**Issues/Addresses for 1/26/2019**

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

The *Los Angeles Times* reports: “U.S. border officials finalized plans Thursday [1/24/2019] to require asylum seekers to remain in Mexico while their cases are considered in the United States, the latest escalation of the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown. Border officers will start pushing asylum applicants back across the border as soon as orders become operational on Friday [1/25/2019], beginning at the San Ysidro Port of Entry in San Diego, a Homeland Security official said on condition of anonymity to discuss internal planning. Until now, most migrants seeking asylum were released from detention into the United States while awaiting a court hearing, a process that can take years because of backlogs. Migrant advocates say implementing the plan will put asylum seekers at risk by requiring them to wait in Mexican border cities with some of the deadliest homicide rates in the world.” (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**OBJECT** to this new practice

• **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

**ASK** our Congresspeople to act against this policy that leave asylum-seekers in mortal risk for extended periods of time

• **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

From Rogan’s List: “We've been asking our MoC to investigate the separation of immigrant families at the border, along with their subsequent treatment in shelters, and members of the House have listened. Unfortunately, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar is refusing to testify before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which is investigating this practice.” (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**INSIST** to Secretary Azar that he should take responsibility and accept the Energy and Commerce request to testify

• **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave, SW, DC 20201, (202) 690-7000

**THANK** the Chair of the Energy and Commerce committee for pursuing this line of investigation

• **Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.** (D-NJ), C hair, House Energy and Commerce Committee, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2927

In his proposed state budget, Governor Gavin Newsom has allocated $20 million over three years to provide services during immigration emergency situations. He has also asked that $5 million be allocated for this purpose through the end of the fiscal year in June. The *Los Angeles Times* explains that “Much of the money will likely go to San Diego nonprofits and community organizations, collectively known as the San Diego Rapid Response Network, running a temporary shelter for families released by federal officials after asking for asylum at the southwestern border…. The Rapid Response Network has been pushing for support from local and state governments for months. The collective opened its temporary shelter after federal immigration officials announced in October they would no longer help migrant families arrange travel plans with their sponsors across the country before releasing them in San Diego. About 5,000 migrants have passed through the shelter since it opened, most staying one or two days before traveling on to cities all over the United States. The shelter itself has moved five times since it opened and has yet to find a permanent location.” (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**THANKS** to the Governor for prioritizing these services

• **Governor Gavin Newsom**, c/o State Capitol, Suite1173, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-2841

**EXPLAIN** to your State legislators that you support the Governor’s proposal

• **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

From *Rogan’s List*: According to the Office of the Health and Human Services (HHS) Inspector General, many thousands more children were taken from their families at the border, a year prior to the so-called zero tolerance rule that was implemented in the spring of 2018. No records of these children were kept in a central database, the Office of the Inspector General points out, so reuniting them with their families has been a challenge. However, HHS itself claims it can locate such records. As the *New Yorker* points out, immigration agents can take children from their parents if they claim to have reason to believe that the parents are abusive or have criminal ties. They do not have to provide evidence for these claims. A 2017 draft memo leaked to Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) shows precisely how the Trump administration planned to separate children from their families to deter migrants from seeking asylum. The plan was/is to deny asylum hearings to children and to prosecute parents. The authors wrote that the “increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have a substantial deterrent effect,” according to NBC News. This is in direct contradiction to statements by Department of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen, who said that there was no policy, only an effort to enforce existing law…. Senator Merkley has asked for a perjury investigation of Nielsen, while Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) has called on Nielsen to resign, given the report about how many more children were abducted from their families than was previously acknowledged. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**THANKS** to both Senators for calling attention to this problem

• **Senator Jeff Merkley** (D-OR), 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3753

• **Senator Dick Durbin** (D-IL), 711 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2152

**TELL** our Senators you want further scrutiny of Homeland Security policies and the actions of the Secretary of Homeland Security

• **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 Will Hurd(R-TX), the only Republican Congressman representing a district along the Texas-Mexico border, where the Republican administration proposes to build its wall, has been vocal in opposing the wall and working to address the root causes of migration. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**THANKS** to the Representative for his bipartisanship and his willingness to help shape complex responses to complex situations

• **Representative Will Hurd** (R-TX), 317 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (210) 224-4511

According to the Center for Migration Studies of New York, Visa overstays far exceed unauthorized border crossings. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**EXPLAIN** that if the nation wants to address unauthorized immigration, it should do so by addressing the most common form of this immigration

• **Donald Trump**, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500, (202) 456-1111

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

• **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), Speaker of the House, 1236 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

**CONSUMER PROTECTIONS and WORKPLACE RIGHTS**

Many of the federal workers who are not receiving their pay during the shut-down are finding themselves forced to take out short-term loans to make ends meet. At the same time, the monies that should have gone to them are earning interest for the federal government. It’s not enough to pay withheld salaries once the shut-down is over. Federal workers should receive interest on these monies rather than letting their hardship provide interest income to the Republican administration. After all, the loans federal workers are being forced to take out surely come with their own interest payments that have to be met. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**DEMAND** back pay *with interest* for federal workers sidelined during the shut-down

• **Donald Trump**, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500, (202) 456-1111

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

• **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), Speaker of the House, 1236 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

• **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

**EDUCATION**

From Action Network via *Rogan’s List*: “It may have been lost in the news, but this week is so-called School Choice Week, ‘a well-funded campaign supported by Betsy DeVos's American Federation for Children, the Koch Brothers, the Walton Foundation, ALEC and others in order to promote vouchers, charters, virtual schools and schemes like ESAs and tax credits. The intent is to fund private schools with public tax dollars.’” (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**REMIND** the Secretary of Education and our Congresspeople that we want ample support for public schools and don’t want to see their funding drained through “choice” programs that benefit few and often violate separation of church and state

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

• **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

Here’s another benefit of having a Democratic majority in the House: House Democrats are preparing to scrutinize Education Secretary Betsy DeVos regarding her overhaul of campus sexual assault rules and rollback of regulations on for-profit colleges. *Countable* quotes Representative Rosa DeLauro, Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, which oversees the education budget, as explaining, “We are going to hold Secretary DeVos accountable for, in so many ways, failing to uphold federal protections for our students.” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**THANK** Representative DeLauro for defending students and committing to this course of action

• **Representative Rosa DeLauro** (D-CT), Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, 1016 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3481

**ENVIRONMENT**

From *Rogan’s List*: “All three members of Montana’s Congressional delegation have signed on to sponsor the Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act, S.60, which would ban mining on 30,000 acres of Custer Gallatin National Forest. The act had been included as a part of a public lands package that faltered at the 11th hour of Congress’ last session in December after two senators—Mike Lee of Utah and Rand Paul of Kentucky—halted the package.” (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**ASK** our Senators to cosponsor this important bill

• **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

A coalition of House Democrats has introduced a suite of eight (8) bills to protect America’s coastal communities from offshore drilling: H.R.279, the California Clean Coast Act; H.R.286, the Florida Coastal Protection Act; H.R.287, The New England Coast Protection Act; H.R.291, the Coast Economies Protection Act; H.R.309, the Stop Arctic Ocean Drilling Act; H.R.310, the West Coast Ocean Protection Act; H.R.337, the Defend Our Coast Act; and H.R.341, the Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism (COAST) Anti-Drilling Act. All eight bills are currently with the House Natural Resources Committee, which is chaired by Raúl Grijalva. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**URGE** the Natural Resources Committee Chair to prioritize these pieces of legislation

• **Representative Raúl Grijalva** (D-AZ), Chair, House Natural Resources Committee, 1324 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DCV, (202) 225-6065

The New York Times reports: “Slow-moving, hulking ships crisscross miles of ocean in a lawn mower pattern, wielding an array of 12 to 48 air guns blasting pressurized air repeatedly into the depths of the ocean. The sound waves hit the sea floor, penetrating miles into it, and bounce back to the surface, where they are picked up by hydrophones. The acoustic patterns form a three-dimensional map of where oil and gas most likely lie. The seismic air guns probably produce the loudest noise that humans use regularly underwater, and it is about to become far louder in the Atlantic…. Five companies have been given permits to carry out seismic mapping with the air guns all along the Eastern Seaboard, from Central Florida to the Northeast, for the first time in three decades. The surveys haven’t started yet in the Atlantic, but now that the ban on offshore drilling has been lifted, companies can be granted access to explore regions along the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific…. ‘[Airguns] fire approximately every 10 seconds around the clock for months at a time,’ said Douglas Nowacek, a professor of marine conservation technology at Duke University. ‘They have been detected 4,000 kilometers away. These are huge, huge impacts.’… Some scientists say the noises from air guns, ship sonar and general tanker traffic can cause the gradual or even outright death of sea creatures, from the giants to the tiniest — whales, dolphins, fish, squid, octopuses and even plankton. Other effects include impairing animals’ hearing, brain hemorrhaging and the drowning out of communication sounds important for survival, experts say.” Several environmental organizations have filed suit to challenge the new East Coast permits. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**JOIN** in objecting to this destructive method of oil exploration and **ASK** your Congresspeople what they can do to block these new permits and to protect our oceans

• **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

Barbara Lee’s H.R.322, the “INVEST Act,” would amend the IRS Act of 1986 to provide work opportunity tax credit for hiring veterans in renewable energy companies. Jobs for veterans and a boost for clean energy—what’s not to like? This legislation is currently with the House Ways and Means Committee. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**SHARE** your enthusiasm for H.R.322 with the House Ways and Means Committee Chair

• **Representative Richard Neal** (D-MA), Chair, House Ways and Means Committee, 1139E Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3625

H.R.242, introduced by Jayapal, would repeal Pay-as-You-Go (PAYGO). In general, PAYGO is a good idea. It originated with Democrats and requires that all legislation be paid for with funds currently available, rather than borrowed funds. The problem is that big program, like the potential New Green Deal, pay for themselves in the long run, but require borrowing at the start. H.R.242 is currently with the House Budget and Rules Committees. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**EXPLAIN** to Speaker Pelosi, the Chairs of the Budget and Rules Committees and your own Representative that saving the planet will require radical action—and it can’t be accomplished if we’re hobbled by PAYGO

• **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), Speaker of the House, 1236 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

• **Representative John Yarmuth** (D-KY), Chair, House Budget Committee, 204-E Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 226-7200

• **Representative James P. McGovern** (D-MA), Chair, House Rules Committee, H-312, the Capitol, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-9091

**ETHICS and SEPARATION of POWERS**

Based on reporting in the *Baltimore Sun*: 26 states have infringed on residents’ First Amendment rights by restricting companies that support a boycott of Israel from being eligible to bid for state contracts. These restrictions specifically target the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which according to its website, uses peaceful means to “end international support for Israel’s oppression of Palestinians and pressure Israel to comply with international law.” These anti-BDS laws are designed to punish people for their political views, resulting in multiple lawsuits. State legislatures across the country have penalized individuals and institutions for their political views regarding Israel and Palestine. Some examples:

-In Dickinson, Texas, residents were asked to sign a loyalty oath to Israel before they could receive hurricane recovery monies.

-In Austin, a speech-language pathologist lost her job when she refused to sign an addendum to her contract renewal saying she would not boycott Israel during its term.

-In Arizona, a U.C. Berkeley lecturer who was invited to speak at Arizona State University, was first requested to sign a loyalty oath requiring speakers to certify that they do not support the BDS movement. In response to the lawsuit, the university agreed to remove the clause from all its speaker agreements but the clause remains in place in other areas.

-Again, in Arizona an attorney who provides legal aid to incarcerated individuals lost his contract with the state because he refused to pledge not to boycott Israel.

- In Arkansas a newspaper was required to pledge that it would not boycott Israel to prevent being paid less to run state advertisements in its publications

-In Kansas a school teacher who was chosen for a program to train math teachers was told she could not participate because she refused to certify that she would not boycott Israel, which she does along with her Mennonite church. (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**OBJECT** to these unfair limitations on speech by individuals and corporations (who are, as Citizens United told us, “people” with free speech rights of their own) and **TELL** our Congresspeople we want to see national-level legislation against this bullying

• **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

Agencies like the FBI, ICE, and several local police departments are using facial recognition technology that’s being supplied to them by tech companies like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft. Microsoft markets and sells its own tool called Face API, even as it calls on the federal government to regulate facial recognition technology. Amazon has been secretly trying to sell the Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) agency its facial recognition surveillance system, Rekognition. Google, on the other hand, has announced it would not make its facial recognition program available on its cloud platform, but has not ruled out doing so in the future and has already shared enhanced surveillance technology with the U.S. military. Facial recognition is not a neutral technology. **Academic research has already shown that facial recognition technology is less accurate for darker-skinned faces and women.** This means that Black and Latinx people are much more likely to be misidentified and treated as a threat to law enforcement, biasing law enforcement agents before an encounter even begins. For Amazon’s Rekognition software, the default settings are alarmingly inaccurate and racially biased. **In a recent test of Rekognition that ran pictures of every member of Congress against a collection of mugshots, there were 28 false matches, with significantly higher incorrect results for Black members of Congress like civil rights hero John Lewis (Write-up 1/24/2018)**

**EXPLAIN to the leaders of these tech giants that they shouldn’t be profiting from these deeply flawed technologies that are apt to lead to serious civil rights violations**

• **Jeff Bezos**, President, Chief Executive Officer, Board Chair, Amazon, 410 Terry Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109-5210, (206) 266-1000

• **Brian Tolavsky**, Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, Amazon, 410 Terry Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109-5210, (206) 266-1000

• **Larry Page**, Chief Executive Officer, Google, 1600 Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View, CA 94043, (650) 253-0000

• **Eric Schmidt**, Executive Chair, Google, 1600 Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View, CA 94043, (650) 253-0000

• **Satya Nadella**, Chief Executive Officer, Microsoft Corp., One Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052-6399

• **John Thompson**, Board Chair, Microsoft Corp., One Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052-6399

• **Bill Gates**, Founder, Microsoft Corp., One Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052-6399

NBC News Reports: “‘The Committee on Oversight and Reform is launching an in-depth investigation of the security clearance process at the White House and Transition Team in response to grave breaches of national security at the highest levels of the Trump administration,’ Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, said in a letter to the White House obtained by NBC News. Last February, NBC News reported that more than 130 political appointees working in the Executive Office of the President did not have permanent security clearances as of November 2017, including the president's daughter Ivanka; Kushner, her husband; and the president's top legal counsel. Kushner has since obtained a clearance, according to his lawyer, despite reports that he has been targeted for manipulation by foreign governments…. In the letter, Cummings said the investigation will seek to determine ‘why the White House and Transition Team appear to have disregarded established procedures for safeguarding classified information’ and ‘the extent to which the nation's most highly guarded secrets were provided to officials who should not have had access to them.’” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**THANK Chair Cummings for undertaking this investigation**

• **Representative Elijah E. Cummings** (D-MD), Chair, House Oversight and Reform Committee, 2471 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5051

**The House Intelligence Committee and Financial Services Committee are discussing ways to investigate Trump's business ties to Deutsche Bank**. Trump owes the bank at least $130 million, according to a 2017 financial disclosure. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**TELL** the chairs of these two committees that you appreciate this attention to Trump’s questionable business dealings

• **Representative Adam Schiff** (D-CA), Chair, House Intelligence Committee, Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304, Washington DC 20515-6415, (202) 225-7690

• **Representative Maxine Waters** (D-CA), Chair, House Financial Services Committee, 2129 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4247

We can ask for the censure of Mitch McConnell and his expulsion from the Senate for 1) blocking the constitutional work of the Senate (by refusing to consider legislation based upon the question of whether the President supports it) and 2) usurping Trump's role as the head of the executive branch (he has a right to receive proposed legislation from Congress and to decide whether or not to sign it). Will McConnell be censured and expelled? Highly unlikely. However, it’s important that we comment on this abuse of his role as Senate leader and its betrayal of the system of checks and balances among our three houses of government. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**TELL** McConnell that his refusal to conduct the business of the Senate is a clear dereliction of duty

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

**ASK** our Senators to support taking action against McConnell for his failure to meet his responsibilities

• **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

CalMatters explains: California’s new Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara has chosen Michael Martinez to be “one of two people leading… Lara’s transition .... [Martinez] worked until last month as the Sacramento lobbyist for a major drug maker that is the subject of an investigation by the Department of Insurance that Lara soon will head.” (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**TELL** Commissioner Lara that you are deeply un comfortable with the conflict of interests represented by his appointment of Martinez

• **Ricardo Lara**, Insurance Commissioner, 300 Capitol Mall, Suite 1700, Sacramento, CA 95814, (800) 967-9331

**GENERAL DECENCY**

From Representative Jimmy Panetta: “I sent a letter to Secretary Sonny Purdue at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in response to a concerning report from the *Des Moines Register* about actions taken against LGBTQ youth in the 4-H program. The 4-H organization, which is administered by USDA, currently has over 6 million participants. Last year, 4-H issued a document entitled ‘4-H Guidance for Inclusion of All Gender Identities, Gender Expressions, Sexual Orientation, and Sexes’ aimed at making the organization more welcoming for its LGBTQ youth. Following the publication of this guidance, reports indicate that a senior USDA official instructed programmatic staff to revoke the guidance from all public platforms. We are seeking answers of Secretary Perdue and the USDA over these actions. We can, and we must, do more to support LGBTQ youth and prevent barriers to programs like 4-H.”

**JOIN** Panetta in asking Secretary Purdue why LGBTQ inclusive materials were removed from 4H platforms

• **Sonny Purdue**, Secretary of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250, (202) 720-2791

**THANK** Panetta for taking this issue on

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

Jimmy Panetta introduced H.R.676, the “NATO Support Act,” which prohibits the use of federal funds for withdrawing the U.S. from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This legislation has passed in the House and companion legislation can be considered in the Senate. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**THANKS** to Panetta for introducing H.R.676

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

**URGE** our Senators to protect our NATO membership

• **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

From the annals of cluelessness, here’s billionaire Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, speaking about furloughed federal workers: “I know they are [going to homeless shelters] and I don't really quite understand why because as I mentioned before, the obligations that they would undertake—say borrowing from a bank or credit union—are in effect federally guaranteed,” said Ross. “So the 30 days of pay that people will be out—`there's no real reason why they shouldn't be able to get a loan against it… Now true, the people might have to pay a little bit of interest but the idea that it's paycheck or zero is not a really valid idea.” Ross also said the economic ramifications of the shutdown—the fact that 800,000 workers are not getting paid—is barely a blip on the U.S. economy's radar. Hypothetically if the workers never got their back pay, “you're talking about a third of a percent on our GDP, so it's not like it's a gigantic number overall.” (Write-up 1/24/2019)

**EXPLAIN** to Secretary Ross that a missed paycheck means much more than a blip on the radar for the average American, regardless of what those blinded by their own wealth might think

• **Wilbur Ross**, Secretary of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington DC 20239, (202) 482-2000

Because we apparently hadn’t spent enough time on these issues during the Obama administration and the past two years under Trump, newly-minted Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham plans to investigate several Obama-era “scandals.” These include the FBI’s handling of its investigation into Hillary Clinton’s private email server and Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrant applications targeting former Trump campaign aide Carter Page. Graham, a close-ally of the president, said he was also interested in probing special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**CONDEMN** this waste of time and money returning to a search for malfeasance that has already proven useless

• **Senator Lindsey Graham** (R-SC), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, 290 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5972

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

*Slate* reports: “Without fanfare or even notice, the Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women made significant changes to its definition of domestic violence [last] April. The Obama-era definition was expansive…. [and] included critical components of the phenomenon that experts recognize as domestic abuse—a pattern of deliberate behavior, the dynamics of power and control, and behaviors that encompass physical or sexual violence as well as forms of emotional, economic, or psychological abuse. But in the Trump Justice Department, *only* harms that constitute a felony or misdemeanor crime may be called domestic violence. So, for example, a woman whose partner isolates her from her family and friends, monitors her every move, belittles and berates her, or denies her access to money to support herself and her children is *not* a victim of domestic violence in the eyes of Trump’s Department of Justice. This makes no sense for an office charged with funding and implementing solutions to the problem of domestic violence rather than merely prosecuting individual abusers. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**DECRY** this change in definition and **REQUEST** investigation of the change’s impact by the House and Senate Judiciary Committees

• **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

• **Senator Lindsey Graham** (R-SC), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, 290 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5972

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

**TELL** our Congresspeople we want a definition of domestic violence that goes beyond physical assault

• **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

Four members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus—Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ro Khanna, Ayanna Pressley, and Rashida Tlaib—have been named to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. This committee is the main investigative committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Committee’s web page explains that it “has authority to investigate the subjects within the Committee's legislative jurisdiction as well as ‘any matter’ within the jurisdiction of the other standing House Committees.” These topics range from the federal civil service personnel procedures to the National Archives to the review of the efficacy and impact of any federal legislation. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**WELCOME** these new House Oversight and Government Reform Committee members and **EXPLAIN** that we’re looking forward to seeing the results of their work

• **Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** (D-NY), 229 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3965

• **Representative Ro Khanna** (D-CA), 221 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2631

• **Representative Ayanna Pressley** (D-MA), 1108 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5111

• **Representative Rashida Tlaib** (D-MI), 1628 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5126

From *Rogan’s List*: Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s idea of raising the top tax rate to 70% in order to pay for the Green New Deal has been pooh-poohed by both the Democrat and Republican the political establishment; however, the majority of Americans, including 45% of GOP voters, think this is a good idea. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**REMIND** our Congresspeople that tax rates used to be as high as 90%, and were at 70% as late as 1980 and **ASK** them to start working for more progressive tax reform so we can use the revenues to save our planet

• **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

CNN reports: “In 2017, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria hit the United States in August and September. The storms [are] blamed for the deaths of more 3,000 people and caused billions of dollars in damage. Although all three hurricanes were destructive, a new study from online journal *BMJ Global Health* indicates the US federal response to the hurricane disaster in Puerto Rico was lopsided compared to the response in Florida and Texas. Using public data, *BMJ* created a timeline of staff and funding coming directly from FEMA to those affected by the hurricanes. The study focused on measures of federal spending, distributed federal resources, and direct and indirect storm-mortality tolls. The study says its results show the federal response was faster and ‘more generous’ in terms of funding and staffing for Hurricane Irma in Florida and Harvey in Texas than for Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico…. The study also shows a disparity in the time it took for victims to receive relief. In the first nine days after Harvey hit, those affected received $141 million from FEMA. Those affected by Irma had received nearly $100 million after the first nine days. Maria victims received nearly $6 million in the first nine days. Within the first two months, the study finds that those impacted by Irma and Harvey both received about $1 billion in relief. It took nearly four months for Maria aid to reach the same amount. The study also reports disparity in staffing. Nine days after Harvey made landfall, 30,000 federal employees were posted in Texas. Nine days after Irma, 16,200 were sent to Florida. Nine days after Maria, there were 10,000 federal workers in Puerto Rico. The study says, ‘At the peak, 19,000 federal employees were posted in Puerto Rico, one month after landfall, well short of the peak for Texas of 31,000.’” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**ASK** our Congresspeople whether they are familiar with these disparities and **REMIND** them that we can still take action now to help with Puerto Rico’s containing recovery

• **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

From Reuters: “Detained in a California lockup with hundreds of other immigrants seeking asylum, Duglas Cruz faced a choice. He could content himself with a jailhouse diet that he said left him perpetually hungry. Or he could labor in the prison’s kitchen to earn money to buy extra food at the commissary. Cruz went to work. But his $1-a-day salary at the privately run Adelanto Detention Facility did not stretch far. A can of commissary tuna sold for $3.25. That is more than four times the price at a Target store near the small desert town of Adelanto, about two hours northeast of Los Angeles. Cruz stuck with ramen noodles at 58 cents a package, double the Target price. A miniature deodorant stick, at $3.35 and more than three days’ wages, was an impossible luxury, he said…. But immigration attorneys say the pricey commissary goods are part of a broader strategy by private prisons to harness cheap inmate labor to lower operating costs and boost profits…. The U.S. for-profit prison industry has exploded over the past two decades. In 2016, 128,300 people - roughly 1 in 12 U.S. prisoners - were incarcerated in private lock-ups. That is an increase of 47 percent from 2000, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Geo Group and CoreCivic together manage over half of U.S. private prison contracts, with combined revenues of nearly $4 billion in 2017. ICE is the No. 1 customer by revenue for both companies. Both Geo Group and CoreCivic have added hundreds of immigration detention beds over the past year. Stock prices for the two companies are up about 30 percent since Trump’s election. The government pays private prison companies fees ranging from roughly $60 to $130 daily for the care and feeding of each detainee. At CoreCivic’s Stewart Detention Center in Georgia, which houses about 1,700 undocumented immigrants, ICE pays a per diem of $62.03 for each detainee housed there. CoreCivic’s revenue from Stewart alone was $38 million last year, court records show.” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**DECRY** this profiteering from the underpaid labor of detained 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

**DECRY** this profiteering from the underpaid labor of detained asylum seekers and **REQUEST** further investigation and legislation to end these abuses

• **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

When the Supreme Court ruled that the Republican administration’s transgender military ban could be enforced as challenges to it work their way through the court system, one of the most articulate critical voices was Tammy Duckworth’s. Senator Duckworth issued a statement opposing the ban, explaining “When I was bleeding to death in my Black Hawk helicopter on that dusty field in Iraq, I didn’t care if the American troops risking their lives to help save me were gay, straight, transgender, black, white, male or female. All that mattered was they didn’t leave me behind. If you are willing to risk your life for our country and you can do the job, you should be able to serve-no matter your gender identity or sexual orientation.” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**THANKS** to Senator Duckworth for advocating for transgendered members of our military

• **Senator Tammy Duckworth**, 524 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2854

Just a reminder that late last summer, water-stealing giant Nestlé and neighborhood-coffeehouse-destroying Starbucks signed a global marketing deal. What this means is that a stop at Starbucks is funding the commoditization of water and taking water away from local communities. Yes, we love our coffee, but we can choose to purchase it somewhere other than Starbucks—or to go without if we really have to. Seriously, if you’re desperate, keep some sealed containers of cold-brew on hand. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**TELL** Nestlé and Starbucks that you are boycotting their products as long as Nestlé continues privatizing and commodifying water and stealing it from unwilling communities through legal maneuvers (and follow through)

• **Steve Presley**, Market Head and Chief Executive Officer, Nestlé U.S., 1812 North Moore St., Rosslyn, VA 22209, (815) 549-6000

• **Howard Schultz**, Chairman and CEO, Starbucks, 2401 Utah Ave, South, Seattle, WA 98134, (206) 447-1575

Also from *Rogan’s List*: It has come to light that ex-Breitbart contributor Robert W. Patterson, now acting associate commissioner at the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Office of Strategic and Digital Communications, once worked in communications for George W. Bush, resigned a social welfare position under then-Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett in 2012 after the Philadelphia Inquirer revealed that he’d proposed that women become shrill and suicidal unless they’re in “contraceptive-free marriages,” opposes working mothers, and lauded Rodney King's police assailants; before all that, he worked for two virulently anti-LGBTQ organizations. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**TELL** the SSA that Patterson should not be involved in “Creat[ing], develop[ing], facilitat[ing], implement[ing], oversee[ing] and evaluat[ing] all SSA communications and [public affairs] activities, both internal and external”

• **Nancy A. Berryhill**, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, 6401 Security Blvd, Windsor Park Bldg, Baltimore, MD 21235, (800) 772-1213

*Buzzfeed* reports: The Trump administration says providing additional disaster funding for Puerto Rico’s food stamp program is “excessive and unnecessary,” as the island continues to struggle to recover from the effects of 2017’s Hurricane Maria and an ongoing economic crisis. In response to a bill that passed the House this week, the White House rejected the idea of extending disaster funding for food stamps in Puerto Rico…. The measure would have provided $600 million for the island’s food stamp program, known as NAP or Nutrition Assistance for Puerto Rico, to help provide for more Puerto Ricans in the aftermath of the natural disaster. “There is no indication that households need ongoing support at this time or that Puerto Rico requires additional time to return to normal NAP operations,” the White House wrote in [a] statement of administration policy. But the request for $600 million came directly from Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, who wrote a letter to congressional leaders in November asking for additional disaster relief funding, including for the food stamp program, citing “[Puerto Rico’s] inability to provide food security to those in need.” (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**POINT OUT** Trump that this cruel action once again underlines his complete lack of understanding of the recovery process in Puerto Rico

• **Donald Trump**, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500, (202) 456-1111

**EXPLAIN** to our Senators that you want to see this legislation introduced in the Senate, regardless of what Trump has said—Puerto Rico deserves our continued support

• **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 Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) has re-introduced a federal budget amendment that would halt the growth of U.S. immigration detention by prohibiting the government from transferring funds to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for the purpose of building or expanding immigration detention facilities. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**THANKS** to Representative Jayapal for introducting this legislation

• **Representative Pramila Jayapal**, 1510 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3106

**URGE** our Representative to support her effort

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

The *Washington Post* reports: “Four women were convicted of misdemeanors for leaving food and water in the desert for migrants. The volunteers, who worked with the group No More Deaths, were found guilty of entering a wildlife refuge without a permit, the first such conviction in a decade. They could be sentenced to six months in prison and fined $500. Another volunteer for the organization said: ‘This verdict challenges not only No More Deaths volunteers, but people of conscience throughout the country. If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?..’ [No More Deaths points out] [m]ore than 3,000 migrant deaths have been reported between October 1999 and April 2018, according to data gathered by Humane Borders and the medical examiner’s office in Pima County, which covers part of Cabeza Prieta.” Since Trump’s ascendancy, the permit to enter the refuge requires initialing a new clause saying that you agree not to put food, water, blankets, socks, or medical materials on the refuge.” No More Deaths has found their containers of water destroyed by the Border Patrol. This is not illegal. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**OBJECT** to the Border Patrol practice of destroying water containers and **INSIST** that deliberately leaving anyone to die in the desert is immoral

• **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

**URGE** our Congresspeople to publicly object to both the destruction of water containers and to these convictions

• **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

We can put Parents Magazine in the “good news” column. Their Valentine issue included a cover story on a pair of gay dads raising two children together. They’re been receiving vitriolic complaints from those who claim the magazine is “teaching homosexuality to children.” (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**THANKS** for showing real parenting in its variety to

• **Mark Josephson**, Senior Vice President/Group Publisher, Parents Magazine, 225 Liberty Street New York, NY 10281, (212) 455-1344

**GUNS**

H.R.8, the “Bipartisan Background Act,” would require a background check for *every* firearm sale. It’s currently with the House Judiciary Committee. The Senate version of this legislation is S.42. (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**URGE** the House Judiciary Committee to take quick action on H.R.8

• **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

**TELL** the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee that we’d like to see this legislation prioritized

• **Senator Lindsey Graham** (R-SC), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, 290 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5972

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

The title of H.R.435 explains its purpose: “To Provide for a Coordinated National Research Program to Examine the Nature, Causes, Consequences, and Prevention of Violence and Unintended Injury and Death Relating to Gun Ownership, Use, and Trafficking, and for Other Purposes.” This legislation is currently with three House committees: Judiciary; Science, Space, and Technology; and Energy and Commerce. The Chair of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Eddie Bernice Johnson, introduced this legislation. (Write-up 1/23/2018)

**EXPRESS** your desire for serious gun research to the appropriate committee chairs—with a special thanks to Chair Johnson

• **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

• **Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson** (D-TX), Chair, House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, 2321 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6375

• **Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.** (D-NJ), C hair, House Energy and Commerce Committee, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2927

**HEALTH and HEALTHCARE**

S.99, the “Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Act,” would authorize Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries. It is currently with the Senate Finance Committee. Right now, all sponsors are Democrats, but there’s no reason Republicans shouldn’t be equally interested in the savings this legislation might provide. (Write-up 1/24/2019)

**TELL** the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee that you see lowering Medicare drug prices as a nonpartisan issue and URGE swift action on this legislation

• **Senator Chuck Grassley** (R-IA), Chair, Senate Finance Committee, 219 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510-6200, (202) 224-4515

• **Senator Ron Wyden** (D-OR), Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee, 219 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510-6200, (202) 224-4515

California’s S.B.24 would require that public university student health centers make abortion medication available for students. It is currently with the California Senate’s Health and Education Committees. (Write-up 1/24/2019)

**EXPLAIN** to committee leadership that access to abortion medication may be a necessity for some students and this option should be available

• **Senator Richard Pan**, Chair, California Senate Health Committee, Room 2191, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 651-4111

• **Senator Jeff Stone**, Vice Chair, California Senate Health Committee, Room 2191, State capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 651-4111

• **Senator Connie M. Leyva**, Chair, California Senate Education Committee, Room 2083, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 651-4105

• **Senator Scott Wilk**, Vice Chair, California Senate Education Committee, Room 2083, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 651-4105

The Republican administration reportedly wants to convert Medicaid to block-grant funding by executive order. The use of block grants by the federal government is generally seen as a strategic first step to cutting funding for programs the administration does not support (although the administration will no doubt offer the convenient “states’ rights” explanation that it uses selectively while it opposes other states’ rights). Medicaid covers 73 million of the most vulnerable Americans. We need to protect this program. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**ASK** our Congresspeople to issue a statement in support of keeping Medicaid as a federal program

• **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

A new Trump administration proposal would change the annual limits on consumers’ out-of-pocket costs for insurance plans sold under the Affordable Care Act: insurers would not have to count the full amount of a consumer’s co-payment for a brand-name drug toward the annual limit on cost-sharing but rather only the smaller amount that would be charged for a generic version of the drug or for using coupons drug companies issue. This proposal should be posted in the Federal Register this week, though because of the government shutdown the site is currently “unsupported.” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**OPPOSE** this change and **DEMAND** that our Congresspeople do so as well (we can write them whether or not the official comment site is up)

• **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**

One of the first things right-wing Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro did after taking office was transferring responsibility for recognizing Indigenous lands to the Ministry of Agriculture, which has strong ties to generally-hostile-to-the-survival-of-indigenous-peoples agribusiness. The Guardian cited Dinaman Tuxá, executive coordinator of the Articulation of Indigenous People of Brazil, responding to this move by warning “There will be an increase in deforestation and violence against indigenous people. Indigenous people are defenders and protectors of the environment. (1/25/2019)

**EXPLAIN** to the Secretary of State and the chairs of the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees the we want them to take every opportunity to oppose this new attack on the health of our planet and the lives of indigenous peoples

• **Mike Pompeo**, U.S. Secretary of State, 2201 C St. NW, Washington DC 20520-2204, (202) 647-6575

• **Senator James E. Risch** (R-ID), Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 423 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4651

• **Representative Eliot Engel** (D-NY), Chair, House Foreign Affairs Committee, 2170 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2464

*The Hill* reports: “As the government shutdown drags on amid Trump's threats to declare a ‘national emergency’ to build his border wall, a true emergency is unfolding in Guatemala, with serious implications for stability in Central America and beyond. On Jan. 5, Guatemalan authorities detained a member of a U.N.-sponsored anti-corruption commission in the airport. They refused him entry into the country, despite an order by Guatemala's Constitutional Court not to interfere with the commission's work. Two days later, Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales announced he was terminating the mandate of the International Commission Against Impunity, known as CICIG, which works with prosecutors in Guatemala's Public Ministry to investigate organized crime and corruption. The commission's investigators left the country the following day. Morales himself is being investigated by CICIG for illicit campaign financing. His willingness to defy Guatemala's highest court in order to shut down that investigation has provoked a constitutional crisis, which many Guatemalan analysts and Journalists are calling a ‘slow-motion coup,’ which could have dire implications for combating corruption—and a ripple effect beyond Guatemala’s borders. The Trump administration has kept silent as Guatemala unraveled, a stance harshly criticized by Representative Norma Torres (D-Calif.), co-chair of the House Central America Caucus. Torres linked Guatemala's entrenched corruption to international migration, saying that the crises created by Guatemala's ‘mafioso’ government are ‘why children leave their homes and risk their lives to come here.’ Trump's silence flies in the face of what had been, up to now, a strong bipartisan American support of CICIG. By turning its back on Guatemala's anti-impunity efforts, the Trump administration is undermining the best—and maybe the last—hope to dislodge mafia control over the Guatemalan state. Moreover, Guatemala's efforts to prosecute organized crime are watched closely in other Central American countries and even Mexico.” (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**EXPLAIN** to our Congresspeople that if we’re concerned about migration, we need to improve conditions in Central America, not build a wall and **DEMAND** that they speak out against the Republican Administration’s silence

• **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

**The Trump administration hasn't imposed required sanctions on Moscow nearly three months after determining that Russia had violated the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act** in connection with the poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal.

INSIST to Republican Administration figures that the time for sanctions is long overdue

• **Donald Trump**, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500, (202) 456-1111

• **Mike Pompeo**, U.S. Secretary of State, 2201 C St. NW, Washington DC 20520-2204, (202) 647-6575

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

• **Senator James E. Risch** (R-ID), Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 423 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-4651

Twenty-two Republican members of the House voted against a proposal to prohibit using federal funds to withdraw from NATO. You may want to see if your Representative or Representatives from your state are on the list. (Write-up 1/22/2019)

**EXPRESS** your disgust at their failure to honor the community of nations that comprises NATO

• **Representative Rick Allen** (GA-12), 2400 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2823

• **Representative Justin Amash** (MI-3), 106 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3821

• **Representative Andy Biggs** (AZ-5), 1318 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2635

• **Representative Tim Burchett** (TN-2), 1122 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5435

• **Representative Ben Cline** (VA-6), 1809 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5431

• **Representative Scott DesJarlais** (TN-4), 2301 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6831

• **Representative Russ Fulcher** (ID-1), 1520 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6611

• **Representative Matt Gaetz** (FL-1), 1721 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4136

• **Representative Louie Gohmert** (TX-1) 2267 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3035

• **Representative Paul Gosar** (AZ-4), 2057 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2315

• **Representative Morgan Griffith** (VA-9), 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3861

• **Representative Andy Harris** (MD-1), 2334 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5311

• **Representative Jody Hice** (GA-10), 409 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4101

• **Representative Jim Jordan** (OH-4), 2056 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2676

• **Representative Thomas Massie** (KY-4), 2453 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-3465

• **Representative Tom McClintock** (CA-4), 2312 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2511

• **Representative Mark Meadows** (NC-11), 2160 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6401

• **Representative Scott Perry** (PA-10), 1207 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5836

• **Representative John W. Rose** (TN-6), 1232 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4231

• **Representative Chip Roy** (TX-21), 1319 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4236

• **Representative W. Gregory Steube** (FL-17), 521 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-5792

• **Representative Randy Weber** (TX-14), 107 Cannon House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2831

The House has unanimously passed H.R.31, the “Caesar Civilian Protection Act.” The Syrian American Councils comments on H.R.31 as follows: “The legislation, which would hold Syrian President Bashar al-Assad accountable for his war crimes while limiting his ability to access funds from allies Russia and Iran, has been in the works for nearly three years with deep bipartisan support. Having passed this latest hurdle, the bill is expected to be considered by the Senate after the end of the partial U.S. government shutdown…. The passage of H.R. 31 comes on the heels of the European Union imposing sanctions on 11 individuals and five companies for providing financial and other military assistance to the Assad regime.” (Write-up 1/23/2019)

**THANK** your Representative for supporting H.R.31

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

**INFORM** your Senators that you want them to support H.R.31 as well

• **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

**JUDICIARY**

Did Kavanaugh lie during his confirmation hearing? Let’s find out! (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**TELL** the Democratic chair of the House Judiciary Committee that you want to see Brett Kavanaugh investigated for possible perjury during his confirmation hearing.

• **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

**SHUTDOWN**

The protracted government shutdown is over for the moment, but its impacts include the following:

-The National Transportation and Safety Board has been unable to investigate at least 87 incidents that have occurred since the shutdown started

-The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has not released its annual temperature analysis, data which is used by scientists and governments around the world

-Nonprofit government contractors have sent home thousands of disabled employees whose employment has been facilitated by a federal contracting set-aside program

-FBI investigations involving terrorism, gangs, drugs, and sex trafficking have been put on hold

-The State Department has canceled an annual conference it hosts on export control and—prepare for irony—border protection

-Military families are not receiving death benefits

-At least 2,500 grocery retailers have become unable to accept food stamps because their licenses have expired during the shutdown

-Flights have been cancelled and delayed in and out of major airports (Write-up 1/25/2019)

**CHOOSE** any or all of the above and **TELL** Trump and McConnell that you hold the Republican Administration responsible for the shutdown, which should never have been launched, and for the damage it has inflicted on ordinary Americans

• **Donald Trump**, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500, (202) 456-1111

• **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541