Issues Addresses for January 5, 2019

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CONSUMER PROTECTIONS and WORKPLACE RIGHTS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ELECTIONS**

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

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

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

**ENVIRONMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ETHICS and SEPARATION of POWERS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**GENERAL DECENCY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# HUMAN and CIVIL RIGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# INTERNATIONAL

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

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

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