without a specific route, technology, or governance structure. It says that the ridership forecast is at “the high end” of a reasonable range, partly because the ultra-high-speed rail survey overly relied on responses farmed from social media. And it says the desired speed of 220 mph is “at the high end of what's likely.” Trains traveling this fast require new rights of way because they can't share track or even run close to slower trains, like freight trains. New parcels of land, including wetlands and rural land, would need to be purchased on whatever route between Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., is eventually selected.

How much would the ultra-high-speed project cost? Without more nuts-and-bolts decisions like the route and what kind of technology would best achieve the desired speeds, it's hard to project costs for this North-South ultra high-speed rail.

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But the Joint Transportation Committee heard figures like \$36 billion to \$63 billion if it were to be built now, partly because of increased construction costs and the costs of tunneling and carving out new rights of way through urban areas. One of the consultants estimated that \$70 billion was more likely, though it was not possible to project costs without more detailed planning, and the report itself gives a cost range with \$150 billion at the high end.

How long would the ultra-high-speed rail project take to build?

This is the most alarming thing for people concerned about climate change. There was quiet laughter in the Joint Transportation Committee when consultants referred to the initial studies projecting an end date of 2030 or 2035 — “clearly not doable,” they said. The California High Speed Rail project that, though fraught, may deliver some benefits by 2030 or 2035 has taken 20 years to build the least complex segment through the Central Valley.

Washington is embarking on its ultra-fast rail project more than two decades after California started. And even the proponents of Washington’s project have called it a “Vision for 2050.” Isn’t that a bit late? In respect to the climate, we need to cut our emissions in half by 2030 — just seven years from now.

And according to the Washington State Department of Commerce, also at the hearing on June 20, converting to electric vehicles is “far from enough.”

What can be done?

Even if decision makers in Olympia forge ahead with the ultra-high-speed rail project, at a cost of \$70 billion or more and a due date of 2050 or later, we must upgrade our existing rail service North-South and East-West so that people have climate-friendly options by 2030 to 2035.

We can do this!

In 2006, Washington completed a plan for frequent trips between Seattle and Portland that would take 2.5 hours and could make the ride between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., in 2.75 hours. Our governor and Legislature are shunning this plan, but this can change if we demand it: 2030 or bust!

Choose more trains, not more lanes and planes!



Extinction Rebellion and Citizens Assemblies

by John M Repp

“only nonviolent rebellion can now stop climate breakdown and social collapse” is the subtitle of the book: Common Sense for the 21st Century by Roger Hallam (London: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2019)

Roger Hallam writes that real change happens when ordinary people break the law i.e., do nonviolent direct action. He gives his book a title that reminds us of Tom Paine’s Common Sense (January 1776) which sparked the American revolution. The book reads like a short 95-page instruction manual for a nonviolent revolution. Hallam uses “reverse engineering”, imagining what a successful nonviolent revolution would look like and then works back to the steps and preparations needed to achieve it. He means revolution literally: the current political class and political structure will be removed if the Extinction Rebellion succeeds with its highest goals.



The existential issue is the approaching collapse of most of the earth’s ecological and political systems due to climate change combined with extreme inequality and political corruption. (p. 55) This is happening all over the world. Our current leaders refuse to do what is necessary **at the scale needed** to save millions of people from eventual death. It is more than heat waves and the rising ocean; George Monbiot tells us that climate change will affect our ability to produce enough food and starvation will be widespread. Hallam focuses on England and the book was written four years ago, but most of the ideas apply to the United States of today.

We in *Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation* and the SNOW coalition knew a few of the steps since we tried to apply them to stop the invasion and war in Iraq, and later, many of us lived through Occupy Wall Street. We know about training activists in nonviolence (Mike Yarrow Peace Fellowship). We know that sometimes we must bring tents in case an occupation goes beyond a day (Occupy Wallstreet). We know how to reach out to artists and musicians to make the atmosphere positive.

Some leaders meet with the police beforehand to establish trust. We tell them we will be nonviolent, and we assure them we know they have a job to do, which is to arrest us. We say clearly that we intend to break the law. There are even a few paragraphs about using direct action to push NGO’s and other potential allies to join the action.

We develop affinity groups of 8 to 12 people who know each other and support each other. We had neighborhood groups in SNOW. (cont. next page)

According to Hallam, in an action, several people of each affinity group will not get arrested so they can support those of the group who do. There will be a series of smaller actions where people will be jailed to get national publicity leading up to the bigger action. This is how to build a campaign as part of the movement. Hallam writes “that radical change is primarily a numbers game.” (p.33) He knows that to get the number of people needed for a mobilization, the planning cannot be done secretly. Despite the focus on direct action, the overall goal is to change the minds of as many people as possible.

What happens **after** the big, many layered actions shake up the government? Hallam introduces us to **Citizens’ Assemblies**. Chosen by a random process of selecting a few citizens from all sectors of society, a process called **sortition**, Citizens’ Assemblies will discuss the issues that are dividing a society like abortion in the case of Ireland, or with Extinction Rebellion, what to do about climate change.

We in the United States use a form of sortition when we pick **juries** and when we try to survey what people are thinking in **opinion polling**. Sortition has been used in situations where the difference between the parties on an issue is very great and the parties are not really speaking to each other. That is where we are with the issue of climate change.

Hallam writes: **“The transition that will be shown to be necessary would be political death for any one party should they suggest the changes that will be required.”** (p. 75) This is a most important consideration and a reason why democracies with elections as the key institution cannot deal with climate change. Would the people vote for policies that lessen their standard of living? Extinction Rebellion thinks we will need to cut in half our standard of living to survive the warming world. Making people’s income and wealth more equal is the only way to make such a change palatable.

The ordinary citizens that sit as the Citizen’s Assembly are presented with an issue like “Shall we legalize abortion in our country?” for example, in the case of Ireland. The Assembly is told by experts the facts that support each side of the issue. They can ask for more resources or information. They then take as much time as necessary to discuss among themselves the issue until they are ready to propose their position and announce it to the larger public. They need a consensus to make a report, usually 70% or more.

This new kind of political institution (i.e. Citizen’s Assembly) has been used in Europe to solve difficult problems but is **not very well known the United States**. Hallam writes: “The Citizens’ Assembly system answers the age-old question of ‘Who decides?’ and

represents as big a political shift as the transition from aristocratic rule to representational democracy.” (p. 78) In the United States, there is now a struggle over voting; some wanting to make it harder to vote, some wanting to make it easier; so, having Citizen’s Assemblies make the final decisions may be too big a step here. There is an intermediate step that has been used in Europe, where Citizen’s Assemblies decisions have been given to elected leaders and the elected leaders make the final decision.

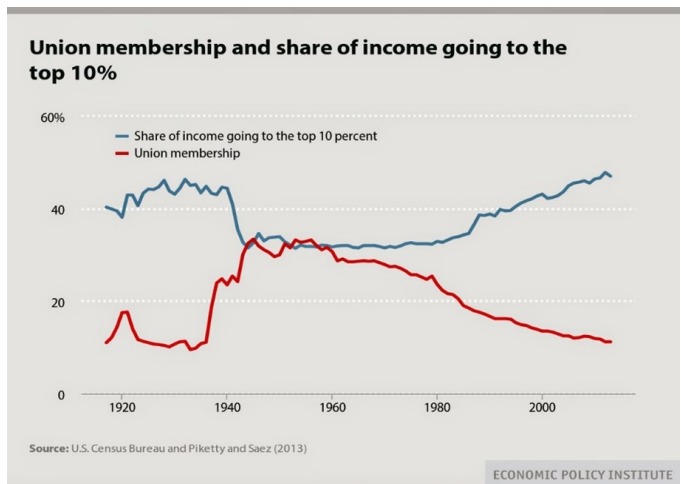
The reason for this change to using Citizen’s Assemblies to decide issues is that wealthy political activists in our country have figured out how to **game** the “democratic systems” we have now, using lobbying, control of mass media networks, now troll farms to influence social media, and large campaign contributions to politicians. It has resulted in our political systems being paralyzed so our system cannot deal with such a difficult problem as climate change.

Labor Struggles – Where’s Our Contract?

by Cindy Cole

Over the past few years labor unions organizing successes have been in the news. But some big companies have used fierce union busting tactics, like firing workers who organize, requiring captive audience anti-union meetings, threats to shut down a worksite and more to fight this trend. Despite that, the independent Amazon Labor Union has been able to organize several Amazon warehouses. Also, Starbucks workers have organized 21 cafés in the last few years. However, over a year after the success of these organizing drives **neither union has been able to secure a first contract**. We need to look at the right to collective bargaining as a two-step process: 1) organizing a union and 2) negotiating a contract. The workers are at a strong disadvantage at the second step, because the employer can refuse to negotiate.

Without a negotiated contract, workers are not guaranteed higher wages, health benefits, good working conditions, retirement plans, or a grievance procedure.



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Refusing to negotiate is a tactic that has been used over and over by employers. When collective bargaining became legal through the Wagner Act, passed by Congress, and signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt on July 5, 1935, General Motors the nation's largest company at the time refused to negotiate. The union, organized by the United Auto Workers, had to use a more militant tactic. The Flint Sit Down Strike of late 1936 through 1937, where union members took over factories, brought GM to the table. It was a months-long fight involving thousands of workers, police, and the national guard. The wives of the strikers brought them food so they could survive. It was tense and sometimes violent on both sides.

Jane McAlevey, a union organizer, writes that what new **and** established labor unions need to recognize is that **“high energy organizing”** never stops. This includes high participation by workers in a transparent negotiating process and when a contract is secured be assured, she writes, that the employer will set out to violate it. Workers need to fight back collectively and not leave it just to their lawyers. Unions and their communities need to win real improvements that will propel more workers to take the risk of unionizing.

Why Mass School Shootings?

by John M Repp

One of the most disturbing news reports we hear nowadays is a report of a mass shooting at a school. Usually, the report tells us how many people are killed, the location, and ends with a statement “no motive has been established”. The listener or viewer’s heart sinks.

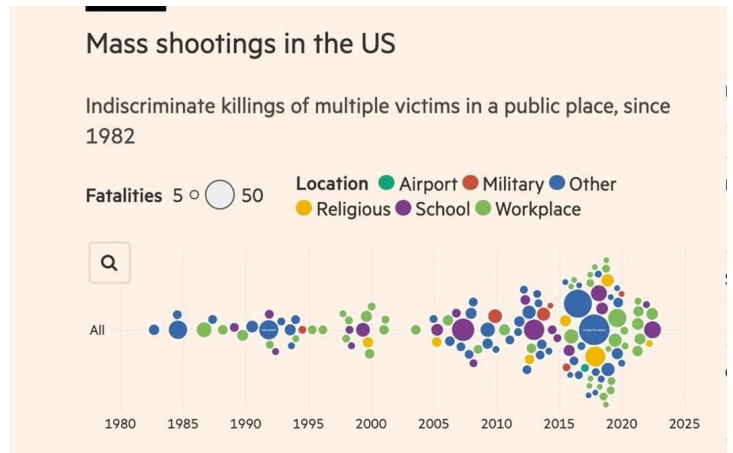
A few years back, two professors of criminology and criminal justice respectively, Jillian Peterson and James Densley, put together a database of mass shootings in the United States since 1966, when the first one happened. In 2021, they published a book The Violence Project: How to Stop a Mass Shooting Epidemic. Politico published a review of the book in 2022. Quotes below are from the review.

Many mass shootings are “acts of violent suicide.” This finding makes the idea false that somebody on the scene with a gun is going to deter a mass shooting. Most mass shooters know the shooting is their final act. Some also crave fame. The shooter turns the self-hate that is the cause of their suicide outward. Early childhood trauma is the deep cause: “violence in the home, sexual assault, parental

suicides, extreme bullying”. The driver is that people, especially young males, feel more looked down upon and disrespected in a massively unequal society. They feel a loss of face.

Often, the shooter studies other shootings. Many shooters even tell people beforehand that they are going to do it but are not believed. Older shooters who shoot up people in their workplace are often different from younger shooters who go to their school to shoot. They seem upset about the workplace or people in it. Strong labor unions might help in those cases.

Unfortunately, mass shootings of all kinds are socially contagious. The number of mass shootings is

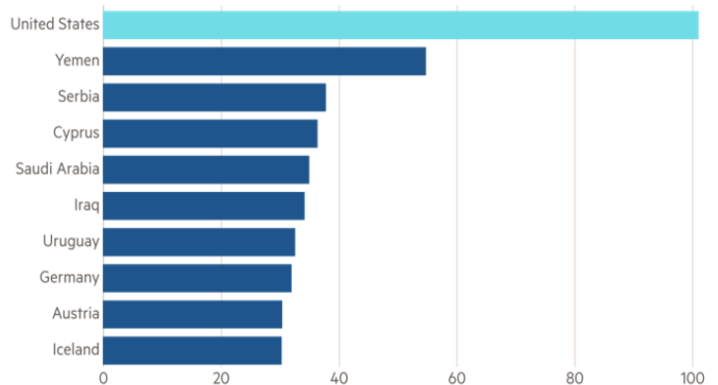


increasing.

There is a huge debate between conservatives and progressives in the United States about **the cause** of our high number of mass shootings. Is it too many guns or mental illness? The USA has the most guns per capita by far, almost twice what the next country has. There are more licensed gun dealers in the United States than all the McDonald’s, Burger King, Subway and Wendy’s combined.

The US has more guns per capita than any other country

Firearms per 100 people



Source: GunPolicy.org, collected by the Sydney School of Public Health © FT

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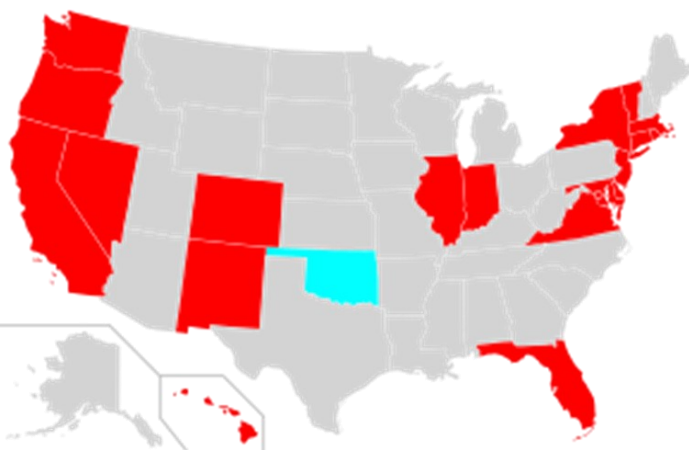
And that does not even count the unlicensed or on-line outlets.

The huge number of guns is a key factor, but the professors Peterson and Densley write “Why does it have to be an either/or?” **It is both! Our polarized debate is leading nowhere.**

In terms of prevention, one approach that Peterson and Densley discuss is the need to focus on mental illness, and then **we need follow through.** Republicans say the problem is mental illness. Republicans do not want to tighten up the gun laws, but they do not follow through with money to help mental illness, in the schools for example. The authors suggest we place 500,000 psychologists in our schools to find troubled individuals and counsel them. That would be about four to five psychologists in each school. It would cost \$35 billion in funding.

The only gun control laws Peterson and Densley mention are **red flag laws** which allow a judge to temporarily remove guns from a person **who is a danger to themselves or others.** But most people don't know they exist (and they don't exist everywhere), don't know how they work, and the police need to be trained and supported in the effort to enforce red flag laws. It would not be easy to confiscate the guns of a potential shooter in a rural pro-gun community with a small law enforcement body that everybody knows.

As of May 2023, 21 states and the District of Columbia have enacted some form of red-flag law. The specifics of the laws, and the degree to which they are



utilized, vary from state to state. Oklahoma has an anti-red flag law!

Nor is this a problem we are going to punish our way out of. The Parkland shooter of 2018 who shot up

Marjory Stone Douglas High School “had just been expelled and then came back.” Nor has “hardening schools – metal detectors, armed officers, teaching our kids to run and hide” been working all that well. Maybe we should try to implement what Peterson and Densley suggest: help counsel our young men while they are in school, and longer term, mitigate the massive inequality and lack of upward mobility in our society than is causing such shame to young men.

But let's be bold and dream of a better America! Why can't we learn the lesson Australia can teach us? After a decades long series of mass shootings, there was a mass shooting in Port Arthur Australia in 1996. There was **a moment of collective revulsion**, and Australia decided “to require a license to own virtually any type of gun and to regulate semiautomatic pistols and rifles as tightly as fully automatic ones.” (p. 149) **In other words, they license all guns and rifles like we license cars and fully automatic weapons.** “Since the implementation of these laws in Australia, there has been only one small mass shooting and the number of suicides has dropped by 77 percent.” (Same source as above) (A semiautomatic requires a squeeze of the trigger for each shot.)

These simple and elegant solutions are being blocked by the profit-seeking behavior of our gun manufacturing companies, our gun dealers, and the gun lobby.

The New Cold War
 by John M Repp

There is one main reasons for the new cold war with Russia and China: U.S. efforts to remain dominant in a changing world. After promising not to move NATO east of what had been the Soviet Union, the new governments that formed in the east European countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union, were invited into NATO. We now know our national security people knew they crossed a red line when they did that. On February 24, 2022, Russia has invaded Ukraine, not a North Atlantic country. The U.S. is supplying a massive number of weapons to Ukraine, so we are in **a proxy war** with Russia, some say a real war, certainly a profitable war for the military-industrial complex.

And now China has made the most amazing change in their economy in the last 70 years. To put this in perspective, in 1820 China was 1/3 or about 30 percent of the world economy. Then the European powers took control of China and divided it up between them. By 1950 China was just 5% of the world economy. We should see that the 1949 revolution was really a national liberation struggle that Chairman Mao led. (cont. next page)

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In 2023 China is 18.92 percent of the world economy. The U.S. is 15.39. (This way of measuring the relative size puts the huge U.S. financial sector, **the speculating non-producers**, in perspective.) China has risen to the status of the world's biggest manufacturing economy. In 70 years, China has become one of the world's wealthiest economies, from being one of the poorest after 1949. This is a radical change in the geopolitics of the world. Now, China also has the world's largest navy by numbers of ships.

China did not do this with a centrally planned economy which was the Russian Soviet model after the 1917 Russian revolution. China used what they call "market socialism." Many of the big companies are owned by the government, but a market, not a central plan, determines their relationships with each other and the world. There is a national plan but it is a plan not a rigid framework. The financial and corporate elites in the Western world moved many factories to China to take advantage of the cheap labor: that was a huge factor in the turnaround of China's position in the world.

Wisely, the Chinese companies made sure that the western companies shared the technology with the Chinese. That was the deal. And now the West, especially the United States is trying to compete in the manufacturing sector again. Our leaders don't want to break with neoliberalism i.e. "free trade." They hesitate to pass tariffs like what Alexander

Hamilton recommended to George Washington that eventually led to the economic development of the United States, although this is starting to change.

There is a very long-term downside for China. With global warming, they might lose much of their arable land. James Hansen predicts in his new not yet published nor peer-reviewed paper, that we are headed for a 60-meter sea level rise in an ice-free world if we don't make a drastic change. The sixty (60) meter rise in sea level will flood much of China's traditional agricultural fields, not to speak of many of the world's big cities. Most Americans don't know that almost two-thirds of China is mountainous with many small villages. Many of the people who now work in factories come from those villages. In response to global warming, China is now manufacturing solar panels and windmills as fast as they can.

And the leader of China, Xi Jinping is saying they want Taiwan back into the People's Republic. The United States has a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan. No wonder people who watch the global geopolitical rivalry and the buildup of nuclear weapons say this is a very dangerous time for humanity.

The so-called "great powers" (U.S., Russia, and China) should **focus on cooperation in order to mitigate climate change** rather than engage in geopolitical struggle that has resulted in the rise and fall of so many empires over the thousands of years of what we call "civilization".

The United States has China surrounded.

How would we feel if the roles were reversed?

This map is a bit dated, showing U.S. troops in Afghanistan, that are now gone.



At the Border: Deportations and CBP One App
by Bruce Radtke and Cindy Cole

The US Government’s COVID-19 public health emergency order expired on May 11, 2023 – this included the Trump Title 42 order that expelled over 2.5 million migrants from the US-Mexico border. The Biden Administration is now rolling out plans that will continue to restrict many migrants’ access to asylum, including a “transit ban”. Under the new rule, migrants who pass through countries on their way to the U.S. and do not first claim asylum there or take advantage of other lawful pathways will be deemed ineligible to claim asylum at the southern border. A recent policy requires migrants to use a cell phone app (CBP One App) and apply for an immigration appointment while waiting at the Mexican side of the border.

These policies have lowered the number of migrants crossing the U.S. Mexico border, despite certain Republicans claiming that the “border is open”. However, many migrants have trouble logging onto the CBD One app. Some wait a month or more before being able to log on and navigate the application process. Where they must wait is often a dangerous environment.

In addition, since Biden’s inauguration there has been the ultra-rapid adjudication of asylum cases under conditions of expedited removal. There have been 17,963 ICE air flights. In the last 12 months there have been 1,368 removal flights with an estimated average of 100 passengers per flight. This means approximately 136,800 migrants returned/expelled/deported.

The Los Angeles Times recently reported that the Biden Administration plans to expand a program called “Family Expedited Removal Management. This program places families who cross the border without authorization under a home curfew lasting from 11 pm to 5 am, and the head of household must wear a GPS monitor. “This program railroads asylum-seeking parents and children to deportation through a process so rushed and punishing that they will be unable to find lawyers and unable to effectively present their claims to asylum” said Heidi Altman from the National Immigrant Justice Center. She asserts that the USA “has the capacity to provide a respectful welcome to people in need of protection.”

As seen in immigration news, Florida and Texas governors have been sending migrants to northern cities in vast numbers, In New York City 58,000 asylum seekers have been flown and bussed to the city and there is now a crisis in shelter, food, etc. Mayor Eric Adams has asked for federal assistance and for the Biden Administration to issue work permits to many of the migrants so that they can work while waiting for asylum appointments. A Federal rule, however, prevents issuing work permits until migrants have been in the U.S. 180 days. Since many of the cities new migrants are illegal, the Feds are concerned if they make exceptions and quickly issue work permits and green cards more migrants will attempt to cross the border.

Unfortunately, there continue to be abuses by Border Control and some of the governors in Southern States. In Texas, Greg Abbot has placed buoys with razor wire in the Rio Grande. In Arizona, migrants have been held outside in 110-degree temperatures in cages. Water placed in the desert has been destroyed causing deaths. We need comprehensive, humane immigration reform.

“Border Patrol has the right to apprehend someone, but in the proper way, not wrongfully. Many people are afraid of the Border Patrol. Thanks be to God—He gave me the strength to endure and overcome what they [Border Patrol] did to me... People do not have to put up with Border Patrol’s abuses. Because it’s difficult, and my case is one example. An example for many people who maybe also have been run over, like me... It is an example that I share with fellow migrants, so that they don’t become demoralized. If the Border Patrol hits you, demand your rights, because we all have rights.”

— “Marco Antonio,” who filed a complaint after Border Patrol hit him and ran over his leg on a four-wheeler



WATCH THE MOVIE ON NETFLIX

Youth v Gov

Our Children’s Trust wins a sweeping constitutional lawsuit in Montana

By John M Repp

Our Children’s Trust is a non-profit law firm, the only non-profit law firm in the nation, that is using the court system to force the state and federal government to establish the right of our children to a clean and healthful environment. The law firm started in 2015 and is based in Eugene, Oregon. Their first lawsuit was against the Federal Government. The executive branch, i.e. the Department of Justice, has attempted to stop the lawsuit so they don’t have to act to stop the emissions of fossil fuels. The law firm has also filed lawsuits in four states.

Montana is one of those states and on August 14, 2023, a court in Montana ruled in favor of the children against the state of Montana. You can get a four-page summary of the judgement and even the whole 103 page document on Our Children’s Trust website. The first finding of fact listed in the summary says: “Each additional ton of GHGs (greenhouse gases) emitted into the atmosphere exacerbates impacts to the climate.” There is even a graph in the longer document of the rising carbon dioxide emissions since 1960.

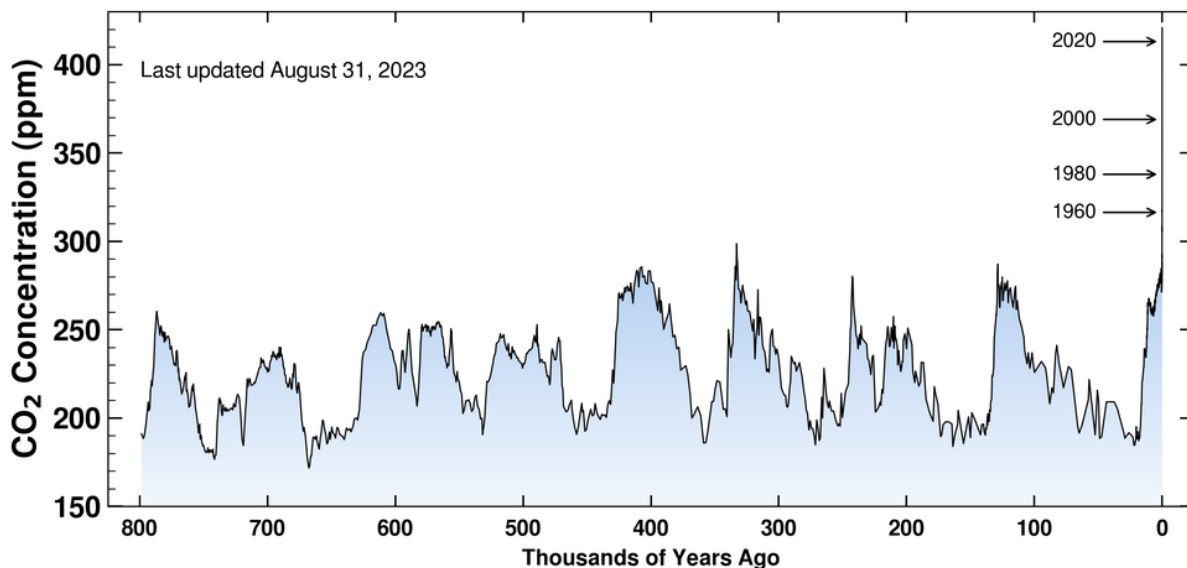
I went to the source of the graph and found the graph shown below. The commentary in the next

paragraph is mine.

We often hear human-caused climate change deniers say “climate change comes and goes”. If you look at this graph, you can see that CO2 concentrations have indeed gone up and down **over 800,000 years**. The coming and going we call the ice ages. But notice what happened after 1960. The concentration of carbon dioxide has increased beyond anything that happened in the last 800,000 years. Now, the deniers may question science. But then they should stop driving cars, stop riding in airplanes, and stop using computers: all devices that modern science has made possible. Indeed, they seem to want to take us back to the dark ages, or maybe worse, **to extinction!**

Within a few weeks, Our Children’s Trust expects, unless the Department of Justice pulls a fast one, will be back in court arguing their original lawsuit against the federal Government.

The approach being taken by Our Children’s Trust is brilliant. The executive and legislative branches of both the federal and state government of our country are essentially under the influence of fossil fuel money. Due to the *Citizen’s United* and other U.S. Supreme Court decisions, our electoral process has been corrupted by monetary contributions. We have learned lately that some of the Supreme Court justices have also been personally corrupted. However, the whole court system may be less corrupt than the executive and legislative branches. That is the value of the strategy of Our Children’s Trust.



source: <https://keelingcurve.ucsd.edu/>