

# Progressive Policy Review

Volume 1

## **In this Issue:**

**SEEKING HEALTH EQUITY  
IN THE POST-COVID ERA**

**A VISION FOR A PROGRESSIVE  
U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

**PORTRAITS OF WOMEN  
SERVING LIFE SENTENCES**

# Progressive Policy Review

Volume 1

Published by the Progressive Policy Review,  
a student publication at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Visit us online at <https://ppr.hkspublications.org/>

The Progressive Policy Review is a student publication at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. All views expressed in the journal are those of the authors and interviewees only and do not represent the views of Harvard University, the Harvard Kennedy School, the staff of the Progressive Policy Review, or any of its affiliates.

© 2021 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved. Except as otherwise specified, no article or portion herein is to be reproduced or adapted to other works without the expressed written consent of the editors of the Progressive Policy Review.

**Email:** [progressivecaucushks@gmail.com](mailto:progressivecaucushks@gmail.com)

**Website:** <https://ppr.hkspublications.org/>

# Letter from the Editors

Thank you for reading our first annual edition of the Progressive Policy Review (PPR), a student publication at the Harvard Kennedy School produced by the Progressive Caucus.

In November 2020, we launched the Progressive Policy Review to serve as a student-run publication dedicated to racial, social, environmental, and economic justice for all and to its achievement through transformative policy change and popular mass movements. In the months since our launch, we have sought to contribute to these efforts through scholarship, commentary, and creative media on injustices worldwide and the policies best suited to addressing them equitably, sustainably, and justly.

With this 2021 digital journal edition, we join a robust family of HKS student journals working to pursue knowledge, understand the great policy and moral challenges of our time, and advance meaningful change to build a better world.

A look at today's world reveals how deeply progressive change is needed. The COVID-19 pandemic rages on, with rich countries vaccinating their own citizens and refusing to waive intellectual property rights as variants surge in the Global South. As we move beyond initial crisis responses, the question of who gains from the economic recovery and who is left behind are already coming to the fore. This struggle will be waged as right-wing authoritarianism and anti-democratic movements continue to gain steam worldwide—whether in Brazil, India, much of Europe, or in the United States where the Republican party wages a war on free and fair elections in statehouses across the country and in the U.S. Capitol. White supremacy continues to dominate our institutions, amid a historic global uprising against policing and anti-Black racism. The forces of militarism and colonialism continue to cause untold harm, from Yemen and Myanmar to Palestine. Climate change progresses unabated, with political leaders unwilling to take the steps necessary to decarbonize and save the planet.

These overlapping and multiplying crises we face today require bold action, moral clarity, and a relentless dedication to justice, equity, and human flourishing. At PPR, we believe that a better world is possible and that we must move beyond the status quo to radically transform our global society, tearing down systems of oppression and building systems of liberation and solidarity.

The writings included in this issue all seek to help build that world. In this digital edition we include a mix of brand new publications and a sampling of articles published earlier this year on our site, with additions made specially for this new edition.

We open with an article by Kennedy School-Business School joint degree candidate Morgan Brewton-Johnson on caring as a radical act—and the first step towards a public policy based on solidarity and justice. Public health leaders Amira Nazarali and Aasha Rajani take up this challenge, arguing for how healthcare in the United States can build from the experience of COVID-19 to deliver justice, dignity and quality.

Kennedy School Masters of Public Administration candidate Jack Shapiro reminds us that the carbon transition must put the interest of ordinary and marginalized communities first: left to their own devices, decarbonization by the likes of Exxon could leave workers and communities weaker and shareholders better off. In a creative piece, fellow Kennedy School student Morgan

Pratt reminds us of the inherent value of the natural environment, and the need to protect it against the interests of those who promote bio-engineering as a market-friendly way out of the climate crisis.

2020 saw tens of millions mobilize in the United States' largest ever protests, with the call that Black Lives Matter. Several of our articles explore what criminal justice reform might—and might not—look like. Kennedy School student Danica Yu opens with a piece critiquing police reform based on mere demographic diversity, without challenging the institution of policing itself. Minneapolis-based activists Emily Wade and Elissa Schufman use the example of traffic enforcement in their home city to illustrate how a reliance on policing is self-defeating: failing to improve traffic safety while amplifying inequities in the community. As the United States continues to have the highest per capita rate of incarceration in the world, we also present a piece exploring the human consequences of this policy: a photo essay by Sara Bennett sharing the experiences of twenty women serving life sentences in New York state.

In our second section, we consider what social justice looks like in a global, rather than domestic, context. Harvard Business School Research Associate Ria Mazumdar sketches the implications of a global system based on mutual aid rather than the charity and patterns of domination that characterize the post-colonial era. Joseph Leone at the Kennedy School shares his thoughts on a Fall 2020 event imagining what a transformative progressive foreign policy would mean for the United States; and Nooran Alhamdan of Georgetown University addresses the tragic consequences of current U.S. policy towards Palestine, arguing this is a litmus test for progressives. John Ramming Chappell, also of Georgetown, goes on to set out what a more general turn from militarism, and towards democratic control of U.S. foreign policy, could look like.

Policy does not emerge from a vacuum. Our third section focuses specifically on politics and social movements in driving change. Morgan Pratt argues that the Capitol attack of January 6 was not some sort of aberration, but rather a demonstration of impunity, enabled by corrupted politics and law enforcement. Kennedy School student Billy Ostermeyer situates this insurrection in a wider neo-Confederate and fascist ideology—the 'Theocracy of Whiteness'—that is not going away. Morgan returns to consider the tokenistic LGBTQ+ politics of the Kennedy School's Class of 2021 Commencement Speaker Pete Buttigieg, pointing to the latter's track record to conclude "he is more concerned with white, wealthy, cisgender gay men being able to join the ranks of the oppressor than tearing down systems of oppression." Will Mulhern and Adarsh Shah use the case of Senator Ron Johnson, an enabler of the Trump Administration and the Capitol insurrection, to call for both stronger personal accountability and greater realism about the role of corporate donors and anti-democratic politicians in the United States today. Finally, Vanessa Warheit, Andrea Marpillero-Colomina, Marc Geller and Sven Thesen set out how California's drive to adopt electric vehicles has continued to perpetuate historic biases. They set out how reforms to the building code could democratize access to electronic vehicles in California, and lead the way across the US.

We thank you for taking the time to read this issue. You can find more articles from PPR and opportunities to get involved on our website: [ppr.hkspublications.org](https://ppr.hkspublications.org).

*In solidarity,*

*The Editorial Team of the Progressive Policy Review  
Summer 2021*

# Table of Contents

## Policies for Social Change

|   |    |
|---|----|
| In Defense of Caring<br><i>Morgan Brewton-Johnson</i>                                 | 4  |
| Seeking Health Equity in the Post-Covid Era<br><i>Amira Nazarali and Aasha Rajani</i> | 6  |
| Exxon and the Inevitable Decline of Fossil Fuels<br><i>Jack Shapiro</i>               | 9  |
| Don't Let Them Steal Our Sky<br><i>Morgan Pratt</i>                                   | 12 |
| The Fallacy of Diversity Reforms for Police Departments<br><i>Danica Yu</i>           | 15 |
| Why We Don't Support Traffic Enforcement<br><i>Emily Wade and Elissa Schufman</i>     | 17 |
| LOOKING INSIDE: Portraits of Women Serving Life Sentences<br><i>Sara Bennett</i>      | 21 |

## Policies for Global Justice

|  |    |
|--|----|
| From Development Aid to Mutual Aid: The Argument for Localized Solutions<br><i>Ria Mazumdar</i>      | 24 |
| "Dignity, not Domination": Imagining a Progressive U.S. Foreign Policy<br><i>Joseph Leone</i>        | 28 |
| The United States is Complicit in the Ethnic Cleansing of Sheikh Jarrah<br><i>Nooran Alhamdan</i>    | 32 |
| A Progressive Domestic Agenda Needs A Foreign Policy Vision to Match<br><i>John Ramming Chappell</i> | 35 |

# Table of Contents

## Politics and Social Movements

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Capitol Rioters Have Not Lost Control<br><i>Morgan Pratt</i>  | <b>46</b> |
| The “Post-Truth” Theory of Trumpism is a Comforting Fantasy<br><i>Billy Ostermeyer</i>  | <b>49</b> |
| The Receipts: Pete Buttigieg’s Policies Fail LGBTQ+ Communities<br><i>Morgan Pratt</i>  | <b>51</b> |
| Ron Johnson: Senator for the Rich<br><i>Will Mulhern and Adarsh Shah</i>  | <b>58</b> |
| Narrowing the Divide: Addressing Inequities in California’s Electric Vehicle Infrastructure<br><i>Vanessa Warheit, Andrea Marpillero-Colomina, Marc Geller, and Sven Thesen</i> | <b>61</b> |

## Journal Staff

Morgan Brewton-Johnson  
Rachel Carle  
Teresa Chen  
Yaseen Hashmi  
Joseph Leone  
Ria Mazumdar  
Emily Mello  
Will Mulhern  
Billy Ostermeyer

Morgan Pratt  
Adarsh Shah  
Jack Shapiro  
Peter Skopec  
Merrit Stüven  
Dan Turner  
Ismaila Whittier  
Yuqi Zhu

## Acknowledgments

**Martha Foley**, Assistant Director for Publications and Student Services  
**Professor Richard Parker**, Student Journal Faculty Advisor  
**Professor Timothy McCarthy**, PPR Faculty Advisor  
**Lauren Truong**, Graphic Design  
**The Progressive Caucus** at the Harvard Kennedy School

# **Policies for Social Change**



# In Defense of Caring

Morgan Brewton-Johnson

*In tumultuous times, self-interest is more tempting than ever. But how much has self-interest weakened us as individuals and as a nation?*

My statistics class was recently presented with a hypothetical choice. Our professor was willing to host one of two lotteries. In the first, half of the class wins \$20,000 and half \$0. In the second, half of the class wins \$14,000 and half \$5,000. Which would we choose? A poll revealed that most people preferred the second lottery, because at worst they were guaranteed to end up with something. It was a reasonable expression of self-interest.

But I began to wonder—what if I knew that by working hard or emailing the professor nicely, I could guarantee myself a spot in the half of the class that won \$20,000, knowing that the other half would get nothing? Would I prefer the winners-take-all lottery then, to the option where even the worst-off end up with something? Reasonable self-interest would say yes.

And yet, both in this hypothetical and in the very real world around us, I still feel the answer should be no. If I knew that I had a clear shot at ending up relatively well off—earned or by chance—I hope I would still choose to sacrifice more for myself to ensure enough for others.

This is, in short, because it's worthwhile to care. Specifically, it is worthwhile and even essential to care about the hidden costs of my choices to others, even when my immediate self-interest is clear.

There are plenty of reasons to care about others, even at some expense to ourselves. Social reciprocity is one such reason: we care for others in the hope that someone will do the same for us if we are ever in need, and believe that acts of care contribute to desirable social relationships and community ties. Many

different belief systems commonly hold caring as a moral right as well. Jesus, for example, preached, "Love thy neighbor as thyself,"<sup>1</sup> and was himself drawing on **ancient teachings**<sup>2</sup> that are now more commonly known as Golden Rule: "**Do unto others what you would have them do to you.**"<sup>3</sup> Today, the value of caring is also rooted in common acceptance of fundamental **human rights**<sup>4</sup>, which necessarily entail some personal responsibility to do what we can to ensure that no one's rights are at risk.

Regardless of the motivation, caring is built into who we are as social beings and the values we claim as a society. And yet, evidence is growing that Americans are starting to think and behave differently.

The 2020 presidential election was a clear referendum on self-interest at any cost: Over the last four years, the highest earners got the largest tax breaks, while the lowest earning got a **tax hike instead**<sup>5</sup>; the most powerful politicians **enjoyed pardons**<sup>6</sup> from our justice system while the most vulnerable citizens **died at its hands**<sup>7</sup>; and malicious foreign interests **gained influence**<sup>8</sup> over our politics, while immigrants that contribute to this country were **demonized**<sup>9</sup> and **disenfranchised**<sup>10</sup>. While these interests did not win, **seventy-four million Americans**<sup>11</sup> did vote for four more years.

The pandemic tells a similar story: many Americans who believed they personally had little to fear—young, healthy, or **privileged**<sup>12</sup> enough to survive the virus—declined to take precautions **as simple as wearing a mask**<sup>13</sup> to protect others. And America as a whole has paid the price, with **over four hundred thousand deaths in just ten months**<sup>14</sup>, and fatalities disproportionately borne by vulnerable groups like **racial minorities**<sup>15</sup>

and those living with **underlying health conditions**<sup>16</sup>.

In each of these cases, self-interest proved a formidable opponent to caring, with few guardrails to protect the most vulnerable from paying the ultimate price. Americans have a right to vote for whomever will protect their plenty, or decline the inconvenience of wearing a mask, even when those choices demonstrably endanger others. But as individuals, and as a nation, we are—or should strive to be—better than these unmitigated expressions of self-interest at the expense of our fellow Americans.

We publicly celebrate figures whose personal acts of care set a moral example for us all—activists like Martin Luther King Jr. or altruists like **Matt Wage**<sup>17</sup>—but treat these individuals as the exception rather than the rule. What if, instead, we structured our society to facilitate caring, rather than relying on the benevolence of exceptional individuals?

Such a shift in the American worldview would call for reform of all of our major institutions, to our collective benefit. We could transform a criminal justice system that **punishes our most vulnerable**<sup>18</sup> into one that rehabilitates; revolutionize an educational system that is alarmingly **separate and unequal**<sup>19</sup> into one that equitably serves all of our youth; restructure a labor market that **finds enough money for executive bonuses but not for a living minimum wage**<sup>20</sup> into one that adequately compensates all contributions; and establish a safety net so that no one **dies simply because they don't have enough to live**<sup>21</sup>.

Reform of this scale is a tall order. But we can start small, by embracing the mindset that if we have enough, we should do what we can for those who may not. As simple as this may sound, caring—especially for those we don't know—is a radical act that will inevitably contradict the self-interest that has become much more commonplace. But an America newly committed to caring is an America that

is better positioned to live out the values we profess of true integrity, democracy, and unity.

---

*Morgan Brewton-Johnson is an editor of the Progressive Policy Review and a first-year dual-degree candidate at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Business School. She is passionate about issues of identity, power, and equity.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> [Matthew 22:39](#)

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Rule)

<sup>3</sup> [Matthew 7:12](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/31/opinion/republicans-biden-taxes.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/trumps-pardons-have-been-sparse-and-self-serving-and-thats-without-even-pardoning-his-kids/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/5/30/21275588/trump-policing-policies-doj-george-floyd-protests>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewsolender/2020/09/14/trump-said-hes-cozier-with-tougher-and-meaner-dictators-calls-them-smarter-than-biden/?sh=4f94947b5392>

<sup>9</sup> <https://time.com/5645501/trump-anti-immigration-rhetoric-racism/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/30/940116088/supreme-court-weighs-trump-plan-to-cut-undocumented-immigrants-from-census>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2020/dec/08/us-election-results-2020-joe-biden-defeats-donald-trump-to-win-presidency>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-testing-rich-people/608062/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/8/7/21357400/anti-mask-protest-rallies-donald-trump-covid-19>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/health/covid-race-mortality-rate/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/06/15/patients-with-underlying-conditions-were-12-times-more-likely-die-covid-19-than-otherwise-healthy-people-cdc-finds/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/opinion/sunday/nicholas-kristof-the-trader-who-donates-half-his-pay.html>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/crime-and-punishment/201804/why-punishment-doesnt-reduce-crime>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/schools-are-still-segregated-and-black-children-are-paying-a-price/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-compensation-2018/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/how-many-us-deaths-are-caused-poverty-lack-education-and-other-social-factors>

# Seeking Health Equity in the Post-COVID Era

*Amira Nazarali and Aasha Rajani*

As we cross the eighteen month mark of the COVID-19 pandemic's arrival in North America, data and headlines continue to reveal the significant disparities in the impacts of the virus. In the U.S., **Black and Latinx people**<sup>1</sup> across all age groups are generally three times as likely to become infected and close to twice as likely to die from COVID-19 than white people. **According to the CDC**<sup>2</sup>, even after accounting for the **agency's imperfect data**<sup>3</sup>, American Indian and Alaska Native populations in 23 states were 3.5 times as likely as white populations to get the virus, and are at a higher risk for severe COVID-19 related outcomes. **In Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital**<sup>4</sup> in Los Angeles, one of the hardest-hit hospitals in the hardest-hit county in California, eight out of ten individuals who have died of COVID-19 have been Hispanic, and **county data**<sup>5</sup> reveals that the most impoverished residents have been dying of the disease at nearly four times the rate of the wealthiest residents.

Though these numbers are deeply unsettling, they should not be surprising. The pandemic has forced us to confront uncomfortable and longstanding realities about the health disparities facing **racialized**<sup>6</sup> and otherwise marginalized communities throughout the country. Notably, the healthcare system remains stacked against Black, Hispanic and Native Americans, as well as those who are poor. These groups are disproportionately **uninsured**<sup>7</sup> and **underinsured**<sup>8</sup>, with approximately 11% of Black, 20% of Hispanic and 22% of Native Americans living without access to insurance and basic health care services.

Massive expansion of access to healthcare is frequently posed as a solution to the disparities described above. A single-payer model of universal healthcare, funded through

a progressive financing strategy, could simultaneously **reduce per capita healthcare spending in the United States**<sup>9</sup> while ensuring that all Americans have **access to hospital and community healthcare services with no cost at the point of service**<sup>10</sup>.

However, this solution on its own is unlikely to entirely erase the health disparities we are seeing. In Canada, for instance, where the Canada Health Act of 1984 sealed a decades long post-WWII trajectory of expansion and evolution of provincially administered and funded hospital and community-based medical services, and the concept of universal health care is a point of national pride, **inequities abound**<sup>11</sup>.

While Canadians have the right to access comprehensive healthcare services without the burden of payment or the necessity of private health insurance, Canada nevertheless struggles to address inequities in its healthcare provision and outcomes. While these disparities exist **at a different scale than the U.S**<sup>12</sup>, they are still worth noting. A recent Ministry of Health report in the province of British Columbia found that **Indigenous people, for instance, are 75% more likely to end up in the ER**<sup>13</sup> due to lack of access to primary care doctors, and to experience widespread racism, stereotyping and discrimination in the healthcare system. Anti-Black racism is also a **significant problem**<sup>14</sup> within Canadian healthcare environments, and Black and other racialized Canadians have been **disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic**<sup>15</sup>. The Canadian example demonstrates that universal access may only go so far in eliminating entrenched health inequities.

As we collectively look to build more just health systems in the post-COVID world and address the health inequities that have been highlighted during the pandemic, we offer two important points for consideration:

## 1) Social Determinants of Health

We have long known that the single largest means by which health inequities facing Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and other marginalized persons, can be resolved is likely **through massive investment in social equity outside of the health sector**<sup>16</sup>.

While underlying health conditions and lack of access to healthcare do explain some of the COVID-19 disparities we are seeing, they are also linked to a broader set of social, political and economic factors. Uneven access to these **“social determinants of health”**<sup>17</sup> manifests in the health inequities that we observe. These determinants range from tangible needs like quality housing, education, nutritious food, to intangibles including clean air, access to public transportation, and physical security.

This group of nonbiological, nonmedical variables is estimated to account for **80 percent of health outcomes**<sup>18</sup> and their distribution is undeniably affected by the entrenched oppression and racism within our public policies and institutions. These systemic inequities result in the constant undermining of the mental and physical well-being of BIPOC as well as **vast inequities**<sup>19</sup> in opportunity, income and wealth. Though public health experts have been discussing these linkages for several decades, public officials and the general public are becoming increasingly vocal about this issue with more than 20 states, counties and cities **declaring racism, itself, a public health crisis**<sup>20</sup>.

Consequently, public policies and programs that address the unequal access to social determinants of good health have the power to improve health equity at the population level. A recent **epidemiological analysis**<sup>21</sup> led by Harvard Medical School researchers suggests,

for example, that reparation payments for slavery could have significantly reduced the inequitable disease burden of COVID-19 on Black communities by reducing the racial wealth gap.

Progressive policy proposals that promote social equity in order to advance public health will require substantial political capital, but many worthwhile efforts are already in process. **The Green New Deal**<sup>22</sup>, with its emphasis on **racial and economic equity**<sup>23</sup> as means of achieving climate justice, is one example of a progressive policy agenda that has significant potential to positively impact health equity through the social determinants of health, if its recommendations are adopted.

## 2) Beyond Access to Care

Mere access to healthcare is not sufficient. Structural oppression and violence are deeply embedded at all levels of care. As a result, BIPOC and other marginalized groups experience not only overt incidents of racism and intentional medical violence, but are also at risk of receiving a poorer standard of care<sup>24</sup> than privileged social groups. In the long term this leads to mistrust and underutilization of otherwise accessible health services. This reality is actively manifesting as **COVID-19 vaccine hesitation**<sup>25</sup> in non-white communities. It is therefore essential to dismantle entrenched systems of oppression within the healthcare sector in order to achieve high quality, equitable health service delivery.

While improving **representation of BIPOC**<sup>26</sup> in the healthcare leadership is an especially important step, all healthcare professionals must be trained to better understand **their role**<sup>27</sup> in either perpetuating or dismantling oppressive structures that significantly impact the health outcomes of patients and the communities to which they belong. This awareness can help begin to build relationships and foster trust with individuals and communities that are rightfully skeptical of a healthcare system that continues to treat them unfairly.



Finally, we must also build robust systems to systematically track inequities and hold the health sector **accountable**<sup>28</sup> for disparities in quality of care to marginalized groups. This commitment will require long-term investment, but progress toward health equity must ultimately become a standard measure of the quality of healthcare systems.

The significant disparities in the impacts of COVID-19 should serve as a rallying cry for reforming our policies, practices and attitudes within the healthcare system but also beyond. If we genuinely hope to achieve health equity in a post-COVID world, we must understand that universal access to healthcare is a fundamental stepping stone, but is not enough. Access must be pursued in tandem with significant efforts to guarantee that all people have equitable access to the social determinants of good health, and to ensure that as marginalized communities seek out care, they are treated by the healthcare system with justice, dignity and the highest standard of care.

---

*Amira Nazarali is a Canadian public health professional and social worker interested in exploring the intersection of physical and mental health promotion, public policy development, and social justice. She holds graduate degrees from the University of Toronto and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.*

*Aasha Rajani has policy experience at the state and local level in K-12 education, marijuana regulation, affordable housing and economic security. She has a graduate degree in public policy and management from the London School of Economics and is interested in progressive policy development with an acute focus on equity and justice.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/05/us/coronavirus-latinos-african-americans-cdc-data.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0819-covid-19-impact-american-indian-alaska-native.html>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-cdc-must-end-its-silence-on-the-racial-impact-of-covid-19/2020/04/07/6d686450-7906-11ea-9bee-c5bf9d2e3288\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-cdc-must-end-its-silence-on-the-racial-impact-of-covid-19/2020/04/07/6d686450-7906-11ea-9bee-c5bf9d2e3288_story.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/08/us/covid-los-angeles.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/data/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup> [https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/deib-explorer/files/sociology\\_of\\_racism.pdf](https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/deib-explorer/files/sociology_of_racism.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/state-indicator/nonelderly-uninsured-rate-by-raceethnicity/?dataView=1&currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/Collins\\_hlt\\_ins\\_coverage\\_8\\_years\\_after\\_ACA\\_2018\\_biennial\\_survey\\_tables.pdf](https://www.commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/Collins_hlt_ins_coverage_8_years_after_ACA_2018_biennial_survey_tables.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/484301-22-studies-agree-medicare-for-all-saves-money>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2018/12/13/18103087/medicare-for-all-explained-single-payer-health-care-sanders-jayapal>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Colour-Coded-Health-Care-Sheryl-Nestel.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1483879/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/covid-vaccine-hesitancy-vulnerable-communities-1.5895903>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thehouse/racialized-canadians-vaccine-priority-1.5911952>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.apha.org/-/media/Files/PDF/factsheets/Health\\_inAll\\_Policies\\_Guide\\_169pages.ashx](https://www.apha.org/-/media/Files/PDF/factsheets/Health_inAll_Policies_Guide_169pages.ashx)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/racism-is-killing-black-people-its-sickening-them-too/2020/06/04/fe004cc8-a681-11ea-b619-3f9133bbb482\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/racism-is-killing-black-people-its-sickening-them-too/2020/06/04/fe004cc8-a681-11ea-b619-3f9133bbb482_story.html)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/26/we-must-address-social-determinants-affecting-black-community-defeat-covid-19/>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/racism-is-killing-black-people-its-sickening-them-too/2020/06/04/fe004cc8-a681-11ea-b619-3f9133bbb482\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/racism-is-killing-black-people-its-sickening-them-too/2020/06/04/fe004cc8-a681-11ea-b619-3f9133bbb482_story.html)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/06/15/racism-is-a-public-health-crisis-say-cities-and-counties>

<sup>21</sup> <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/anti-racist-epidemiology>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/reparations-green-new-deal-aoc/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Colour-Coded-Health-Care-Sheryl-Nestel.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/health/coronavirus-vaccine-trials-african-americans.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20181446>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/health-indigenous-racism-miller-1.5764659>

<sup>28</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/312282/9789289054096eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&ua=1>

# Exxon and the Inevitable Decline of Fossil Fuels

*Jack Shapiro*

Less than a week before the 2020 U.S. general election, ExxonMobil, current fossil fuel giant and former largest company in the world, **announced**<sup>1</sup> they would lay off 14,000 people worldwide, including 1,900 workers in the United States – 15 percent of their workforce.

The layoffs may not come as a surprise, as the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the oil and gas industry hard. But this came just two days after the company announced they would **maintain dividends**<sup>2</sup> for shareholders, clearly showing what really matters to Exxon executives.

These two announcements reveal a bigger and more important story. The reality of climate change, and fossil fuels' inescapable role in it, means the end of the fossil fuel industry is inevitable. And far from a sacrifice, the clean energy transition will make nearly everyone's lives better. But ending an industry this big will not be painless. In other words, how we transition away from fossil fuels is just as important as when.

Let's back up for a second. It is no secret that the climate crisis is accelerating. 2020 may be the **hottest year ever recorded**<sup>3</sup>, wildfires turned western skies **apocalyptic**<sup>4</sup> this fall, and the Atlantic Ocean has been spitting out **tropical cyclones**<sup>5</sup> like it's going out of style. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Americans have experienced 119 "billion dollar" weather and climate disasters<sup>6</sup> since 2010, totalling \$810 billion in damages.

Pollution from burning coal, oil, and gas causes climate change, and Exxon is in the **small group of companies**<sup>7</sup> responsible for the majority of it. Just like the tobacco industry knew about cancer risks, Exxon **knew about the dangers of climate change**<sup>8</sup> for decades but funded extensive campaigns to block policies

that could have made a difference. Today, they have not changed their stripes. In October, **internal documents showed**<sup>9</sup> that the company still plans to increase pollution for years to come, even as climate impacts worsen all around us.

The fossil fuel industry more broadly is under extreme pressure. The financial industry is **waking up to the fact**<sup>10</sup> that if we take climate seriously, the fossil fuel industry suddenly becomes a **very risky bet**<sup>11</sup>. President-elect Biden has said that climate action is a top priority for him, and, even without a Democratic majority in the Senate, he can take a number of executive actions to shrink fossil fuel use.

With a core product that causes climate change, it is clear that the fossil fuel industry cannot last forever. If we transition sooner, we prevent greater cumulative climate damage and lower the risk of reaching dangerous thresholds like collapsing ice sheets raising sea levels worldwide or melting permafrost creating an unstoppable feedback loop. But what does that transition look like? For most of us, it actually looks pretty good! For far too long, making cleaner choices has been seen as a sacrifice or a tradeoff. But that is just not the case anymore.

Auto manufacturers have dozens of new electric vehicle models coming out next year, and research shows electric vehicles cost **significantly less**<sup>12</sup> to own and operate than gas cars. Precise and safe induction cooktops can replace gas stoves and remove a **dangerous source of indoor air pollution**<sup>13</sup>. Electric heat pumps can replace old gas furnaces. In many cases, families can eliminate their gas bills altogether. **New analysis by Rewire America**<sup>14</sup> showed that fully electrifying the economy and sourcing our energy from clean sources

could create up to 25 million jobs and save the average household more than \$2,500 every year.

Wind and solar are the cheapest forms of new energy in the world today, **according to BloombergNEF analysis**<sup>15</sup>, and in five years it will be more affordable to build a brand new wind farm or solar plant than to operate a natural gas power plant that already exists. The economics of clean energy are powerful and they are not going away.

Our energy system is already changing, and we need only to look to the coal industry to see what an unjust and unmanaged transition looks like. As coal in the United States has collapsed, executives have taken companies through repeated bankruptcies and acquisitions and paid themselves big bonuses while shedding pension, healthcare, and environmental cleanup obligations. It has been a **disaster**<sup>16</sup> for tens of thousands of coal workers and their communities.

Wealthy fossil fuel executives will be fine—and we do not owe them anything. But the communities and workers who provide the energy we use deserve better. These are our neighbors and fellow Americans. As the oil and gas industry winds down, these workers should be able to transition to the clean economy and new careers with dignity and justice.

There is no shortage of ideas for how this could happen. Governor Jay Inslee's presidential campaign platform included an **extensive set of transition policies**<sup>17</sup>, like a G.I. bill for energy workers and jobs programs in environmental restoration. The House Committee on the Climate Crisis **recommends**<sup>18</sup> establishing a robust National Economic Transition Office. Greenpeace USA's proposal for a **Worker and Community Protection Fund**<sup>19</sup> highlights precedents for supporting communities losing extractive industries, like timber in the West, or other economic activity, like closing military bases.

In Biden's acceptance speech, he said he would seek to unify the country, and be a president for all Americans. There is now a new discussion we can have about how to bring fossil fuel workers and communities together with advocates for environmental, climate, and racial justice.

That is the path we should choose. If we do not, we will stay on the road that Exxon's twin announcements lay out in front of us: one where executives and shareholders get paid, and the rest of us get left to clean up the mess on our own.

---

*Jack Shapiro is completing the Mid-Career Master's in Public Administration program at the Harvard Kennedy School, focused on climate and energy policy and public sector management. Previously, he worked in progressive advocacy and organizing on issues including climate change, economic fairness, health care, and immigration reform, and served as an appointee in the Obama Administration.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/exxonmobil-layoffs/exxon-to-cut-14000-global-jobs-including-1900-in-u-s-as-pandemic-hurts-demand-idUSKBN27E30U>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20201028006255/en/Exxon-Mobil-Corporation-Declares-Fourth-Quarter-Dividend>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/10/14/earth-hottest-september-2020-ranking/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2020/09/photos-wildfires-rage-across-american-west/616219/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/atlantic-hurricane-season-2020-record-breaking/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/exxon-knew-about-climate-change-almost-40-years-ago/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-05/exxon-carbon-emissions-and-climate-leaked-plans-reveal-rising-co2-output?sref=oUjKjw8m>

<sup>10</sup> <https://county17.com/2020/10/22/140-finance-firms-have-fled-coal-oil-gas-are-next-report/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/95efca74-4299-11ea-a43a-c4b328d9061c>

<sup>12</sup> <https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Maintenance-Cost-White-Paper-9.24.20-1.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://rmi.org/insight/gas-stoves-pollution-health>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/jobs-report>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-19/wind-solar-are-cheapest-power-source-in-most-places-bnef-says>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/7/9/20684815/coal-wyoming-bankruptcy-blackjewel-appalachia>

<sup>17</sup> <https://jayinslee.com/issues/evergreen-economy>

<sup>18</sup> [https://climatecrisis.house.gov/sites/climatecrisis.house.gov/files/Climate Crisis Action Plan.pdf](https://climatecrisis.house.gov/sites/climatecrisis.house.gov/files/Climate%20Crisis%20Action%20Plan.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Protecting-Energy-Workers-Briefing-Greenpeace-April-20201.pdf>



# Don't Let Them Steal Our Sky

Morgan Pratt

*"Really?" the grandchildren asked, "The sky was that blue?" They crowded in the narrow hallway, fingers smudging a framed photo of your childhood home in the Appalachian mountains.*

*"Yes, darlins, it once was. We'd even step outside without sunscreen!" You turned to the window, just to check. The white, hazy sky lingered, as always.*

*"D'you ever see the Great Barrier Reef?" The oldest asked, nearly shouting at this point.*

*"Wow!" You smiled, their enthusiasm contagious. "They still teach that in schools? I always meant to go, but it completely bleached before I got the chance. I managed to see Victoria Falls before it dried up, if you know about that." The hinges of the front door creaked as your daughter stepped in from the greenhouse. You nudged the children in her direction.*

*"Now, go help your parents unpack! You know how tired they get." Like most in their generation, your children had the misfortune of growing up breathing toxic air before medical workarounds were commonplace, leaving their lungs severely stunted compared to yours and those of your grandchildren.*

*"Just look at those tomatoes! Are those Dow® or Bayer®?" your son-in-law asked as he emerged from the greenhouse, a folded e-bike in one hand and his suitcase in the other. After droughts made most natural crops untenable, water-efficient GMOs complete with patented seeds and greenhouses became standard for most gardeners in your area.*

*As the family crammed into the apartment, a chorus of voices bouncing off the walls, your mind wandered back to holidays when you were a child yourself: running up and down the mountainside, constructing snow forts and ducking from*

*snowballs behind fig trees. Now your winter memories feel like a hazy dream, and not just because of the number of years gone by. The small joy of catching snowflakes on your tongue is no longer something your grandchildren can experience – snow doesn't fall around here much anymore, and what little arrives has a pH akin to vinegar when it melts.*

*"Last one in, make sure to close the door!" you stressed. "I know you megacity folk can barely smell, but I don't want that stench in here." Everyone's elbows practically bumped the walls, but any inconvenience was overshadowed by the joy of being together in person instead of in pixels. Fifteen minutes into the first course, the lights dimmed.*

*"One hour warning!"*

*Last year, your neighborhood voted to automatically taper excess electricity use every weeknight—overhead lights first.*

*After dinner, the kids scurried up the ladder out back to watch the sunset. "They go crazy for a good view," your daughter sighed, tidying a few plates licked clean. "Always talking my ear off about their friends who live higher up."*

*"Say, why don't we go join 'em?" you proposed, folding the last of the chairs into the hall closet with a grin. "I'll grab a mask or something."*

*The kids said nothing when the adults snuck in behind them, no doubt mesmerized by the fiery cirrus tendrils whipping across the sky. After some jokes from the adults about stealing the ladder, everyone huddled together to brace against the creeping cold. As you twirled your grandchild's curls in your lap, they pointed to the roof's lone feature.*

*"What's that dusty table for?"*

*"That's a solar panel. Used to get electricity from 'em before the haze."*

*When the dark clouds took over, the group descended, but you decided to stay. While the sunset burned intense with fury, the night sky existed in apathy. Even with the new light pollution regulations, you still couldn't find a single star.*

*"You comin'?" you heard from downstairs.*

*"I'm just looking for a... yeah, I'm comin'."*

The above future is one fast approaching, where the powers that be decide to mitigate Global Warming by pumping around **12 teragrams** (1 million tons)<sup>1</sup> of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere every year. This idea, known as stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI), is an appealing one; SAI can **halve the warming**<sup>2</sup> due to climate change **in a matter of months**<sup>3</sup> and at a fraction of the cost of other plans (estimates range from **\$2B**<sup>4</sup> to **\$200B**<sup>5</sup> per year). In fact, the idea is spearheaded by Harvard's own **Keith Group**<sup>6</sup> via **opinion pieces**<sup>7</sup> and the **first ever experiment**<sup>8</sup> of the plan.

Though the above story is not necessarily outright dystopia, this plan is a bad idea for three reasons. First, excess sulfur dioxide in the atmosphere has many known downsides and a plethora of unknowns. Second, this plan does not address many of the challenges posed by climate change, only warming. Finally, this idea abides by and reinforces the same logic that started the climate catastrophe in the first place.

In addition to many of the problems noted in the story above—acid snow, drought, a permanently white sky, ozone depletion, hamstrung solar power—sulfur dioxide **also affects**<sup>9</sup> satellite remote sensing, air travel, and has a host of complex effects on the atmosphere. This will disrupt entire fields (e.g. astronomy) and permanently change weather patterns in ways we cannot hope to predict. These changes could mean

intensifying regional disparities like **hastening desertification**<sup>10</sup> in Africa and Asia.

The lack of upsides is also a troubling feature of this plan. SAI will not regrow the ice sheets, **stop ocean acidification**<sup>11</sup>, mitigate wildfires, help endangered species, or do much of anything besides reduce warming. Additionally, the cooling effects fade as fast as they begin; injections would have to occur constantly or else catastrophic warming would return in mere months. Some plans say this means **6,700 injection flights a day for 160 years**<sup>12</sup>.

And what might we do with a cooler Earth? **Jevons' Paradox**<sup>13</sup>—the observation that, under capitalism, savings from efficiency increases are reinvested, ultimately increasing consumption—suggests any gains will evaporate as quickly as they come. SAI is cheap enough for **large corporations to independently emit**<sup>14</sup> sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide hand-in-hand, claiming their net effect is "warming-neutral." Small countries could run a modest SAI program as a cover for ongoing emissions, and large ones could single-handedly manipulate the Earth's temperature. Likewise, human modification of the atmosphere is what started this mess; a comprehensive plan to counteract ecological destruction must dismantle the ideology that the most powerful among us are entitled to wreck the Earth for profit.

The most frustrating aspect of proposals like these is that they are unnecessary; we **already have the technology**<sup>15</sup> to decarbonize our society and prevent catastrophic ecological harm. Spending precious funding and airtime on ideas that deepen the ideological problems underpinning climate change only lowers our chances of getting out of this alive. It is for these reasons I implore you to resist technocrats with stuffed pockets telling you to sell your atmosphere even further. Don't put SAI on the table. Don't let them steal our sky.

*Morgan is an MPP candidate on a leave of absence to engage with grassroots organizing around climate change and progressive policy. Morgan has previously worked in diplomacy, refugee advocacy, and as an elementary school teacher.*

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> <https://esd.copernicus.org/articles/11/579/2020/esd-11-579-2020.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-019-0398-8.epdf>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6784395/>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aae98d/meta>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/RobockBridge.pdf>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://keith.seas.harvard.edu/home>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://keith.seas.harvard.edu/news/help-cool-climate-add-aerosol>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07533-4>
- <sup>9</sup> <http://climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/RobockBridge.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-six-ideas-to-limit-global-warming-with-solar-geoengineering>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/what-solar-geoengineering>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.livescience.com/59901-geoengineering-methods-to-cool-planet.html>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://monthlyreview.org/2010/11/01/capitalism-and-the-curse-of-energy-efficiency/>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/357/6348/246/tab-pdf>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.beforetheflood.com/explore/the-deniers/fact-we-absolutely-can-solve-the-climate-crisis-today/>

## Prose Citations

*Sulphur Dioxide causes acid rain/snow: [1] [2]*  
*pH of acid snow: [1] [2]*  
*Air pollution stunting lung growth: [1]*  
*Air pollution and scent: [1]*  
*Effects of haze on solar power/plants: [1]*  
*Sulphur Dioxide and drought: [1] [2] [3]*  
*Plant extinction risks: [1] [2]*  
*Seed copyrights: [1] [2]*  
*Climate change and wildfires: [1] [2]*  
*Pollution and sunsets: [1] [2]*  
*Various negatives of sulfur dioxide: [1]*  
*Information on aerosols generally: [1]*

# The Fallacy of Diversity Reforms for Police Departments

*Danica Yu*

As the United States faced a year of racial reckoning through 2020, nearly every major institution within our society has been **called out**<sup>1</sup> for its lack of diversity. Our country's police force has been central to this conversation. Intuitively, we strive to make police departments more reflective of the communities they serve in hopes of reducing the disproportionate harm they impose on BIPOC communities. But by focusing reforms on the diversity of the police force alone, we distract from structural policy changes and place the burden of work on the BIPOC community, a group already experiencing the crushing consequences of police brutality.

The Chicago Police Department and its disturbing history of torturing (primarily Black) men and women is a prime example of this undue burden. Between 1972-1991, the department **tortured over 100 innocent people**<sup>2</sup> in Chicago's Area 2 to induce confessions. Jon Burge, the commander at the time, was accused of running a "reign of terror" that employed unconstitutional torture tactics including electrocution and suffocation. This history is troubling not just because of Burge's role as a single actor, but also the fact that this was an open secret in the department for decades that went largely unquestioned while it was happening and unpunished in the aftermath.

In 1983, Harold Washington was elected as Chicago's first Black mayor and ran on the explicit goal of improving police accountability. Washington made **great strides toward this goal**<sup>3</sup>, opening lines of communication between district commanders and citizens and even appointing the first Black police superintendent. And yet, unsurprisingly, Black leadership alone was not enough to curtail the use of police torture. The Washington administration's legislative agenda was consistently blocked by an uncooperative City Council – he was even quoted saying, **"I have about as much control over the Chicago Police Department as I do over Puerto Rico."**<sup>4</sup> The struggles Washington faced reflect an

institution that reacted to his election with racial hostility and resistance. Author Laurence Ralph, who wrote a book centered on this episode of police torture, highlights the hostility Black officers who served in Chicago during this time also experienced. He wonders whether their distress was twofold, **"not [only emerging] because you participated in this brutality, but because the other options available to you were also fraught with peril."**<sup>5</sup> During Burge's reign of terror, if prosecutors and politicians were complicit in the use of torture, it's hard to imagine Black police officers had the power to stop it.

What kind of work are we asking people of color to do for the rest of society when we claim that their presence alone should have solved these institutional problems? Even with the additional perspectives that diversity can bring, those perspectives will only be heard if institutions are willing to listen. Pinning the solution on racial diversity is an extractive behavior that mimics the practices of slavery and colonialism. Black folks and other people of color have long been tokenized in the workplace, and while representation matters, appointing a Black spokesperson does more for public perception of a police force than it does for structural change.

In fact, plenty of departments at the center of policing scandals have significant Black and Latinx representation, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, **which is now a majority-minority**<sup>6</sup>. The literature on the effect of having a more diverse force on police brutality is mixed, suggesting that racist policing comes not just from individual officers, but from the **broader structures and culture of policing**<sup>7</sup>. Even further, diversity without structural change comes at a great cost. Beyond the explicit racism and historical segregation Black officers face, the pressure of racial anxiety

pushes some to overpolice Black communities in the same way as their white counterparts. In other words, some Black officers may feel that the only way to prove their commitment to their job and dispel suspicions from coworkers of being “soft” on crime are to “marginalize the concerns of and disassociate themselves from the community of ‘Black.’”<sup>8</sup>

While diversity reforms may be effective in other workplace contexts, they are a particularly inappropriate approach to the problem of policing brutality given the history of policing itself. Some of the earliest forms of policing that emerged at our nation’s founding were slave patrols, groups of white men tasked specifically with controlling the enslaved. Slave patrols were “explicit in their design to empower the entire white population...with the duty to police the comings and goings and movements of black people,”<sup>9</sup> thus creating a collective sense of supremacy even among white men who didn’t own slaves themselves. Knowing that the existence of the police force in the US is rooted in this explicitly racist behavior, how can we think diversifying the force, rather than dismantling it, will appropriately address its problems?

Recruiting BIPOC individuals to serve in the problematic institution that is the police force puts a disproportionate burden on people of color to change the institutions that oppress them. Increased diversity must be paired with changes to power structures and the reallocation of resources. For guidance on reforms, we should look to **BIPOC wisdom that is already paving the way forward**<sup>10</sup>. While diversity in and of itself is a worthy goal, our problems of police racism and brutality are outside the scope of what diversity alone can address. Trust that history has shown diversity is not enough. Reallocate police funding to services that will actually make communities safer, like mental health crisis response, affordable housing, and public health initiatives. Diversity initiatives will not get us there, but defunding the police might.

*Danica is a first-year Master in Public Policy student at the Harvard Kennedy School. She is a member of the HKS AAPI Caucus and Research Assistant at the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Police where she researches anti-Black racism in Asia. Danica previously worked in tech and plans to pursue a career advancing racial and environmental equity after HKS.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/09/us/powerful-people-race-us.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://bostonreview.net/race-law-justice/gili-kliger-pain-just-stays-your-head>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.chicagoreporter.com/harold-washingtons-legacy-provided-touchstones-for-progressive-politics/>

<sup>4</sup> Losier, T. (2017), “The Public Does Not Believe the Police Can Police Themselves”: The Mayoral Administration of Harold Washington and the Problem of Police Impunity, *Journal of Urban History* 46(5).

<sup>5</sup> <http://bostonreview.net/race-law-justice/gili-kliger-pain-just-stays-your-head>

<sup>6</sup> <https://harvardlawreview.org/2018/05/the-black-police-policing-our-own/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/08/22/does-diversifying-police-forces-reduce-tensions>

<sup>8</sup> <https://harvardlawreview.org/2018/05/the-black-police-policing-our-own/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/869046127>

<sup>10</sup> <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-defunding-the-police-really-means/>



# Why We Don't Support Traffic Enforcement

*Emily Wade and Elissa Schufman*

At [Our Streets Minneapolis](#)<sup>1</sup>, we firmly believe traffic enforcement is not a good strategy to make streets better places to bike, walk, and roll. As we use it, traffic enforcement means the enforcement of all traffic laws like speed limits. It does not mean failing to act when road users crash, especially when someone is injured as a result. We developed this position over several years with leadership from a multi-racial group of staff and volunteers through detailed research, hours of work group meetings, and their own lived experiences.

## **There are two main reasons we think enforcement is a bad strategy:**

- 1. Increased traffic enforcement will almost certainly amplify racial disparities in our city*
- 2. Changing street design is a more effective way to make streets better places to bike, walk, and roll*

When Minneapolis police killed George Floyd on May 25th, 2020 we renewed our call to [de-police our streets](#)<sup>2</sup>. Yet despite years of advocacy and [growing local support](#)<sup>3</sup> for alternative approaches to traffic safety, traffic enforcement remains a go-to strategy for people looking to prevent harm on streets in Minneapolis and cities across the country. The harms presented by our streets are not small ones: over [38,000 people die](#)<sup>4</sup> in motor vehicle crashes annually in the United States, and [4.4 million people are injured](#)<sup>5</sup> seriously enough to require medical attention. Here in Minneapolis, people walking and biking are [overrepresented](#)<sup>6</sup> in these serious and fatal crashes, and Black and Indigenous people are [disproportionately impacted](#)<sup>7</sup> by fatal crashes.

It's realities like these that have led cities across the nation to adopt a policy framework

known as [Vision Zero](#)<sup>8</sup>, which recognizes that the dangers on our streets are a result of the way they're designed, and seeks to eliminate serious injuries and deaths caused by people driving. Traffic enforcement—both police enforcement and use of cameras—have long been seen as a necessary tool to reduce dangerous driving, and traffic enforcement is a standard component of Vision Zero plans in the United States.

We know that our position against traffic enforcement sets us apart from many local and national advocates who believe law enforcement is key to making streets spaces for everyone. Here in Minneapolis, the idea that we need more police enforcing traffic laws is popular in conversations about drivers blocking bike lanes, speeding, and the City of Minneapolis [Vision Zero Action Plan](#)<sup>9</sup> to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries. People who support traffic enforcement believe enforcement deters drivers from engaging in dangerous behaviors.

Given what's going on with these conversations in our local community, we want to explain why we think traffic enforcement is a bad strategy in a bit more detail.

## **Increased traffic enforcement will amplify racial disparities**

In Minneapolis, our local police do not enforce traffic laws in the same way for people of different races. Minneapolis police have skewed interactions with both Black folks on bikes and Black folks in cars.

A [report](#)<sup>10</sup> created by Melody Hoffmann, Ph.D, and Azul Kimecik, MPH, former volunteers for our organization, found that internal Minneapolis Police Department reports suggest Black bicyclists face greater

threats of police violence than white bicyclists, especially for small infractions like failure to use a light or riding on the sidewalk.

When we pulled data from the [Minneapolis Police Department Stop Dashboard](#)<sup>11</sup>, we found that from January 1 to June 25 of 2019, 45 percent of the people stopped for traffic moving violations in our city were Black or East African, while 38 percent were white. Black and African American people make up only 18 percent of our [population in Minneapolis](#)<sup>12</sup>. Police sometimes search the vehicles of people they stop. When we pulled traffic stop data in Minneapolis, we found 70 percent of those searches were performed on Black or East African drivers.

Sometimes police search drivers' bodies when they conduct traffic stops. In the data set we pulled, 68 percent of those body searches were performed on Black or East African drivers. From these numbers we can see that Minneapolis has a problem with race and traffic enforcement. We found [similar problems](#)<sup>13</sup> when we looked into police and automated traffic enforcement in [Chicago](#)<sup>14</sup>, [Boston](#)<sup>15</sup>, and [Washington, D.C.](#)<sup>16</sup>

Sometimes we hear from folks that the solution to racially biased policing is police reform, not less policing. What that says to us is that folks know there is a problem with the police. But, rather than pressing pause on policing and the harm it causes, they think it would be better to continue with our current levels of enforcement, or even increase them, and write off the disproportionate outcomes as an unfortunate side effect. For these people, traffic enforcement is more important than racial justice.

At Our Streets Minneapolis, we don't think that's good enough. Especially because we know that for Black men in our community, being pulled over can be deadly. It was for [Philando Castile](#)<sup>17</sup>.

We also see disparities with other consequences of enforcement. The Minnesota

state laws governing fees and fines create poverty penalties and traps unavoidable in ticket-based enforcement, with a minimum \$75 fee attached to fines for all moving violations. [Harvard Law School's Criminal Justice Policy Program](#)<sup>18</sup> calls for the elimination of mandatory fees and surcharges because they are poverty traps that disproportionately impact low-income communities—which in Minneapolis and many other places are also largely communities of color. And while fines scaled by ability to pay (known as “day fines”) sound like a good solution in theory, [in practice decision makers tend towards imposing the same fine amounts they always did](#)<sup>19</sup>, while justifying their decisions under the new system's frameworks.

These issues remain across all kinds of enforcement, even when enforcement is conducted by civilians or using automated technology like cameras. And of course, [widespread use of cameras and surveillance](#)<sup>20</sup> comes with its own set of concerns.

We think racial disparities are a good enough reason to oppose traffic enforcement as a street safety strategy. But, on top of this, traffic enforcement doesn't necessarily translate into better environments for people to get around their communities.

Given police officers' discretion in how they do their jobs, they at times hand out more tickets to cyclists for minor infractions [rather than ticketing speeding or reckless drivers](#)<sup>21</sup>. And, for people of color, fear of being profiled by police [can keep them from riding a bike](#)<sup>22</sup> in the first place.

## **Want better streets? Build better streets**

Fortunately there is a much better way to make our streets better places to bike, walk, and roll: change the streets.

We know that good infrastructure makes a huge difference in people's driving behavior. People tend to drive in the way the built

environment around them allows. For example, **wider lanes**<sup>23</sup> make drivers feel comfortable speeding, so they do. Where there are protected bike lanes, on the other hand, folks driving slow down and **everyone benefits**<sup>24</sup>.

But don't just take it from us. The U.S. Department of Justice also supports changing the built environment as the best way to reduce speeding. In their **2009 guide on effective policing and crime prevention**<sup>25</sup>, the U.S. Department of Justice states:

The most important principle in speed control is that motorists tend to drive at the speed at which they feel safe and comfortable, given the road conditions. Therefore, the key to reducing speed is to alter road conditions such that motorists feel uncomfortable speeding.

The report goes on to recommend that local leaders install traffic calming devices, narrow streets, or even just make streets appear narrower so folks driving slow down. Infrastructure changes don't have to be expensive or time consuming, either. The 'yield to pedestrians' signs that helped improve drivers' behavior toward pedestrians in St. Paul's **Stop for Me Campaign**<sup>26</sup> start at only **\$65**<sup>27</sup>. In Minneapolis we've seen time and time again how quickly work crews can be sent out to add street enhancements, like when our community put pressure on the City and County to **restore the buffers on Park & Portland**<sup>28</sup>.

Don't get us wrong—we love total street reconstructions and curb-protected bikeways. But we don't have to wait for a full reconstruction every time we want change.

## Let's be bold

Here's what we know about traffic enforcement:

- 1. Increased traffic enforcement will almost certainly amplify racial disparities in our city*
- 2. Changing street design is a more effective way to make streets better places to bike,*

## *walk, and roll*

Black advocates and advocates of color have been pushing this conversation for years. But, as far as we know, traffic enforcement has been part of every Vision Zero effort to date, including here in Minneapolis.

This gives cities across the country a unique opportunity to step up: be the first city to try Vision Zero without enforcement as a strategy, or eliminate enforcement from existing Vision Zero action plans.

Minneapolis is a city that's known for innovative approaches, and we pride ourselves on creating equitable policies. This is the kind of thing that ought to be right up our alley. Yet so far, it hasn't been.

We could show our neighbors that we will not put more resources into a deeply flawed police system. We could take those resources and invest in improving the infrastructure on our streets. We could make big changes to what it's like to bike, walk, and roll in Minneapolis.

We could also set an example by implementing solutions that could be scaled up and down across the country. With a new administration in the White House, the federal government also has an opportunity to lead. Street safety groups are rightly demanding big change at the federal level. Yet similar to advocacy at the city level, these calls for change **include expanding traffic enforcement**<sup>29</sup>, often without any discussion of the disparate impact increased enforcement would have on people of different races.

From City Hall to the U.S. Department of Transportation, it's past time we prioritized and funded infrastructure solutions that do not further harm Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color. To get to these solutions, we must eliminate traffic enforcement and truly commit to the transportation system we need. While these conversations will be difficult, our commitments to transportation justice, racial



justice, and climate action demand them.

**Our Streets Minneapolis**<sup>30</sup> is a local nonprofit working for a city where biking, walking, and rolling are easy and comfortable for everyone. Their work brings together neighbors, businesses, and community organizations to advocate for an equitable, sustainable transportation system and host Open Streets Minneapolis events.

---

*Emily Wade is the former Development and Communications Director at Our Streets Minneapolis. A year-round bike, walk, and transit commuter, she's never owned a car. She believes transportation policy has a critical role to play in eliminating racial disparities and connecting and strengthening our communities.*

*Elissa Schufman is a member of the Our Streets Minneapolis board of directors. As a queer speculative fiction writer, she sees expanding our imaginations as a necessary part of the work to create a more just and joyful world.*

A **version** of this editorial was originally published on July 18th, 2019 on the Our Streets Minneapolis blog. An extensive list of additional source material for this article is available at [www.ourstreetsmpls.org](http://www.ourstreetsmpls.org) and in the endnotes.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/>
- <sup>2</sup> [https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/de-policing\\_county\\_streets](https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/de-policing_county_streets)
- <sup>3</sup> [https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/bicycle\\_advisory\\_committee\\_resolution\\_traffic\\_enforcement](https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/bicycle_advisory_committee_resolution_traffic_enforcement)
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.asirt.org/safe-travel/road-safety-facts/>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.asirt.org/safe-travel/road-safety-facts/>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/visionzero/vz-data-stats/>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/visionzero/vz-data-stats/>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://visionzeronetwork.org/>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/visionzero/>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/citationreport>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/35z6htb4>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/city/minneapolis>

- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2020/06/12/black-people-made-up-70-percent-of-boston-police-stops-department-data-show>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-met-bike-tickets-getting-around-20180211-story.html>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2020/06/12/black-people-made-up-70-percent-of-boston-police-stops-department-data-show>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/predominately-black-neighborhoods-in-d-c-bear-the-brunt-of-automated-traffic-enforcement/>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2019/06/traffic-stops-as-criminal-investigations-pretext-stops-should-be-disallowed-in-minnesota/>
- <sup>18</sup> <https://cjdebtreform.org/>
- <sup>19</sup> [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/cjpp/Day-Fines\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_digital-6.29.20.pdf](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/cjpp/Day-Fines_Report_FINAL_digital-6.29.20.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2020-06-26/the-surveillance-state-is-a-reality>
- <sup>21</sup> [https://gothamist.com/2016/06/16/nypd\\_cyclists\\_bike\\_lanes.php](https://gothamist.com/2016/06/16/nypd_cyclists_bike_lanes.php)
- <sup>22</sup> <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2017/04/18/for-people-of-color-barriers-to-biking-go-far-beyond-infrastructure-study-shows/>
- <sup>23</sup> [https://www.livablestreets.info/slowng\\_traffic\\_to\\_a\\_target\\_speed](https://www.livablestreets.info/slowng_traffic_to_a_target_speed)
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.fastcompany.com/90357294/bike-lanes-make-you-less-likely-to-die-on-the-street-even-if-youre-driving-or-walking?fbclid=IwAR2yo7hSoz45yysSsXmzf4SxuWHLLdjmMh0Eh7HII doEShuLE4xu53TRWUc>
- <sup>25</sup> [https://media.law.wisc.edu/m/dm9ym/mayors\\_guide.pdf](https://media.law.wisc.edu/m/dm9ym/mayors_guide.pdf)
- <sup>26</sup> <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2018/10/18/want-drivers-to-yield-to-pedestrians-you-gotta-play-mind-games/>
- <sup>27</sup> [https://usa.streetsblog.org/2019/06/14/building-a-safer-mid-block-crossing/?fbclid=IwAR2IgjvNTh9aXIQ\\_93Sqvc-lz4EKS3bp3fnvi51U3wHAo3EDimnaMgZ83I](https://usa.streetsblog.org/2019/06/14/building-a-safer-mid-block-crossing/?fbclid=IwAR2IgjvNTh9aXIQ_93Sqvc-lz4EKS3bp3fnvi51U3wHAo3EDimnaMgZ83I)
- <sup>28</sup> [https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/restore\\_buffer\\_protected\\_bike\\_lanes\\_on\\_park\\_and\\_portland](https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/restore_buffer_protected_bike_lanes_on_park_and_portland)
- <sup>29</sup> <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2021/01/21/street-safety-groups-to-president-biden-commit-to-a-federal-vision-zero-plan/>
- <sup>30</sup> <https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/>

# LOOKING INSIDE: Portraits of Women Serving Life Sentences

Sara Bennett



© Sara Bennett, ASSIA, 35, in the storeroom for baby clothes at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility (2018)  
Sentence: 18 years to life. Incarcerated at the age of 19 in 2003.

More than 200,000 people in the United States are serving life sentences, a punishment that barely exists in other western countries. I've long believed that if judges, prosecutors, and legislators could see people convicted of serious crimes as individual human beings, they would rethink the policies that lock them away forever.

Before I photographed 20 women in New York state prisons in 2018 and 2019—all convicted of homicide—I visited them to learn about their lives. I asked them about themselves,

and each woman responded to a question I posed, "What do you want to say to the outside world?" You can see the entire series and the women's handwritten statements at [lifeafterlifeinprison.com](http://lifeafterlifeinprison.com).

Each woman was so much more than the one act that sent her to prison for life. They are all hard-working, resilient, dignified, introspective, and remorseful. They strive to live meaningful lives. I wanted viewers to ask themselves, "what do we do with a redeemed life?" For this Journal, I reached out to 5 of



those same women and asked them how the pandemic affected them. What follows are their responses.

After spending 18 years as a public defender, SARA BENNETT turned her attention to documenting women with life sentences, both inside and outside prison. Her work has been widely exhibited and featured in such publications as *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker Photo Booth*, and *Variety & Rolling Stone's "American (In)Justice."*

This article is published in collaboration with the [Harvard Journal of African American Policy](#), which published Sara Bennett's work in its 2021 print edition.

The uncertainty of prison life has been exacerbated by the crippling effects of COVID-19. Not only were jobs, academic classes, vocational programs, and recreational activities minimized or cancelled, but visits our main connection to the world around us were terminated. For the last 15 years, I have relied on the (three times yearly) 2 days and 2 nights afforded by the Family Reunion Visiting Program to see and parent my children. This program was shut down in March of 2020. In an environment where closeness and human touch are prohibited, losing the physicality of face-to-face interactions with our children, loved ones, and friends has further driven us into a state of isolation and despair.

Social distancing in prison is nearly impossible; and when COVID-19 descended upon us, the solution was to keep us locked in a cell for 22 hours a day. That's the same as being "keep locked," something I never had experienced before because I've never been in trouble. The sudden, extreme restriction caused an immediate, severely negative impact on my emotional and psychological health. I felt helpless and frankly, I'm left traumatized...

Being in this predicament while fighting this pandemic makes me feel like I'm running out of time. It's so scary because it's like no matter how much you wash your hands, keep your mask on and social distance yourself, some way some how you still become positive. I see my peers die from this virus, some who I just had classes with and now they're gone. It's so sad. I can't see my family, I can barely talk to them because my time is limited. I just feel so alone. I see people being released early to go home, but because I was convicted of a violent crime it looks like they think I deserve to die in prison.

COVID-19 has affected my life in such a profound way. The major effect for me is that I'm not able to embrace my family or any of my loved ones. I've already been taken from them and they are my family. They took away our visits, the commissary is always out of stock on items, supplies are low. Masks aren't given out regularly and they won't even allow our family to send us some. There have been times when the phones and the kiosk (where we receive mail/emails) have been down for days and we're disconnected from our family. It's terrible how we are treated during this period of time.

# **Policies for Global Justice**

# From Development Aid to Mutual Aid: The Argument for Localized Solutions

Ria Mazumdar

In the last couple of decades, the global percentage of people living in extreme poverty has **fallen**<sup>1</sup>, reaching 9.2 percent in 2017, compared to 10.1 percent in 2015. However, a closer look reveals a bleak picture. Despite over **\$1 trillion**<sup>2</sup> in aid being funneled to the African continent in the past sixty years, the biggest aid recipients have actually displayed negative annual growth rates. The “Big Push” theory, which stipulates that large investments of aid from wealthy countries can end global poverty, has been challenged by economists based on such evidence, while U.S. foreign aid spending has continued to rise (see Figure 1).

The foreign aid issue is especially relevant during the pandemic. Multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have mired developing countries deeper and deeper in debt, which they **refused**<sup>3</sup> to cancel in the wake of the devastating economic impacts of Covid-19. As the world’s poorest and most marginalized communities have been hit hard by the pandemic, being forced to work in environments that expose them to the virus and often lacking access to medical treatment, we must revisit the question of alternatives to development aid. Amid the crisis of the pandemic, mutual aid, which has been utilized as a political survival tactic throughout history, has re-emerged as an alternative to institutional aid. How can this concept be applied to the development context?

Prior to exploring this alternative, it is important to ground development aid in its historical context. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the U.S. and British governments provided food aid and other forms of international assistance to poorer countries, many of which were colonies at

the time. Following the Second World War, the Marshall Plan and the establishment of the World Bank and IMF resulted in a massive influx of aid to the global South. Current-day aid projects cannot be separated from these imperial origins.

In *Encountering Development*, Arturo Escobar expounds on this in a resounding anthropological critique of development. The discursive construction of the global South as “underdeveloped,” Escobar argues, occurred during the postwar period as a direct continuation of orientalism. This carried heavy ideological implications, as neoliberal development practices were presented as “**market-friendly**”<sup>4</sup> solutions to the problems of countries which, in fact, required intervention, management, and control. Specifically, Escobar writes that these international economic institutions “provided guidelines to strengthen the private sector, expand domestic and foreign markets, and revitalize international trade under the aegis of multinational corporations.”

In *Imagining a Post-Development Era*<sup>5</sup>, Escobar describes the impasse of developmentalist discourse: on one hand, it is seemingly impossible to fully transcend its linkages with a violent, imperialist past, and on the other, the discourse is at risk of domination by privileged intellectualization, prioritizing scholarly critiques at the expense of actually impactful action. What, then, is the alternative?



Figure 1: U.S. Foreign Aid Given Through the Years<sup>6</sup>

Drawing on the work of scholars in the global South, Escobar *argues*<sup>7</sup> that we must search for “alternatives to development” rather than development alternatives—rejecting the paradigm wholesale via localized, grassroots movements that are already underway: “these authors see new spaces opening up in the vacuum left by the colonizing mechanisms of development.” Charity is not a sufficient alternative. Charities and nonprofits sustain themselves through the perpetuation of the problem they aim to fix, and do little to level the power dynamic between donor and recipient. Furthermore, a number of charitable projects have been either ineffective or caused unintended harm. One development program in Lesotho inadvertently drove local farmers out of business, and a medical intervention in Egypt actually *contributed*<sup>8</sup> to increased rates of hepatitis C. This necessitates a structure of social relations operating external to the state, mediated through grassroots social movements.

How can such movements improve the lives of everyday people given that such a vacuum does not currently exist? In what concrete ways can everyday Americans stand in solidarity with popular struggles in the global South beyond charitable donations, which often further re-entrenches a cycle of dependency?

A result of the power differential between aid

agencies and aid recipients, and even well-meaning charitable donors and aid recipients, is a profound information asymmetry whereby the donor can dictate exactly what the recipient needs. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) selects the types of food that go into aid packages, and is often also the arbiter of who is deserving of that aid. While the latter question of dessert contains thorny ethical implications, a foundational problem is simply that outsiders may actually have no idea what people want. In a striking example, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo’s *Poor Economics*<sup>9</sup> describes a poor Moroccan man who declared to them, “Oh, but television is more important than food!” This may seem counterintuitive under conventional economic assumptions – why would someone choose to purchase a TV while going hungry? On further examination this is a perfectly rational choice – things that decrease monotony and increase the pleasure of daily life are a priority for people in poverty, just like for everybody else.

This insight is critical because it reveals that “upstream,” or top-down approaches, are likely to fail even when they are well-intended, due to the distance between donors and recipient’s preferences. In addition to adverse consequences, this is another reason to be skeptical of charity and nonprofit organizations as alternatives to multilateral institutions.



## Mutual Aid vs. Charity

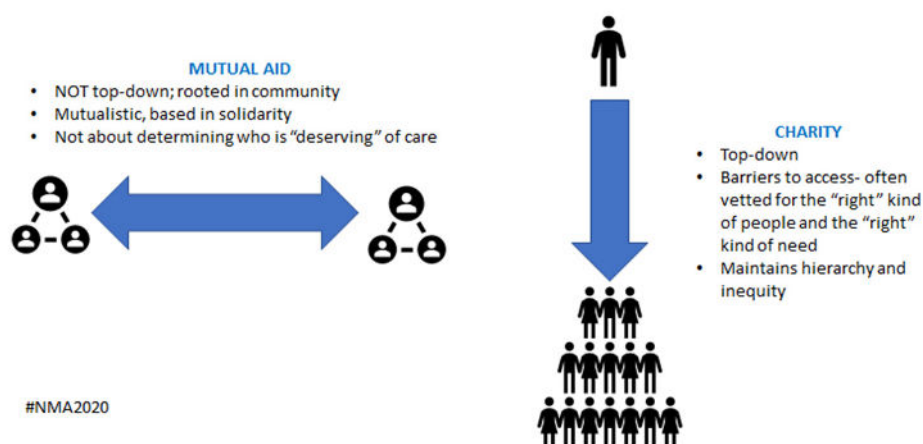


Figure 2: Mutual Aid vs. Charity<sup>11</sup>

Dean Spade published *Mutual Aid*<sup>10</sup> in 2020, a timely and urgent read in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis. He defines mutual aid as “collective coordination to meet each other’s needs, usually from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them. [They] have often created the crisis, or are making things worse.” Mutual aid has been a resistance tactic throughout history, and “is an unbroken tradition among Indigenous people across many cycles of colonialism.” Spade writes that one notable mutual aid program was the Black Panther Party’s Breakfast for Children Program, which was first attacked by the state (police urinated on the food) and subsequently co-opted by the U.S. government’s charity-based federal free breakfast program in the 1970s. By stepping in where state institutions have failed, mutual aid serves as a radical form of organization that threatens the legitimacy of the state itself, as well as its supporting institutions like the police. Mutual aid is thus at the crux of abolitionist logic.

The key distinction between mutual aid and charity is the horizontality of mutual aid, in contrast to the hierarchical aspect of charity which necessarily replicates power dynamics (see Figure 2). By virtue of being decentralized and unburdened by the bureaucracy of organizations, mutual aid can respond to people’s immediate needs within minutes

and days (help with rent in a couple of days, groceries for the week, assistance with childcare). It is necessarily hyper-local and organized at the neighborhood level.

It may seem as though this hyper-local tactic has no relevance to development assistance, which is necessarily global in scale. Yet, according to Spade, “scaling up” mutual aid networks doesn’t mean making groups larger, merging them at the regional level, but rather “means building more and more mutual aid groups, copying each other’s best practices, and adapting them to work for particular neighborhoods, subcultures, and enclaves.” In this way, “one-size-fits-all” approaches to development can be deconstructed and tailored specifically to the needs of local communities. Supplies can be reflexively responsive to immediate demands rather than organized from above. Simultaneously, groups across regions, countries, and continents can share strategies and even redistribute resources.

Social media provides invaluable opportunities to create linkages of solidarity among such hyper-local networks. Platforms such as Instagram and Twitter have decentralized global communication, allowing direct contact with people on the ground as well as the ability to donate money. At the height of the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020,

organizer **Isak Douah**<sup>12</sup> bought gas masks to protect young frontline protesters from tear gas, and accepted donations via Venmo. Mutual aid groups have filled the gaps of the government's failure to respond to the **Texas power crisis**<sup>13</sup>, with citizens around the country donating to these groups within seconds. In India, local **networks**<sup>14</sup> that are supporting protesting farmers on the ground are taking donations and posting updates on the protests. By amplifying such information and donation to mutual aid groups around the world, no matter how small, every individual can engage in daily acts of solidarity. Giving has been revolutionized: anyone can give, and crucially, they can give horizontally rather than operating through the middleman of an institution or charity.

Covid-19 has laid bare the limitations of the state apparatus. In a global health crisis, not to mention an ongoing and escalating climate emergency, it is purportedly the duty of governments and multilateral organizations to protect the vulnerable by providing resources as a last resort. However, as we have seen time and time again, those responsible for aid have not only failed to solve the systemic nature of poverty, they have often exacerbated the problem. Charities and nonprofits, subject to their own sets of perverse incentives, are not a viable alternative to rectifying the power dynamic which re-entrenches aid recipients as subjects.

Mutual aid provides a liberatory alternative to the concept of development aid assistance. In addition to participating in mutual aid at home, any individual can easily transfer resources and support social movements happening thousands of miles away. Social media and cash transfer apps have created a new revolutionary potential for global solidarity. Rather than supporting USAID or an NGO that is likely to deliver ambiguous or even adverse results, all of us can now support the source directly. Rather than fighting for liberation within the scope of an imperial project, Escobar would have us reject these institutions altogether. Yet this rejection does not have to

be simply an abstract thought exercise: mutual aid is an invaluable mode of praxis as love for our neighbors, our friends, and those we will never meet.

---

*Ria Mazumdar is a Research Associate at Harvard Business School. Her interests include the political economy of development and postcolonial theory. She is also a freelance writer contributing regularly on South Asian politics and issues facing the Indian-American diaspora. She holds a B.S. in Quantitative Economics and International Relations from Tufts University.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

<sup>2</sup> <https://dambisamoyo.com/book/dead-aid/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

<sup>4</sup> <https://fpif.org/how-the-imf-and-world-bank-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-public-relations-stunt/>

<sup>5</sup> Escobar, A. (1995), *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press).

<sup>6</sup> Escobar, A. (1992), *Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements, Third World and Post-Colonial Issues No. 31/32.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.givewell.org/international/technical/criteria/impact/failure-stories>

<sup>9</sup> [https://warwick.ac.uk/study/summer-with-warwick/warwick-summer-school/courses/macroeconomics/poor\\_economics.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/study/summer-with-warwick/warwick-summer-school/courses/macroeconomics/poor_economics.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.versobooks.com/books/3713-mutual-aid>

<sup>11</sup> [https://twitter.com/arrianna\\_planey/status/1255860198922768389](https://twitter.com/arrianna_planey/status/1255860198922768389)

<sup>12</sup> <https://wiphilanthropy.org/news/115-ways-to-donate-in-support-of-black-lives-and-communities-of-color/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://grist.org/justice/solidarity-not-charity-mutual-aid-groups-are-filling-gaps-in-texas-crisis-response/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.khalsaaid.org/news/farmers-protest-2020>



# “Dignity, not Domination”: Imagining a Progressive U.S. Foreign Policy

*Joseph Leone*

What should a progressive U.S. foreign policy look like? Is such a thing even possible, or is this line of inquiry akin to asking how best to reform the British Empire or green the fossil fuel industry? How can a country with its hands in multiple wars, with approximately 800 military bases in 80 countries around the world, and with daily state violence waged against Black, Indigenous, brown, and poor people within its own borders, begin to develop a progressive foreign policy?

These are the questions that panelists sought to answer in the first Progressive Caucus event of the Fall 2020 semester, which can be viewed [here](#).

The Progressive Caucus was honored to host Khury Petersen-Smith, the Michael Ratner Middle East Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, Shireen al-Adeimi, Assistant Professor of Education at Michigan State University as well as an activist and journalist, and Tobita Chow, Director of Justice Is Global, to discuss what a progressive U.S. foreign policy should look like and how we can achieve it.

**The first step in such a process is rendering visible the violence that the U.S. commits abroad and honestly grappling with its destructive impact.** While this violence is easily recognizable and on display to those living in Yemen, Somalia, Palestine, or Pakistan, it is normalized and made invisible within the United States through a wide range of means, including ideologies of American exceptionalism, orientalism, and racism, as well as discourses of ‘national security’ and an unshakable belief in the good-ness of America and the righteousness of our intentions. With the destructive Trump presidency thankfully ended, many in the U.S. foreign

policy establishment are eager for the Biden administration to **restore American leadership**<sup>1</sup> on the world stage; however, it is critical to examine what exactly this ‘leadership’ has produced throughout the world.

“The overwhelming bulk of U.S. foreign policy runs contrary to progressive values like justice and equality. It is an unjust and destructive set of activities,” Khury Petersen-Smith argues, tracing the threads of injustice through successive U.S. administrations of different parties back to the foundation of the American project.

Research by Brown University’s Costs of War Project has **estimated**<sup>2</sup> that the United States’ ongoing ‘War on Terror’ has caused the deaths of over 801,000 people through direct war violence, including 335,000 civilians, with several times as many killed indirectly. They also **found**<sup>3</sup> that these wars have displaced 37 million people. These numbers are still rising, as the United States **continues**<sup>4</sup> to launch air and drone strikes in at least seven countries and send soldiers on combat operations in at least 14 countries.

These hot wars are but one form of U.S. violence abroad, complemented by severe economic sanctions imposed on ‘enemy’ populations; military and financial support to repressive governments in Egypt, Israel, the Philippines, and elsewhere; and a crushing neoliberal economic order that traps Global South countries in successive debt crises.

**A constellation of harmful national beliefs underlies this violence.** Petersen-Smith argues that “a progressive U.S. foreign policy

requires rethinking and, frankly, rejecting conventional notions of American leadership.”

Shireen al-Adeimi describes how these notions of American leadership are driven by the idea of American exceptionalism, the false belief that “we are better than the rest of the world; we have more to offer than the rest of the world; and we deserve better than the rest of the world.” The consequences of this logic are predictable, she explains: “why not police the rest of the world? Why not invade and impose our own ideas and impose our own systems, our own ideology onto the rest of the world?”

**Moving away from the harmful practices that have long defined U.S. foreign policy requires a fundamental recasting of the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world.** The United States must, for the first time, view others as equals and partners rather than rely on domination, imperialism, and exceptionalism.

The U.S. foreign policy establishment, whether in good or bad faith, tends to dismiss these criticisms of U.S. militarism and interventionism from progressive or leftist circles as calls for ‘isolationism.’<sup>15</sup> This could not be further from the truth. A progressive foreign policy is rooted in the recognition that global engagement and cooperation are essential to address the shared crises of climate change, deadly pandemics, and the dysfunctional global economy and to provide for the needs of the world’s refugees, migrants, and other frontline communities.

International cooperation around these goals is undermined by the rampant militarism, great power competition, and global austerity that have long defined the U.S. foreign policy playbook. A progressive foreign policy rejects these practices in pursuit of a more just and equitable world built on mutual respect. For Tobita Chow, this process begins with a shift in worldview that rejects the idea that the rights and wellbeing of people in other countries, particularly countries perceived as enemies of the United States, are at-odds with

the flourishing of people in the United States. He rejects this zero-sum mentality as “an incredible act of ideology and propaganda,” that is patently false and harmful to all.

Capturing the essence of what this new internationalism should be, Petersen-Smith referenced the words of his colleague **Azadeh Shahshahani**<sup>6</sup>, the Legal & Advocacy Director at **Project South**<sup>7</sup>, who said that U.S. foreign policy towards Iran should be about “dignity, not domination.” American engagement with the world should not be about subjugation or “**maximum pressure**,”<sup>8</sup> but about partnership in pursuit of human flourishing and reducing human suffering.

This can only come about through constructive international engagement that treats others as equals deserving the same rights and privileges as Americans. “We can’t begin to think about a progressive foreign policy,” al-Adeimi says, “unless we think about it from a space of respect for sovereignty and people’s self-determination.” With this respect, she argues, cooperation and partnership will naturally follow.

As we build cooperative alternatives to traditional notions of American leadership, Chow emphasizes that “shifting things in the U.S. has a crucial role to play in creating a just society,” pointing to a compelling slogan from the **U.S. Social Forum**<sup>9</sup>: “Another World is Possible; Another U.S. is Necessary.”

There are many immediate policy actions that the United States can and must take to end the harms it is actively committing. Panelists identified such steps as:

1. Ending the operations associated with the ‘War on Terror;’
2. Halting military aid and weapons sales to foreign governments committing human rights abuses;
3. Ending the wars in Yemen, Afghanistan, and elsewhere;

4. Withdrawing the tens of thousands of troops deployed around the world and closing the hundreds of military bases and returning the lands to the countries where they are located;
5. Undoing economic arrangements that the United States has secured to its benefits but to the loss of countries in the Global South;
6. Cancelling the debts that have trapped formerly colonized nations;
7. Ending U.S. sanctions against perceived “enemy” countries like Iran; and
8. Ending America’s jingoistic competition with China that only fuels nationalism and persecution of marginalized groups in both countries.

**However, for the United States to play a truly progressive role on the world stage, it needs to do more than put an end to its harms; it also needs to invest in repairing the wrongdoings committed both within and across its borders.** “Developing and advancing progressive visions” Petersen-Smith argues, “can’t involve cosmetic changes. They require real deep transformations.”

Referencing the massive uprisings against racism in 2020, he explains: “Those uprisings have not only targeted particular police killings. Of course, they have demanded justice for people like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many others. But also, those protests put on the table deep problems of anti-Black racism whose origins lie in the foundation of the United States. It begs a reckoning, and similarly, I believe that what the United States has done, and continues to do, abroad begs a reckoning.”

Al-Adeimi likewise asked “How do you begin to think about justice and freedom and progressive foreign policy when we’re still oppressing people here, and we’ve never recognized that we’ve been oppressing them?” Pointing to the need for reparations for slavery, the theft of Indigenous land, the

Volume 1

ongoing abuse of migrants, and state violence against Black Americans, she argues that “until we come to a reckoning of all of the ways in which we’ve harmed people, Black and brown mostly, here at home, at our borders, and across the world, then we can’t begin to think about how to change that.”

**The injustices at home and abroad are connected and feed into one another.**

“When I think of U.S. violence, I think of it in terms of circuits,” Petersen-Smith says, calling the United States an “incubator for a violence that then gets deployed elsewhere.” This exchange goes both ways. He references a **torture ring**<sup>10</sup> organized out of a precinct in the South Side of Chicago during the 1980s and 1990s, where police tortured dozens of Black people, using techniques they learned during the U.S. war in Vietnam. Similarly, in her book *Bring the War Home*<sup>11</sup>, historian Kathleen Belew shows how disillusioned soldiers returning from the Vietnam War fueled white power paramilitary violence within the United States itself.

In 2020 in Portland, as Petersen-Smith notes, unidentified federal agents **dragged protestors into unmarked vans**<sup>12</sup>, deploying tactics used by ICE in immigrant communities and by the CIA abroad against protestors in the streets of a major American city.

Chow succinctly summarizes these dynamics: “militarism abroad feeds racism here and violence abroad feeds violence here,” explaining, as part of the Chinese diaspora, that “the way that the U.S. treats me and people who look like me and the way that the U.S. treats China are linked.”

These linkages impact every sphere of domestic policy, with “the bloated pentagon budget [acting] as a force that undermines spending on domestic priorities,” according to Chow. In line with abolitionist thinking, he advocates for “shifting funding from the military to policies and systems that can meet human needs.”

Dismantling these interlinking systems of oppression is essential and urgent, since, as Chow describes, “status quo U.S. foreign policy is locking us into a century of escalating global crises around public health, around the global economy, around climate, and there is no border and no wall that can protect the United States from these global crises.”

**Building a progressive alternative to U.S. foreign policy is critical, and it will be a monumental organizing effort.** Al-Adeimi notes the importance of seeing ourselves as one global community, and she stresses that “if we recognize that our oppressors are the same, we have much more power to dismantle these structures.”

Chow sees a path forward through grassroots organizing that builds the power and capacity of ordinary people—particularly those impacted by U.S. militarism and national security narratives—to become a powerful voice of critique and shift the discourse. “The foreign policy establishment is not ready for that,” he argues. “National security debates have been so thoroughly insulated from anything like how the majority of people in this country think.”

“The people are out there that we can organize,” Chow explains. “I think there is an enormous opportunity here to pick progressive foreign policy fights and bring those into the rarified air of DC foreign policy circles, backed by organized people power.”

“I think we can make some real gains there and it could be a lot of fun to get into those fights.”

---

*Joseph Leone is an editor at the Progressive Policy Review and an MPP candidate at the Harvard Kennedy School, focusing on international human rights and social movements, particularly in Southwest Asia and the United States. He is also an associate editor at the Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy and co-chair of the Progressive Caucus at HKS.*

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again?utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=special\\_send&utm\\_campaign=election\\_active&utm\\_content=20201107&utm\\_term=all-actives](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=special_send&utm_campaign=election_active&utm_content=20201107&utm_term=all-actives)
- <sup>2</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2019/direct-war-death-toll-2001-801000>
- <sup>3</sup> [https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Displacement\\_Vine et al\\_Costs of War 2020 09 08.pdf](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Displacement_Vine%20et%20al_Costs%20of%20War%202020%2009%2008.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> [https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2019/US Counterterror War Locations%2C 2017-18%2C with Smithsonian and CoW attributions.pdf](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2019/US%20Counterterror%20War%20Locations%202017-18%20with%20Smithsonian%20and%20CoW%20attributions.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-isolationist-temptation-1470411481>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://twitter.com/ashahshahani>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://projectsouth.org/>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.state.gov/advancing-the-u-s-maximum-pressure-campaign-on-iran/>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://grassrootsonline.org/blog/another-world-is-possible-another-us-is-necessary-the-united-states-social-forum/>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/10/30/payback>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674286078>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/07/20/portland-protests-federal-agents-unmarked-cars-and-walls-moms/5470780002/>



# The United States is Complicit in the Ethnic Cleansing of Sheikh Jarrah

Nooran Alhamdan

*Decades of impunity for Israel have progressives at a crossroad.*

Over the past few months, the world has watched in horror, over Instagram livestreams, the forced expulsion of Palestinian families from the Jerusalem neighborhood Sheikh Jarrah. Israeli settlers took over the Al-Ghawi family's home and promised to do the same to the rest of the neighborhood. These armed and ideologically fanatic settlers were under the protection of the Israeli police and had legitimized their theft through lawsuits in Israeli courts, which ruled in the favor of the settlers this past December. For now, Israeli courts have delayed the much-anticipated hearing on the evictions of the Sheikh Jarrah families, giving the families a chance to recoup after weeks of violent settler colonialism. However, the fight to save Sheikh Jarrah will continue until the families of the neighborhood regain their homes and can live without fear of daily settler terror.

Sheikh Jarrah has been coveted by settler organizations since the 1970s in an attempt to increase the amount of private Jewish residency in strategically located areas of occupied East Jerusalem (*Adalah*<sup>1</sup>). Nahalat Shimon International, an organization based in the United States, is one of two settler organizations implicated in the ethnic cleansing of Sheikh Jarrah; it intends to demolish the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and replace it with a 200 unit Israeli settlement, according to legal advocacy organization *Ir Amim*<sup>2</sup>. The other settler organization, Ateret Cohanim, has a branch registered as an American charity in the United States. A 2015 *Haaretz report*<sup>3</sup> found that there are over 50 organizations registered as 501(c)(3) tax exempt charities in the United States that have

funneled over \$200 million dollars to the Israeli settlement enterprise.

In the past few years, Nahalat Shimon has filed several lawsuits against the families of Sheikh Jarrah who have lived there since 1956, all of which have been upheld by Israeli courts. The current deputy mayor of Jerusalem, *Arieh King*<sup>4</sup>, is the founder of the Israel Land Fund, which has the expressed goal of settling East Jerusalem with a Jewish population. The Israel Land Fund lists Sheikh Jarrah as an "investing opportunity" on its website under the name "Nachalat Shimon Residential Plots," which it explicitly claims is "being squatted on by Arabs who have built on them illegally or are renting." The Israel Land Fund website states that one of its chief goals is to realize "the desire of Diaspora Jews to take a more active role in redeeming the land of Israel, especially in Jerusalem." That much can be seen from a *viral encounter*<sup>5</sup> between Sheikh Jarrah native Muna El Kurd and the settler known as Yacob, who speaks to her in a perfect American accent and tells her that if he doesn't steal her home, someone else will.

How is it acceptable that settler organizations are able to operate freely in the United States while Palestinian charities have been accused of providing *material support for terrorism*?<sup>6</sup> How are settlers, many of whom are American citizens, allowed to travel to Jerusalem and other parts of occupied Palestine to partake in violations against international law which include settling occupied land?

The settlement enterprise has been allowed to continue unchecked thanks to the Oslo paradigm. The Oslo Accords are an agreement signed in 1993, in which Israel recognized

the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people and the PLO agreed to recognize Israel. In terms of utility, Oslo was meant to be a first step to later negotiations and a peace treaty, though it was clearly unsuccessful. The United States was successful in manipulating Palestinians to continue pursuing a peace process that Israel itself was not complying with in the slightest; American aid to Palestinians became dependent on fulfilling the parameters of Oslo, which for the Palestinian Authority meant ensuring Israel's safety and security if they ever wanted to qualify for a state. The United States lambasted Palestinians if they weren't sufficiently meeting their Oslo requirements, yet throughout the five-year interim period of Oslo, Israel hardly stopped building settlements, one of its stipulated Oslo requirements; in fact, settlement construction increased in the West Bank and East Jerusalem during this time period according to Israeli human rights organization [B'tselem](#)<sup>7</sup>.

As it stands now, there are an estimated 620,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The infrastructure required to maintain the apartheid system that keeps these settlers comfortable, from settlement-only-highways to military checkpoints all over the West Bank, has eaten away so aggressively at the land—that the United States insists will one day constitute a Palestinian state—that there is less than 22 percent of the occupied territories that is fully in Palestinian sovereignty. The archipelago of remaining Palestinian land is surrounded by settlements at every corner and its inhabitants are still subject to Israeli military rule.

American administrations may have highlighted that settlements were at the very least problematic, varying in their levels of harshness when scolding Israel, but no American administration has ever been serious about ending the settler enterprise. Trump went the farthest in normalizing the settlements by legitimizing products made on settlements and sending former Secretary of

State Mike Pompeo to the West Bank to meet with settlers.

There is also, of course, the bipartisan support for unconditional aid packages to Israel; the Obama administration passed the largest military aid package to Israel, promising \$38 billion USD over a ten-year period. This funding is used to arm the Israeli military and security forces—which not only commit their own fair share of war crimes and human rights violations, but actively protect and defend illegal settlers making life hell for Palestinians in Hebron, Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied territories. Our tax dollars are explicitly at work when it comes to the settlement enterprise; we're paying for the security standing guard at the Al-Ghawi house while settlers jeer at the Sheikh Jarrah families from inside.

If progressive American policy makers like [Bernie Sanders](#)<sup>8</sup>, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and others are serious about saving Sheikh Jarrah, they must be serious about saving all of Palestine. It's not enough to speak out and condemn the Israeli government at this point. That kind of pointed and direct language was needed three decades ago. And while their statements are welcome, especially as they indicate a shift in broader American public opinion on Israel/Palestine, what is needed is **action**.

Some concrete actions that American lawmakers should take are the following:

1. All aid to Israel should be halted and conditional on an end to Israeli violations of human rights and international law, including an end to settlement building. There are already efforts in Congress to condition aid to Israel, introduced by Congresswoman Betty McCollum. The "[Defending Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation](#)<sup>9</sup>" Act would prohibit Israel from using taxpayer dollars

to detain or abuse Palestinian children in Israeli military detention; to support the seizure and destruction of Palestinian property and homes in violation of international humanitarian law; or, to extend any assistance or support for Israel's unilateral annexation of Palestinian territory in violation of international humanitarian law.

American policymakers should support such bills and follow through; hold American purse strings tight and refuse to reinstate funding until the aforementioned violations, including settlements, are halted completely.

2. Charities and organizations in the United States that are implicated in the settlement enterprise in Palestine in any way should have their tax-exempt status removed and should be taken to court for participating in violations of international law.

While this may seem extreme, it is not only possible, but it is necessary. A lawsuit of this kind was filed against Sheldon Adelson, two Israeli banks, several private companies and 13 American nonprofits in the revived appeals case [Al-Tamimi et al v Adelson et al, D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, No. 17-5207](#).<sup>10</sup> The case was revived by an appeals court in 2019 but has yet to be ruled on. There must be a mass effort to hold organizations and individuals involved in the settlement enterprise accountable via the American court system.

3. American citizens found to have moved to Israel to live in illegal Israeli settlements, whether in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem, should face legal consequences for partaking in violations of international law.

Saving Sheikh Jarrah is more than just saving one Jerusalem neighborhood. Saving Sheikh Jarrah is saving tens of hundreds of Palestinian neighborhoods from a similar fate; but this can only happen when Israel has reason to fear repercussions for its actions. The ethnic

cleansing of Sheikh Jarrah stands as an affront to progressive values all over the world. Population transfer is a war crime and it's about time that it is treated as such.

Sheikh Jarrah is the current and most potent litmus test for progressives. What are progressive elected officials willing to do to counter settler colonialism? Anything less than using the full arsenal available to them is complicity. If they have the power to greenlight Israel's behavior, then they have the power to stop it too.

---

*Nooran Alhamdan is an MA candidate in Arab studies at Georgetown University. She is currently a graduate research fellow at the Middle East Institute's Program on Palestine and Palestinian-Israeli Affairs.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/newsletter/eng/feb10/docs/Sheikh\\_Jarrah\\_Report-Final.pdf](https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/newsletter/eng/feb10/docs/Sheikh_Jarrah_Report-Final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/globalministries/legacy\\_url/12409/Microsoft-Word-Evictions-and-Settlement-Plans-in-Sheikh-Jarrah.pdf?1419975211](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/globalministries/legacy_url/12409/Microsoft-Word-Evictions-and-Settlement-Plans-in-Sheikh-Jarrah.pdf?1419975211)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/does-your-jewish-charity-donate-to-settlements-1.5430962>

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/OrenZiv1985/status/1390572090554736640?s=20>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/4/if-i-dont-steal-your-home-someone-else-will-jewish-settler-says>

<sup>6</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2018/08/05/holy-land-foundation-trial-palestine-israel/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/199905\\_oslo\\_before\\_and\\_after](https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/199905_oslo_before_and_after)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/bernie-sanders-progressives-raise-alarms-about-israeli-extremists-amid-violence-against-1589831>

<sup>9</sup> <https://mccollum.house.gov/media/press-releases/mccollum-introduces-historic-legislation-defending-human-rights-palestinian>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-palestinians-lawsuit/palestinians-lawsuit-in-u-s-vs-adelson-others-is-revived-idUSKCN1Q826S>

# A Progressive Domestic Agenda Needs A Foreign Policy Vision to Match

*John Ramming Chappell*

A progressive vision for the United States needs to include foreign policy. Today's challenges require a holistic view that recognizes the connections between domestic and international issues. Military-first approaches have long predominated in American engagement with the world, but advancing justice for all amid historic crises will require a new paradigm. Sustainably improving U.S. foreign policy calls for congressional initiative to deemphasize military action and empower diplomacy.

## Foreign Policy Isn't Optional for a Progressive Agenda

Foreign policy has traditionally been isolated in the American political discourse. Policymakers have considered foreign policy **separately**<sup>1</sup> from domestic projects. Claims that foreign policy is not a "kitchen table issue" for American **voters**<sup>2</sup> have granted elite circles a near-monopoly over agenda-setting abroad. The assertion that "politics stop at the **water's edge**"<sup>3</sup> has too often stifled debate in Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, America's foreign policy **establishment**<sup>4</sup>, derisively nicknamed "**The Blob**"<sup>5</sup>, has recycled **orthodoxies**<sup>6</sup> and **shut down**<sup>7</sup> attempts to interrogate assumptions about America's role in the world.

Long-standing siloes in the foreign policy conversation are finally **eroding**<sup>8</sup> as new debates about **race**<sup>9</sup>, **class**<sup>10</sup>, and **politics**<sup>11</sup> in international affairs come to the fore. As traditional divisions between the domestic and the foreign break down, progressives should envision foreign policy as a central part of their agenda. The United States is in crisis; more than half a million Americans have **died**<sup>12</sup> from coronavirus, climate disasters **continue**<sup>13</sup> apace,

systemic racism continues to thrive, and the gap between haves and have-nots is **broader**<sup>14</sup> than it has been in decades.

Each of these challenges has significant international dimensions. Economic globalization has disproportionately **benefited**<sup>15</sup> the rich while real wages have remained stagnant since 1980. **Communities of color**<sup>16</sup> and **racial justice activists**<sup>17</sup> have faced militarized police using **tactics and equipment**<sup>18</sup> from the global war on terror. The white power movement **consolidated**<sup>19</sup> in reaction to disillusionment with elites who directed a losing war in Vietnam, a legacy that remained relevant even after the movement entered a new era in the 1990s. U.S. white supremacist organizations today form part of a **transnational**<sup>20</sup> **ideological**<sup>21</sup> **network**<sup>22</sup>. Adapting to climate change **requires**<sup>23</sup> unprecedented international cooperation to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States **arose**<sup>24</sup>, in part, from the **Trump**<sup>25</sup> **administration's**<sup>26</sup> **marginalization**<sup>27</sup> of global health professionals.

In light of these crises and their international components, a bold vision for a progressive foreign policy is not just an addendum to a domestic agenda – it is a necessity. Advancing justice for all in a time of crisis will require imagining a future radically different from the present, and actualizing that vision with progressive policies requires significant investments.

Orienting American foreign policy away from military-first approaches will free up resources for domestic progressive programs. Economists and policymakers have suggested



compelling ways to **reconceptualize**<sup>28</sup> public spending, but the United States also spends hundreds of billions of dollars on the military that could instead contribute to progressive change.

## The Failures of Militarism

Many have recognized the corrosive effects of American militarism. President Eisenhower **cautioned**<sup>29</sup> against the military-industrial complex's undue influence and warned of its potential to endanger liberties and institutions. Martin Luther King, Jr. listed war among **America's three evils**<sup>30</sup> and **believed**<sup>31</sup> saving the soul of America required opposing American militarism.

Their statements still ring true. The global war on terror has cost **trillions of dollars**<sup>32</sup> and **hundreds of thousands of lives**<sup>33</sup>, drawn resources and attention away from impending crises, and **fueled**<sup>34</sup> human rights abuses at home and abroad. The most pressing issues for the United States are climate change, pandemics, and managing the U.S.-China relationship—all of which require sustained investment in diplomatic capacity, not more military-first solutions.

### *Military Dominance and the Global War on Terror*

The United States has been a global **superpower**<sup>35</sup> since World War II, when military spending spiked to confront emboldened Axis powers and U.S. interests expanded farther than ever before. During the Cold War, the U.S. retooled its military to contain the Soviet Union. However, U.S. military expenditures have become far more difficult to justify since the Cold War ended and non-traditional threats have increased in importance.

Nevertheless, military spending has increased significantly in the past twenty years. The **2021 National Defense Authorization Act**<sup>36</sup> **allocated**<sup>37</sup> \$740.5 billion to the Pentagon and other national security programs, increasing \$8.75 billion over last year and \$411.66 billion since 2000. The United States spends

**significantly more**<sup>38</sup> on its military than any other country, three times as much as the next largest spender, China, and over ten times more than India, the world's third-ranking spender.

Retooling militarism for the global war on terror has come with dire consequences. **Defensive measures at home**<sup>39</sup> have prevented foreign terrorist organizations from directly attacking the United States, but **profiling and surveillance programs**<sup>40</sup> have violated the civil liberties of Muslim and immigrant communities in the name of national security. Overseas counterterrorism operations have often done **more harm than good**<sup>41</sup>, increasing Salafi-jihadist organizations' influence and facilitating their spread to new regions. Salafi-jihadism and U.S. militarism have mutually reinforced each other since the early days of al-Qaeda. Osama bin Laden **cited**<sup>42</sup> the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, the "Land of the Two Holiest Sites" in Islam, to justify war against the United States in 1996. After 9/11, the war on terror weakened al-Qaeda as an organization while fuelling the appeal of its ideology among populations who felt the consequences of American militarism.

ISIS exemplifies this trend. Before the U.S. invasion, al-Qaeda had no significant presence in Iraq. However, as dissatisfaction with **de-Baathification**<sup>43</sup> and the U.S. occupation grew, al-Qaeda found fertile ground for anti-American narratives. Al-Qaeda's Iraqi branch eventually broke away to become the forerunner to ISIS. While ISIS expanded, it caused untold **human**<sup>44</sup> **suffering**<sup>45</sup>, forced **millions**<sup>46</sup> to **flee**<sup>47</sup> their homes, and drew U.S. troops **back**<sup>48</sup> into Iraq, where American armed forces remain despite opposition<sup>49</sup> from the Iraqi government.

Policymakers inflated the threat of Salafi-jihadist terrorism while underpreparing for predictable crises like climate change and pandemics. People motivated by Salafi-jihadist ideology have **killed**<sup>50</sup> 104 people in the United States since 9/11—**less**<sup>51</sup> than the loss of life in a single season of **climate-change-fueled**<sup>52</sup>

California wildfires or an hour of **early-2021 COVID-19 deaths**<sup>53</sup>. The United States has **committed**<sup>54</sup> over \$6 trillion dollars to the war on terror since 2001. This disproportionate response has resulted in a global military effort that has **destabilized states**<sup>55</sup> and caused enormous human suffering. Hundreds of thousands have **perished**<sup>56</sup> in the post-9/11 wars.

A **military-first approach**<sup>57</sup> to counterterrorism has contributed to a mentality of **endless wars**<sup>58</sup>. Just days after September 11, 2001, Congress passed a sweeping law that authorized the president to exercise broad powers to fight the war on terror. Nearly two decades later, the **2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force**<sup>59</sup> (AUMF) has provided legal justification for military engagements from **Niger**<sup>60</sup> to the **Philippines**<sup>61</sup>. In Afghanistan, unclear and conflicting objectives **plagued**<sup>62</sup> the U.S. campaign from the start. In Iraq, an **illegal**<sup>63</sup> war launched under **false pretenses**<sup>64</sup> **destabilized**<sup>65</sup> the Middle East and **spurred**<sup>66</sup> the rise of ISIS.

Even now, many decision-makers remain committed to endless wars. General David Petraeus, who directed the Central Intelligence Agency and commanded the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, envisions a permanent **military**<sup>67</sup> **presence**<sup>68</sup> in fragile states to prevent the rise of new Salafi-jihadist groups.

After 20 years of the war on terror, the United States should eschew open-ended military commitments and center diplomatic engagement. The most urgent threats facing the United States are collective challenges that call for positive-sum solutions among stakeholders—not military confrontations and endless wars.

### *Correcting Foreign Policy Priorities*

While the U.S. has poured resources into the global war on terror, it has neglected the most urgent foreign policy issues: the climate crisis, global health, and relations with China.

Climate change is the only current existential threat to the United States. Climate change has already altered weather patterns, resulting in more intense **wildfires**<sup>69</sup>, **flooding**<sup>70</sup>, **hurricanes**<sup>71</sup>, and **droughts**<sup>72</sup>. Rising temperatures and sea levels will force communities around the **country**<sup>73</sup> and across the **world**<sup>74</sup> to relocate. Building climate resilience, reducing emissions, and protecting carbon-storing ecosystems will require unprecedented commitments on the domestic level. Reducing military operations, too, would be a significant step in reducing emissions as the U.S. military **pollutes**<sup>75</sup> more than most entire countries do. Still, national efforts could be for naught without collaboration with the world's other **largest greenhouse gas emitters**<sup>76</sup>. The international community must collaborate to meet global environmental challenges. Policymakers should incorporate climate change into every aspect of U.S. foreign policy, from supporting **green development efforts**<sup>77</sup> to incorporating **environmental provisions**<sup>78</sup> into trade agreements.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown that global health ought to feature prominently among U.S. foreign policy priorities. Despite a **perception**<sup>79</sup> that the United States was relatively well-prepared for a public health disaster, Americans make up nearly **20 percent**<sup>80</sup> of COVID-19 deaths worldwide while the country amounts to just **4 percent**<sup>81</sup> of the global population. Efforts to **blame China**<sup>82</sup> or the **World Health Organization**<sup>83</sup> (WHO) neglect the fact that the United States responded to the pandemic with particular ineptitude. Outbreaks are more likely to cross borders in a globalized world, but pandemics are preventable with sufficient disease surveillance and medical diplomacy.

Policymakers should **prioritize**<sup>84</sup> equitable vaccine distribution worldwide. The threat of a COVID-19 resurgence will not subside until the Global South has equal access to vaccines, but international patent enforcement laws are preventing the development of generic vaccines. Along with distributing currently available vaccines, the United States should

vote to **waive**<sup>85</sup> World Trade Organization members' patent enforcement obligations on COVID-19 technologies and facilitate technology sharing. Going forward, the United States must cooperate with international organizations and partners to improve global pandemic preparedness.

The relationship between the United States and China is the most important in the world. Managing relations with China should be a top priority, but Sinophobic rhetoric and narratives of a new cold war hinder collaboration on mutual priorities and **fuel**<sup>86</sup> anti-Asian violence. While tension with China is likely, war is not inevitable. The United States should carefully balance competition when interests diverge and engagement on shared challenges.

The best approach to China's rise is setting a positive example for the international community, which requires sustained diplomatic engagement with partners while advancing justice and prosperity at home. Instead of waging trade wars, the United States should ensure that the American working class has a robust role in the coming green economy. Instead of banning allies from **using**<sup>87</sup> Chinese tech products, the U.S. government should work to provide alternatives. Administrations should call out the Chinese government's **human rights abuses**<sup>88</sup> while also rectifying injustices at home, ranging from mass incarceration to environmental racism.

Climate change, pandemics, and the rise of China all require sustained diplomatic engagement in international fora and engagement with allies and competitors alike. A military-first approach—the status quo—is insufficient.

However, the United States has chronically **underfunded**<sup>89</sup> the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), its premier international affairs agencies. Neglecting diplomatic tools has made conflict prevention more difficult—as General James Mattis **observed**<sup>90</sup> in 2013, “If

[Congress doesn't] fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.” The military has absorbed functions that traditionally belonged to diplomats, **ranging**<sup>91</sup> from rule-of-law programs to public diplomacy initiatives, but does not implement these functions effectively. The Department of Defense has become the face of American engagement in much of the world, sidelining professional diplomats and hurting U.S. credibility.

## Turning Away from Militarism

Building a progressive foreign policy to meet 21st-century challenges requires rethinking substantial aspects of the United States' international outlook.

### *A Systems-Based Approach to Foreign Policy*

Policymakers should understand foreign policy as part of a broader system of relationships. The national security discourse, which long focused on traditional military threats, should evolve to center human needs. In setting policy objectives, examining the unintended consequences that follow well-intentioned plans should foster humility and an appreciation of American limitations. Finally, as the United States seeks to better live up to its stated values, Americans should not hesitate to look abroad for guidance and admit the United States does not have all the answers.

In recent years, policymakers have increasingly recognized that siloing foreign policy yields worse outcomes in both the foreign and domestic spheres. Narrow conceptions of national security have acted as blinders that mask the human consequences of policy decisions. As conversations about **redefining**<sup>92</sup> **national**<sup>93</sup> **security**<sup>94</sup> and recognizing connections between domestic and international issues continue, policymakers should make structural reforms to institutionalize a systems-based policy approach to foreign policy.

Adopting a system-based approach should entail considering the unintended

consequences of decisions made in Washington, DC. The United States habitually invokes human rights and democracy to justify military operations, but **wars**<sup>98</sup> of **choice**<sup>100</sup> too often result in human insecurity and political destabilization. The United States needs humility in its goals and caution in its policy implementation. Raising the threshold for American intervention will prevent overextension and reduce unintended consequences.

The United States could learn a great deal from the rest of the world, but American exceptionalism has prevented the United States from considering policy solutions from abroad. Facilitating transnational relationships based in solidarity rather than hierarchy would allow Americans to learn from the experiences of others. **Subnational**<sup>101</sup> **diplomacy**<sup>102</sup> programs should expand so **cities**<sup>103</sup> and **states**<sup>104</sup> can better draw lessons, whether they be in **transportation or trade**<sup>105</sup>, from overseas. American progressives can build **solidarity**<sup>106</sup> with foreign counterparts and exchange strategies. At the highest levels of government, the United States should welcome assistance from partners. Asking for help should be part of U.S. foreign policy.

Solutions from abroad may not perfectly transplant into the American context, but they could offer starting points for healing our relationship with the environment, building stronger public health infrastructure, and dismantling white supremacy. Many countries are far ahead of the United States when it comes to environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Learning from Costa Rica's **decarbonization**<sup>107</sup> plan, Japan's high-speed rail adoption, or France's **efforts**<sup>108</sup> to reduce food waste could help the United States accelerate its progress towards a green economy. After a devastating pandemic, U.S. policymakers should turn to countries like New Zealand, South Korea, and Liberia, which developed mechanisms to effectively limit COVID-19 infections and reduce deaths. As American communities grapple with white supremacy, we can also look abroad to truth

and **reconciliation commissions**<sup>109</sup> like those implemented in South Africa and Canada.

### *Reducing Military Entanglements*

The United States should review the status of its overseas military bases and military alliances to ensure they still advance U.S. interests in light of new priorities.

In the long term, the United States should aim to reduce in number its overseas military bases. The United States maintains over 800 military bases overseas, forming a global **"empire of points"**<sup>110</sup> that extends across more than 80 countries. By comparison, the United Kingdom, France, and Russia run 30 military bases combined while China maintains only one overseas military base. American bases create permanent commitments that entangle U.S. interests in distant locations long after the original rationales for establishing them expire. The Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, established during the Spanish-American War, is a prime example of a base wearing out its welcome and its utility. Originally a naval station, the base housed Haitian refugees in the 1990s before being repurposed as a detention center and illegal torture site for individuals suspected of terrorism. Cuban leaders have repeatedly demanded the return of the land and routinely **rejected**<sup>111</sup> lease payments. Although President Obama promised to shutter the facility during his first presidential campaign, congressional opposition prevented the closure. Maintaining the base **costs**<sup>112</sup> \$540 million annually.

In the coming decades, policymakers should carefully review whether each of the United States' permanent military installations still serves U.S. interests in the 21st century. Closing bases will warrant coordination with host countries, which may prefer to remain under the American security umbrella. Gradually withdrawing will allow host countries to take charge of their own national defense over time. In some cases, bases that have outlived their usefulness should be closed and personnel should be returned home. Other bases that remain necessary for deterrence



may still be over-resourced.

The United States needs to rethink military relationships that no longer serve U.S. interests. Much like bases, many alliances have transformed from means to specific policy objectives to ends in and of themselves, immune from changing international dynamics and partner governments' abuses alike. In fact, U.S. backing **can**<sup>113</sup> **encourage**<sup>114</sup> foreign leaders to act more recklessly in their foreign policies, and foreign assistance may **facilitate**<sup>115</sup> state violence. The United States should revisit foreign assistance standards to ensure the United States does not exacerbate violations of human rights or international humanitarian law.

One relationship that has failed to evolve with the times is the U.S.-Saudi relationship, which centered on oil politics when it **began**<sup>116</sup> in 1945. Much has changed since then. After the occupation of **Mecca's Great Mosque**<sup>117</sup> by militants in 1979, the Saudi government **became**<sup>118</sup> increasingly theocratic and authoritarian. American consumers once depended on Saudi oil and policymakers **crafted**<sup>119</sup> Middle East policy around energy priorities. However, the United States became a net **exporter**<sup>120</sup> of oil in 2019 and is working towards a transition to renewable energy, decreasing reliance on the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia remains important for global energy prices, but not enough to outweigh the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen, which has **relied**<sup>121</sup> on U.S. military assistance, and the **murder**<sup>122</sup> of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The U.S.-Saudi relationship—along with other long-term alliances that no longer serve U.S. interests—is ripe for a reset.

## The Role of Congress

Making foreign policy reforms that last beyond a single presidency requires congressional initiative. While presidents exercise **broad**<sup>123</sup> **discretion**<sup>124</sup> in how they conduct international affairs, Congress can define the Executive Branch's options by constraining presidents' use of military force, using the power of the

purse, and providing strategic frameworks.

## Restoring Congressional Oversight of War

Congress should hold the Executive Branch accountable by limiting presidential use of force and righting the balance between diplomatic and military tools in the budget.

Congress should repeal the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs. The 2001 AUMF has amounted to a blank check for the global war on terror. Without a sunset provision or reporting requirements, the 2001 AUMF represents an abdication of Congress' constitutionally mandated oversight responsibilities. Congress should also revisit the **2002 AUMF**<sup>125</sup>, which originally authorized the invasion of Iraq but **provides**<sup>126</sup> broad presidential discretion to conduct military actions unrelated to the 2003 war. For example, the Trump administration **resurrected**<sup>127</sup> the Iraq AUMF to authorize the 2020 assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani. Revisiting the AUMFs enjoys **widespread**<sup>128</sup> **support**<sup>129</sup>, including among the original **architects**<sup>130</sup> of the bill. President Joe Biden has also voiced support for repealing the laws. If Congress chooses to pass new AUMFs, it should include a sunset provision to require recurring public debate about the necessity of the use of military force and clearly specify targeted groups, objectives, and reporting requirements.

Repealing the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs would be a promising step, but doing so would not fully reassert Congressional oversight. Many military actions overseas—including drone strikes, special operations, and other gray-zone engagements—utilize legal rationales outside of the AUMFs. The legislature **can**<sup>131</sup> and should explicitly restrain presidential war powers outside of narrow, specific cases of self-defense.

Congress should reduce funding for the Department of Defense. Congress annually considers a National Defense Authorization Act, which funds the military for the upcoming year. Specifically, Congress should cut funds



for expensive programs like the **F-35**<sup>132</sup> and **nuclear modernization**<sup>133</sup>, which do not sufficiently advance policy goals commensurate to their cost. A growing number of members of Congress **support**<sup>134</sup> a relatively modest ten-percent cut to the Pentagon's budget, but rightsizing military spending will be a difficult task due to defense **lobbyists**<sup>135</sup> and **parochial interests**<sup>136</sup>.

### *Putting Diplomacy First*

Congress can play an affirmative role in revitalizing diplomacy and ensuring diplomats are equipped to meet today's challenges.

Legislators can pass laws to push U.S. strategy towards diplomacy. **The Global Fragility Act**<sup>137</sup> is a promising example of shifting away from militarism. Passed in 2019 with bipartisan support, the Global Fragility Act invests in conflict prevention in fragile states to reduce human suffering and political instability. The Act demonstrates how Congress can rally data, collaborate with civil society, and influence the Executive Branch to formulate new approaches. Building on the model of the Global Fragility Act, Congress can provide input for the Executive Branch and steer foreign policy in a more sustainable and effective direction.

Congress should invest in the capacity and adaptability of U.S. diplomatic agencies by **increasing**<sup>138</sup> their funding. Diplomats need budgetary support and specialized training to coordinate international climate action, combat global health disasters, and productively engage with counterparts. **Rebuilding**<sup>139</sup> diplomatic capacity is especially important after the Trump **administration**<sup>140</sup> **gutted**<sup>141</sup> international affairs agencies.

Putting diplomacy first requires **structural reforms**<sup>142</sup> at the Department of State. The Pentagon has dominated the foreign affairs process partly because the **constellation**<sup>143</sup> of civilian agencies that conduct foreign affairs cannot compete with the Department of Defense behemoth. Centralizing foreign affairs

authority would simplify policy processes and allow the Secretary of State to head up a unitary diplomatic agency. The State Department also needs more resources dedicated to long-term strategic planning, which currently falls to the Pentagon. Ending the war on terror will require the State Department reclaiming control of security assistance programs and expanding the department's underfunded **conflict prevention office**<sup>144</sup>.

The U.S. government should also build a more inclusive **international affairs**<sup>145</sup> **workforce**<sup>146</sup> **that**<sup>147</sup> **better**<sup>148</sup> **reflects**<sup>149</sup> the diversity of the United States. Long characterized as "**pale, male, and Yale**<sup>150</sup>," the State Department has become more inclusive in recent decades, but not enough. White men continue to predominate among the senior ranks of the foreign service. Steps to **expand**<sup>151</sup> foreign affairs fellowships and **fund**<sup>152</sup> State Department internships are encouraging but insufficient for the **scale of change**<sup>153</sup> **needed**<sup>154</sup> in recruiting, training, and retention. Congress can play a significant role in making the State Department more inclusive by allocating funding, instituting reporting requirements, and using the Senate's **advice and consent process**<sup>155</sup> to push for appointments of diverse ambassadors and other senior officials. A more representative diplomatic corps will not only make the State Department more agile, effective, and credible, it would also ensure that priorities overseas better reflect the needs and priorities of communities at home.

### **Foreign Policy Ends at Home**

For too long, the United States has overinvested in militarism. Two decades of the global war on terror have left the country ill-equipped to respond to climate change and global health emergencies. To make matters worse, shifting from the global war on terror to war footing with China will make international cooperation all the more difficult.

To advance prosperity for all amid ongoing crises, the United States needs to fundamentally shift its approach to the world. A foreign policy centered on diplomacy is a necessary piece of a broader progressive agenda. For this shift to be sustainable, progressives need to push Congress to restrict the use of military force, offer alternatives to the military-first paradigm, and invest in diplomatic capacity.

A diplomacy-first foreign policy should recognize that our domestic crises are integrally linked to global challenges. American foreign policy inevitably comes back home. The United States has long opted for domination in the international arena and neglected justice, a choice that has begotten police violence, human rights abuses, and white supremacist extremism. Today, though, progressives can commit to a new vision for U.S. foreign policy, a vision that centers diplomacy, solidarity, and cooperation. Progressives can choose to turn away from a system that pours hundreds of billions of dollars each year into state violence and instead repair our relations with the planet and its people. This vision is not optional for a just future. It is a necessity.

---

*John Ramming Chappell is a joint J.D. and M.S. in Foreign Service candidate at Georgetown University, where he focuses on U.S. foreign policy, human rights, and national security law. He holds a B.A. in Arabic and International Studies from the University of Mississippi.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/23/making-u.s.-foreign-policy-work-better-for-middle-class-pub-82728>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/09/10/breaking-voters-still-dont-care-about-foreign-policy/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/10/waters-edge/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/opinion/lyndon-johnson-vietnam-war.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2020-05-28/build-better-blob>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/how-us-foreign-policy-establishment-constrains-american-grand-strategy>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/11/atlantic-council-russia-us-policy-475297>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/book/foreign-policy-begins-home>

<sup>9</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/19/american-racism-foreign-policy-impact/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/23/making-u.s.-foreign-policy-work-better-for-middle-class-pub-82728>

<sup>11</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/18/2020-elections-congress-trump-america-global-standing-anguished-by-americas-decline-more-foreign-policy-wonks-run-for-office/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2020-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-historical>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-08-28/world-economic-inequality>

<sup>16</sup> <https://tnsr.org/2020/12/citizens-suspects-and-enemies-examining-police-militarization/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250171085>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.wired.com/story/pentagon-hand-me-downs-militarize-police-1033-program/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/06/books/review/kathleen-belew-bring-the-war-home.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/blog/transnational-white-supremacist-militancy-thriving-south-africa>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.csis.org/analysis/new-zealand-attack-and-global-challenge-far-right-extremism>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-rights/white-supremacy-a-transnational-threat-u-n-chief-warns-idUSKBN2AM0NX>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/09/coronavirus-american-failure/614191/>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(20\)30182-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30182-1/fulltext)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-cdc-exclusiv/exclusive-u-s-slashed-cdc-staff-inside-china-prior-to-coronavirus-outbreak-idUSKBN21C3N5>

<sup>27</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/ce014d94b64e98b7203b873e56f80e9a>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.salon.com/2021/03/20/welcome-to-the-age-of-modern-monetary-theory-its-turning-conventional-economics-upside-down/>

<sup>29</sup> [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/eisenhower001.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/02/martin-luther-king-hungry-club-forum/552533/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/beyond-vietnam>

<sup>32</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/economic>

<sup>33</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social/rights>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674248663>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6395>

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/house-votes-defense-bill-ndaa-trump-veto/2020/12/07/b872dd72-38c3-11eb-9276-ae0ca72729be\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/house-votes-defense-bill-ndaa-trump-veto/2020/12/07/b872dd72-38c3-11eb-9276-ae0ca72729be_story.html)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.axios.com/defense-spending-by-country-us-china-russia-ddbcdba1-6926-434a-87d4-a8794318f3a6.html>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/terrorism-in-america/what-threat-united-states-today/>

- <sup>40</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/issues/national-security/privacy-and-surveillance/surveillance-under-patriot-act>
- <sup>41</sup> <https://warontherocks.com/2017/12/terrorism-war-terror-look-numbers/>
- <sup>42</sup> <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Declaration-of-Jihad-against-the-Americans-Occupying-the-Land-of-the-Two-Holiest-Sites-Translation.pdf>
- <sup>43</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2013/3/12/iraqs-debaathification-still-haunts-the-country>
- <sup>44</sup> <https://www.usip.org/blog/2020/08/after-isis-genocide-yazidis-need-more-remembrance>
- <sup>45</sup> <https://newlinesmag.com/essays/the-isis-war-crime-iraqi-turkmen-wont-talk-about/>
- <sup>46</sup> <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/iraq/>
- <sup>47</sup> <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/b79-exiles-their-own-country-dealing-displacement-post-isis-iraq>
- <sup>48</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/01/11/invaders-allies-occupiers-guests-brief-history-us-military-involvement-iraq/>
- <sup>49</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-security-parliament/iraqi-parliament-backs-government-push-to-expel-foreign-troops-idUSKBN1Z407Z>
- <sup>50</sup> <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/terrorism-america-18-years-after-911/what-is-the-threat-to-the-united-states/>
- <sup>51</sup> <https://www.kqed.org/science/1971666/california-wildfires-killed-106-people-two-years-ago-researchers-say-the-smoke-killed-3652>
- <sup>52</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/climate-change-is-central-to-californias-wildfires/>
- <sup>53</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/us-coronavirus-death-4000-daily-16c1f136921c7e98ec83289942322ee4>
- <sup>54</sup> <https://www.brown.edu/news/2019-11-13/costsofwar>
- <sup>55</sup> [https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2021/Costs of Counterterrorism in Burkina Faso\\_Costs of War\\_Savell.pdf](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2021/Costs%20of%20Counterterrorism%20in%20Burkina%20Faso_Costs%20of%20War_Savell.pdf)
- <sup>56</sup> <https://www.brown.edu/news/2019-11-13/costsofwar>
- <sup>57</sup> [https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2011/Coping with 911.pdf](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2011/Coping%20with%20911.pdf)
- <sup>58</sup> <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/defining-endless-wars/endless-war-a-term-with-a-history-and-a-definition/>
- <sup>59</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ40/PLAW-107publ40.pdf>
- <sup>60</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/11/11/when-did-congress-authorize-fighting-in-niger-thats-an-excellent-question/>
- <sup>61</sup> <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/aumf-071013.pdf>
- <sup>62</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-strategy/>
- <sup>63</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq>
- <sup>64</sup> <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/false-pretenses/>
- <sup>65</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/03/the-iraq-takeaway-american-ground-invasions-destabilize-the-middle-east/274190/>
- <sup>66</sup> <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/ISIS/Michael-Weiss/9781682450215>
- <sup>67</sup> <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/uncategorized/2-scope-us-forces-involvement-in-endless-mideast-wars/>
- <sup>68</sup> <https://quincyinst.org/2020/03/06/conversation-with-retired-gen-david-h-petraeus/>
- <sup>69</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/climate-change-increases-risk-fires-western-us>
- <sup>70</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/flooding-and-climate-change-everything-you-need-know>
- <sup>71</sup> <https://www.c2es.org/content/hurricanes-and-climate-change/>
- <sup>72</sup> <https://drought.unl.edu/Education/DroughtIn-depth/ClimateChange.aspx>
- <sup>73</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/15/magazine/climate-crisis-migration-america.html>
- <sup>74</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/climate-change-and-disasters.html>
- <sup>75</sup> <https://qz.com/1655268/us-military-is-a-bigger-polluter-than-140-countries-combined/>
- <sup>76</sup> <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/12/interactive-chart-top-emitters>
- <sup>77</sup> <https://www.dataforprogress.org/memos/green-marshall-plan>
- <sup>78</sup> <https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/trade-2020-whats-it-all-about/using-trade-policy-to-fight-climate-change/>
- <sup>79</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK525302/figure/pt5.ch17.sec3.map1/>
- <sup>80</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51235105>
- <sup>81</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/us-population/>
- <sup>82</sup> <https://www.lawfareblog.com/whats-many-coronavirus-related-lawsuits-against-china>
- <sup>83</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/296>
- <sup>84</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-03-19/america-can-and-should-vaccinate-world>
- <sup>85</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/03/10/dont-let-intellectual-property-rights-get-way-global-vaccination/>
- <sup>86</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/atlanta-shooting-political-rhetoric-violence/2021/03/19/f882f8e8-88b9-11eb-8a8b-5cf82c3dffe4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/atlanta-shooting-political-rhetoric-violence/2021/03/19/f882f8e8-88b9-11eb-8a8b-5cf82c3dffe4_story.html)
- <sup>87</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/17/us/politics/huawei-ban.html>
- <sup>88</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037>
- <sup>89</sup> <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/02/state-department-diplomacy-budget-214841/>
- <sup>90</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/06/brass-tone-down-the-ask-for-foreign-aid/>
- <sup>91</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/04/books/review-how-everything-became-war-and-the-military-became-everything.html>
- <sup>92</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/12/04/redefining-our-concept-of-security/>
- <sup>93</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/520326-how-america-should-redefine-its-national-security-after-pandemic>
- <sup>94</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/us/politics/coronavirus-trump-national-security.html>
- <sup>95</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/obamas-worst-mistake-libya/478461/>
- <sup>96</sup> <https://archive.thinkprogress.org/iraq-war-15-year-anniversary-ac6c5461c69e/>
- <sup>97</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>
- <sup>98</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/partnership-among-cities-states-and-the-federal-government-creating-an-office-of-subnational-diplomacy-at-the-us-department-of-state/>
- <sup>99</sup> <https://www.gmfus.org/blog/2021/01/26/it-time-united-states-institutionalize-subnational-diplomacy>



- <sup>100</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/03/06/bernie-sanders-soviet-outreach-wasnt-unusual-it-was-reagan-initiative/>
- <sup>101</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2013/10/californias-sub-national-diplomacy-the-right-approach/>
- <sup>102</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-12-29/cities-are-transforming-us-foreign-policy>
- <sup>103</sup> <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/announcing-progressive-international/>
- <sup>104</sup> <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/costa-rica-living-eden-designing-template-cleaner-carbon-free-world>
- <sup>105</sup> <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/food-waste-sustainability-agriculture-ranking/>
- <sup>106</sup> <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2019/06/19/reparations-truth-and-reconciliation-united-states>
- <sup>107</sup> <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374172145>
- <sup>108</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/05/15/why-the-u-s-base-at-cubas-guantanamo-bay-is-probably-doomed/>
- <sup>109</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/16/us/politics/guantanamo-bay-cost-prison.html>
- <sup>110</sup> <https://defense360.csis.org/bad-idea-permanent-alliances/>
- <sup>111</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/21/opinion/sunday/adapting-to-american-decline.html>
- <sup>112</sup> <https://www.sup.org/books/title?id=30391>
- <sup>113</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/02/10/75-years-after-a-historic-meeting-on-the-uss-quincy-us-saudi-relations-are-in-need-of-a-true-re-think/>
- <sup>114</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-50852379>
- <sup>115</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/saudi-religion-idINKCN1SIOEV>
- <sup>116</sup> <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>
- <sup>117</sup> <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=42735>
- <sup>118</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/16/us/arms-deals-raytheon-yemen.html>
- <sup>119</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45812399>
- <sup>120</sup> <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2014/13-628>
- <sup>121</sup> <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/299us304>
- <sup>122</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ243/PLAW-107publ243.pdf>
- <sup>123</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/19/iraq-war-invasion-repeal-authorization-use-military-force-war-powers-bush-biden/>
- <sup>124</sup> <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/483135-trump-administration-outlines-legal-justification-for-soleimani-strike>
- <sup>125</sup> <https://www.votevets.org/press/strong-opposition-to-iran-war-support-for-complete-repeal-of-2001-aumf-new-joint-poll-from-conservative-progressive-veterans-groups-finds>
- <sup>126</sup> <https://indivisible.org/statement/poll-majority-voters-oppose-war-iran-support-repealing-aumf>
- <sup>127</sup> <https://www.lawfareblog.com/senate-foreign-relations-committee-bipartisan-support-new-aumf>
- <sup>128</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/22/opinion/biden-forever-wars.html>
- <sup>129</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/542412-the-f-35-tells-everything-thats-broken-in-the-pentagon>
- <sup>130</sup> <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/01/06/why-the-us-wastes-billions-on-nuclear-weapons-it-doesnt-need/>
- <sup>131</sup> <https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/markey-sanders-initiative-to-cut-pentagon-budget-by-10-secures-support-of-half-of-us-senate-democratic-caucus>
- <sup>132</sup> <https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2018/12/panel-of-defense-lobbyists-and-revolving-door-doyens-calls-for-more-defense-spending/>
- <sup>133</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/news/2010/11/22/8676/the-coming-battles-over-the-defense-budget/>
- <sup>134</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2116>
- <sup>135</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/16/democrats-state-department-usaid-budget-476237>
- <sup>136</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/how-rebuild-state-department/607837/>
- <sup>137</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/31/how-the-trump-administration-broke-the-state-department/>
- <sup>138</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/11/state-department-empty-ambassador-to-australi/574831/>
- <sup>139</sup> <https://quincyinst.org/report/responsible-statecraft-requires-remaking-americas-foreign-relations-tool-kit/>
- <sup>140</sup> <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacy/what-u-s-government-agencies-work-in-the-u-s-embassies/>
- <sup>141</sup> <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42775.pdf>
- <sup>142</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-477>
- <sup>143</sup> <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/529413-house-democrats-introduce-bill-to-address-diversity-at-state-department>
- <sup>144</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/24/state-department-diversity-racial-ethnic-minorities-recruitment-government-accountability/>
- <sup>145</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/16/state-department-diversity-problem-476161>
- <sup>146</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/can-state-department-bring-more-diversity-us-diplomatic-corps>
- <sup>147</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/27/us/politics/a-reckoning-with-race-to-ensure-diversity-for-americas-face-abroad.html>
- <sup>148</sup> <https://newsroom.howard.edu/newsroom/article/article/13316/howard-university-partners-us>
- <sup>149</sup> <https://castro.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/castro-reintroduces-bipartisan-bill-to-pay-state-department-interns>
- <sup>150</sup> <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/us-diplomatic-service-21st-century>
- <sup>151</sup> [https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/csr89\\_final.pdf](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/csr89_final.pdf)
- <sup>152</sup> [https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Origins\\_AdviceConsent.htm](https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Origins_AdviceConsent.htm)

# **Politics and Social Movements**



# Capitol Rioters Have Not Lost Control

*Morgan Pratt*

The events of January 6th were extremely disturbing. A mob of white supremacists, **egged on**<sup>1</sup> by President Trump and dozens of Republican lawmakers, **stormed Congress and multiple state capitals**<sup>2</sup> in a coordinated attempt to overturn the election results. But the real danger of this event lies in our response to it; many of the emerging narratives about the event will not prepare us to deal with future events like this. Particularly dangerous are suggestions to **increase funding for Capitol Police**<sup>3</sup>, pass a **new domestic anti-terrorism bill**<sup>4</sup>, or heal the divide with **bipartisanship and unity**<sup>5</sup>. With more **pro-Trump actions planned**<sup>6</sup> before Joe Biden's inauguration, it is crucial we address the real shortcomings of Capitol Police: their sympathy towards and involvement in white supremacy.

First, let us tackle the narrative that the coup attempt got as far as it did because there were not enough police and that they need more funding to prevent future attacks. Washington, D.C. is the **most policed metro area**<sup>7</sup> in the country. The Capitol Police alone, with a staff of 2,300, has a budget of **\$460 million**<sup>8</sup>—nearly half what D.C. spends on public education. Further, police at the event were seen **opening gates**<sup>9</sup> to let the mob in, **directed rioters**<sup>10</sup> to Chuck Schumer's office, **denied backup**<sup>11</sup> from the National Guard six times, **posed for selfies**<sup>12</sup>, and even **participated in the riot**<sup>13</sup> on their day off.

What makes more sense is that police have a **long history**<sup>14</sup> of sympathy toward and involvement in white supremacy. Policing in the United States South started as **slave patrols**<sup>15</sup>, only later expanding to include protection of private property. From there, police functioned to **return fugitive slaves**<sup>16</sup> in the North, **enforce Jim Crow and segregation**<sup>17</sup>, **suppress the Civil Rights movement**<sup>18</sup>, **infiltrate and dismantle**<sup>19</sup> social justice

organizations, and **disproportionately arrest and murder**<sup>20</sup> people of color. Indeed, this ideology has changed little up to the present, with **widespread infiltration**<sup>21</sup> of the police force by white supremacist groups and up to **84 percent of police officer**<sup>22</sup> support for President Trump. This ideological alignment is evident through the contrast in brutality with which police handled the **almost exclusively peaceful**<sup>23</sup> George Floyd civil rights protests and their reactionary, often armed white supremacist counter-protests.

In short, it is very difficult for police to see the types of people who stormed the Capitol as enemies or criminals. Increasing Capitol Police funding does not address the root of the problem and will only increase the contact police have with oppressed groups, contact that is **often harmful**<sup>24</sup>. To better secure our capital we need to investigate and dismantle the ties between state security forces and white supremacy.

Second, let us unpack the idea that these were terrorists and what we need is a new domestic anti-terrorism bill. Many have pointed out that the term terrorism **has racialized origins**<sup>25</sup> intended to reinforce the domination of people of color; expanding the usage of this term to include white supremacist violence is unhelpful at best and **seriously harmful at worst**<sup>26</sup>. We already have a word to describe people who enact violence in the name of white supremacy: Nazis. Many who were present **explicitly identified this way**<sup>27</sup>. Plus, one could argue these rioters were not acting against the interests of the state, as terrorism implies, but rather trying to preserve it, since they were acting at the behest of the president and elected officials.

Further, using this event to pass another domestic anti-terrorism bill, as **Biden suggested**<sup>28</sup> the day after the coup attempt, is problematic because this would expand and deepen domestic surveillance. As mentioned earlier, the government has a long history of using domestic surveillance to crush social justice movements. Government surveillance and intelligence agencies also frequently **target**<sup>29</sup> and **exploit minority groups**<sup>30</sup>; many of the anti-ISIS cases prosecuted in the United States were concocted, facilitated, and funded by the FBI to entrap young Black men, many of whom were mentally ill and were **coached on a violent interpretation of Islam**<sup>31</sup> by the FBI itself. Previous anti-terrorism measures **criminalized tens of thousands**<sup>32</sup> of innocent people in America, mostly Muslims. This on top of the troubling implications more surveillance has on the constant erosion of everyone's privacy.

Expanding and deepening the national security apparatus will not neutralize the threat of white supremacist violence but instead hand it to the state. What we need to do instead is target and dismantle white supremacist organizations while critically reconfiguring the role government agencies have in this process.

Finally, we need to stop conflating accountability with the **cries for bipartisanship**<sup>33</sup> from disgraced members of the Republican party. Almost 150 of them—including two-thirds of all House Republicans—voted to discredit the election results after the coup attempt, the culmination of a **years-long**<sup>34</sup> process of sowing doubt in elections that Democrats win. To call for unity without accountability is to bring these anti-democratic behaviors into the fold, to legitimize them. Nothing could be more dangerous. Accountability means taking responsibility for the violence these anti-democratic actions provoke.

An analogous event that might shed light on our situation is the 1898 **coup in Wilmington**<sup>35</sup>, North Carolina. Just after election day, a mob of hundreds of white supremacists, led by a

congressman, killed at least 60, burned down the nation's only Black daily newspaper, forced prominent Black residents out, and overthrew the biracial local government. Instead of standing up to this violence, North Carolina conceded to it. The event was **deemed a "race riot"**<sup>36</sup> instigated by the Black residents, and the white rioters were cast as heroes until the 1990s. Charles Aycock, an agitator of the riots, was elected as governor of NC just three years later **on a platform of white supremacy**<sup>37</sup>, replacing a pro-Black Fusionist government. A building on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus was named after him until June, 2020.

To overcome what started on January 6th, we need to start by naming clearly what happened and why: white supremacists stormed the Capitol because Republicans told them they could change the results of the election. They got in and largely avoided severe treatment because police sympathized with their cause and let them through. This will happen again because neither of the previous two conditions have changed.

To prevent future events like this, we need those responsible for instigating this violence to be held accountable, and we need to confront the white supremacy that lies at the roots of our nation's security agencies and police. We need to kick all of the rioters out of the Capitol.

---

*Morgan is an MPP candidate on a leave of absence to engage with grassroots organizing around climate change and progressive policy. Morgan has previously worked in diplomacy, refugee advocacy, and as an elementary school teacher.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/06/politics/donald-trump-capitol-mob/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2021/1/6/22217736/state-capitol-stop-the-steal-protests-rallies>

- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.rollcall.com/2021/01/08/capitol-police-overhauls-once-an-afterthought-now-at-the-forefront-after-riot/>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-says-mob-that-stormed-capitol-were-domestic-terrorists-11610046962>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/national-international/biden-capitol-riot-opportunity-for-bipartisan-unity/2502447/>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/congress-electoral-college-tally-live-updates/2021/01/09/955289141/as-inauguration-nears-concern-grows-of-more-violence-to-come>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/verify/verify-does-dc-have-more-police-per-capita-than-any-other-us-city/65-9fae328a-5da3-4e0f-8e54-009f48b97b57>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.uscp.gov/media-center/uscp-fast-facts>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2021/1/6/2006489/-D-C-Capitol-Police-Appear-To-Have-Opened-Gates-To-Mob-Not-Good>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/us/names-of-rioters-capitol.html>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/11/955548910/ex-capitol-police-chief-rebuffs-claims-national-guard-was-never-called-during-ri>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/us-news/fury-capitol-policeman-caught-posing-23274676>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-police-investigation/off-duty-police-firefighters-under-investigation-in-connection-with-u-s-capitol-riot-idUSKBN29F0KH>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/hidden-plain-sight-racism-white-supremacy-and-far-right-militancy-law>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://theconversation.com/the-racist-roots-of-american-policing-from-slave-patrols-to-traffic-stops-112816>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fugitive-slave-acts>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws>
- <sup>18</sup> <https://origins.osu.edu/article/policing-police-civil-rights-story>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.concordmonitor.com/Fred-Hampton-and-the-Chicago-police-31258086>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2020-06-03/data-show-deaths-from-police-violence-disproportionately-affect-people-of-color>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.justsecurity.org/70507/white-supremacist-infiltration-of-us-police-forces-fact-checking-national-security-advisor-obrien/>
- <sup>22</sup> <https://www.policemag.com/342098/the-2016-police-presidential-poll>
- <sup>23</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/us/blm-protests-peaceful-report-trnd/index.html>
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/04/justice/capitol-hill-shooting-protocol/index.html>
- <sup>25</sup> <https://philaprint.wordpress.com/2017/10/16/theirs-and-ours-terrorisms-inclusivity-argument/>
- <sup>26</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/01/10/capitol-invasion-terrorism-enforcement/>
- <sup>27</sup> <https://twitter.com/rafaelshimunov/status/1346963410966048768>
- <sup>28</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-says-mob-that-stormed-capitol-were-domestic-terrorists-11610046962>
- <sup>29</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2019/10/29/fbi-surveillance-black-activists/>
- <sup>30</sup> <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2020/08/19/the-fbi-has-a-racism-problem-and-it-hurts-our-national-security/>
- <sup>31</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/12/newburgh-four-fbi-entrapment-terror>
- <sup>32</sup> <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2015/03/proposed-terrorist-registry-could-list-tens-of-thousands-of-new-yorkers-020274>
- <sup>33</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/sarahmimms/republicans-object-biden-win-unity-capitol-attack>
- <sup>34</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38126438>
- <sup>35</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/04/us/04wilmington.html?auth=login-email&login=email>
- <sup>36</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/wilmington-massacre/536457/>
- <sup>37</sup> <https://historyandrace.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1091/2020/11/Aycock-brief-final.pdf>

# The “Post-Truth” Theory of Trumpism is a Comforting Fantasy

Billy Ostermeyer

There has been no shortage of writing about January’s sad raid on the U.S. Capitol Building, some of it **excellent**<sup>1</sup>. In accordance with the post-9/11 American intellectual tradition, however, most American writers and pundits have struggled to interpret both the event’s causes and its meaning. Never to be outdone in their eagerness to misunderstand, the New York Times op-ed team published **an early reaction**<sup>2</sup> to the riot by Yale historian and pundit Timothy Snyder:

*Post-truth is pre-fascism, and Trump has been our post-truth president. When we give up on truth, we concede power to those with the wealth and charisma to create spectacle in its place. Without agreement about some basic facts, citizens cannot form the civil society that would allow them to defend themselves. If we lose the institutions that produce facts that are pertinent to us, then we tend to wallow in attractive abstractions and fictions.*

Much of the initial speculation about the nature of the insurrection feels more premature with **each new revelation**<sup>3</sup> about the event, but the facile assumptions underpinning Snyder’s argument were immediately apparent.

If the United States is living in a post-truth era, then there was, by implication, a time in America when our politics, culture, economy, and society valued and reflected truth rather than ideology, narrative, **superstition**<sup>4</sup>, and **denial**<sup>5</sup>. There is little evidence for that assumption, and mounds of evidence against it. Indeed, it is by no means apparent that a political body can ever act and think in accordance with a worldview that is objectively true. Whether or not people can comprehend truth is **a profound**<sup>6</sup> and difficult question,

and even a thoughtful person who believes that **“the fundamental truth about reality” is knowable**<sup>7</sup> would have difficulty extracting from that belief a case for the possibility of a democratic state whose collective narratives are objectively true. This is to say nothing of the extent to which facts, examined carelessly or manipulated disingenuously, can **obscure our picture of the truth**<sup>8</sup>.

It is possible that Snyder is really bemoaning the end of political consensus in America, but a return to the pre-Recession free-market consensus will not un-ring the bell of Trumpism. Even when it existed, the Clinton-Bush era D.C. consensus (i.e., on criminal justice, foreign policy, labor, corporate deregulation, etc.) was not enough to satisfy the Republican party, which was shrill, outraged, and power hungry throughout the Clinton presidency. That conservative appetite for power has surely done more to create Trumpism and the fascist propaganda system that supports it than some decline of “institutions that produce facts” (although the Times’ eagerness to publish inane explanations of complicated events is but one indicator that it may be a **fact-producing institution in decline**<sup>9</sup>).

Professor Snyder has the order of events reversed. Indifference to verifiable facts does not lead to a desire for authoritarian power any more than rain begets clouds. The right information or facts will not cause Trumpists to abandon their faction and renounce white power. Given access to irrefutable evidence of certain events (namely, that Joe Biden’s election was legitimate), a handful of Trumpists **might change their minds**<sup>10</sup> about those specific events. For the majority of Trumpists, however, exposure to facts that contradict their misconceptions will



not cause them to break with “America’s first white president.”<sup>11</sup>

A more plausible theory of the relationship between Trumpism, ideology, and reality is that many, if not most, Trumpists have not thought very carefully at all about who won the presidential election. Instead, the Trumpists at the Capitol construct their worldview on an ideological foundation that rejects the validity of democracy altogether. Regardless of the vote count, Donald Trump cannot have lost the election because he is the modern guardian of white supremacy, and his downfall cannot be legitimate because he represents the only legitimate ideology. One rioter may have had this narrative in mind when she exclaimed to the press that law enforcement is “supposed to shoot BLM, but they’re shooting the patriots.”

It is a dubious claim that sedition is ever entirely the product of deficient information or pure disregard for the right facts. Sedition, fascism, wars of aggression<sup>12</sup>, and societal collapse are almost always buttressed by factual errors<sup>13</sup> but rarely (if ever) exclusively caused by them<sup>14</sup>. These phenomena have more to do with collective narratives that recharacterize collapse as progress or justice (at least for the proponents and agents of that collapse). Regardless of cause, the agents of societal collapse do not act only because they are simply stupid or because they lack facts. To believe that the ideals of Trumpism stem primarily from a lack of knowledge is to believe that Trumpists can be easily rehabilitated. Both notions are false, and will enable the continued impunity of the neo-Confederate and American fascist movements (insofar as those can even be considered distinct entities<sup>15</sup>).

The neo-Confederate aspirations of the pro-Trump faction cannot be countered with mere facts. To a Trumpist, the Biden presidency is an attack on the neo-Confederate project in America. They believe that their white caste alone is entitled to rule this country. Joe Biden is a white man who, as vice president, agreed to subordinate himself to a Black man. Trumpists simply do not accept the legitimacy of that arrangement. The only true political

order is a theocracy of whiteness. Donald Trump cannot lose because democracy does not deserve to exist.

*Billy Ostermeyer is an editor at the Progressive Policy Review and an MPP candidate at the Harvard Kennedy School. His professional interests include international security & defense policy, countering hate groups & the global far-right, and veterans issues. He is a graduate of Claremont McKenna College and a veteran of the United States Army.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/lost-lost-causes/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/magazine/trump-coup.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/01/25/aoc-garret-miller-capitol-riot/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/07/27/tom-cotton-1619-project-slavery/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/01/denial-heartbeat-america/617631/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2018/8/14/17661430/trump-post-truth-politics-philosophy-simon-blackburn>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/may/31/the-ashtray-by-errol-morris-review>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1971/11/18/lying-in-politics-reflections-on-the-pentagon-pape/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/dec/18/new-york-times-made-serious-editorial-failings-over-caliphate-podcast>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2021/1/6/22218031/trump-supporter-cspan-president-lied>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/the-first-white-president-ta-nehisi-coates/537909/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq>

<sup>13</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20071210152158/http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20060301faessay85202-p0/paul-r-pillar/intelligence-policy-and-the-war-in-iraq.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2016/2/16/11022104/iraq-war-neoconservatives>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/americas/2021/01/05/how-the-insurgent-and-maga-right-are-being-welded-together-on-the-streets-of-washington-d-c/>



# The Receipts: Pete Buttigieg's Policies Fail LGBTQ+ Communities

Morgan Pratt

In the spirit of welcoming the Class of 2021's commencement speaker<sup>1</sup>, I thought it would be valuable to start an honest conversation on who we are inviting to influence our community. Pete Buttigieg's main claims to fame are his spotty<sup>2</sup> record<sup>3</sup> as<sup>4</sup> mayor<sup>5</sup> of South<sup>7</sup> Bend<sup>8</sup> and his "groundbreaking" 2020 campaign where, in spite of a resume<sup>9</sup> that looked more like that of an IOP fellow than a competitive candidate, he was moderately<sup>10</sup> successful<sup>11</sup> and laid the foundation for high hopes in 2024<sup>12</sup>.

Though his 2020 presidential campaign centered<sup>13</sup> his potential to be a huge milestone for the LGBTQ+ rights movement, his tenure in South Bend and a close look at his platform indicate that, substantively, it wouldn't be. We need to bring the focus back to how Buttigieg's policies harm the LGBTQ+ community and discuss the limitations of assimilation politics.

## Health

Perhaps Buttigieg's most harmful flagship proposal is his infamous "Medicare for all who want it"<sup>14</sup>. The plan fails the LGBTQ+ community on multiple fronts: it preserves private insurance, still leaves many uninsured<sup>15</sup>, and largely omits the major reforms needed to address the LGBTQ+ community's unmet health needs.

First, private insurance companies have a long<sup>16</sup> and ongoing<sup>17</sup> history of discrimination<sup>18</sup> against LGBTQ+ individuals. For example, gender affirmation procedures, like hormone therapy and breast reconstruction surgery, are often covered by insurance for cisgender people, but considered elective<sup>19</sup> or heavily restricted<sup>20</sup>—and therefore often unattainable—for transgender or gender non-

conforming (GNC) people. Maintaining private insurance allows the private sector to continue to regulate and police what gender-affirming health care transgender and GNC people can access. Alternatively, a public healthcare system has the distinct potential to mandate non-discrimination<sup>21</sup>.

Next, "Medicare for all who want it" keeps many uninsured by design; the continued existence of uninsured people was acknowledged and accounted for<sup>22</sup> in his platform. This should alarm us, because we already know uninsured Americans are disproportionately LGBTQ+<sup>23</sup>. Health coverage must be universal or explicitly account for structural issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community to address this disparity. Buttigieg's health care proposal makes no mention of LGBTQ+ health care needs nor provisions to improve outcomes for the community. In other words, not only would Buttigieg's plan keep many LGBTQ+ people uninsured, it would keep LGBTQ+ people uninsured at a disproportionately high rate.

Finally, Buttigieg's biggest oversight is avoiding any of the major systemic changes necessary to improve the system for everyone, especially the LGBTQ+ community. Even if his plan ended discrimination (which it wouldn't) and insured everyone (which it wouldn't), it would still not address skyrocketing health costs<sup>24</sup>, corruption<sup>25</sup>, or the problems<sup>26</sup> inherent<sup>27</sup> to<sup>28</sup> employer-sponsored health care. Where universal programs are designed to meet all mental health needs<sup>29</sup>—something that particularly affects<sup>30</sup> the LGBTQ+ community—Buttigieg's goal was to meet just 75 percent<sup>31</sup> of those needs.

Buttigieg's reticence to address these fundamental issues makes sense in light of the **massive support**<sup>31</sup> he has received from the pharmaceutical and health insurance industries. His health care proposals indicate a choice made between fighting for equity and **taking corporate money**<sup>32</sup> to advance his career, a choice that is reflective of the type of President he would be.

## Criminal Justice Reform

Criminal justice reform is another **key issue**<sup>33</sup> within the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ people (and spaces) are often criminalized, over policed, and imprisoned at high rates, which particularly harms Black trans women. Buttigieg's presidential campaign and his record as the mayor of South Bend are both alarming in this arena.

Activists **famously criticized**<sup>34</sup> Buttigieg's response when a South Bend police officer shot and killed Eric Jack Logan, a 54-year-old Black man. The **officer was never punished**<sup>35</sup>. He also **faced criticism**<sup>36</sup> for ousting the city's first Black police chief (within months of the city's **two other prominent Black officials**<sup>37</sup> losing their jobs) after recordings of white officers making racist remarks came to light. These are not isolated incidents; evidence of **racism**<sup>38</sup>, **sexism**<sup>39</sup>, and **corruption**<sup>40</sup> in South Bend's police force under Buttigieg's watch is **extensive**<sup>41</sup>. Stephanie Jones, the mother of a **16-year-old Black child**<sup>42</sup> who was hanged in South Bend, asked Buttigieg to investigate her child's death. He instead appointed the coroner—who ruled the death a suicide with no investigation—interim police chief, replacing the Black police chief he had just ousted. At nearly every opportunity, Buttigieg chose to sweep his police department's problems under the rug to avoid the political consequences that reform entails.

His plans for criminal justice reform leave no reason to believe he would act differently at a national scale. Most of Buttigieg's criminal justice reform proposals are part of his **Douglass Plan**<sup>43</sup>, his campaign's attempt

to court Black voters—which he used to **misrepresent his support**<sup>44</sup> from prominent Black leaders. This plan includes calls to raise police budgets, a **stock photo of a family in Kenya**<sup>45</sup>, typos, and efforts to **center police**<sup>46</sup> in even more aspects of social life, **contact that is often harmful**<sup>47</sup> to LGBTQ+ individuals. Noticeably absent are plans to restore voting rights for incarcerated people, end cash bail, redistribute funds from police budgets to social support systems, or end mass incarceration. There is no mention of LGBTQ+ people or issues in this document either. Far from reform, a President Buttigieg would mean more police officers with more money with the exact same mandate: to criminalize, incarcerate, and over-police LGBTQ+ people, especially Black trans women.

## Housing

LGBTQ+ people are much **more likely to experience homelessness**<sup>48</sup>, and there are currently **no protection from discrimination**<sup>49</sup> in federal public housing programs. Around **30 percent of youth**<sup>50</sup> experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+ , nearly **one-third of all transgender people**<sup>51</sup> have experienced homelessness, 12 percent of transgender people report being **evicted due to their gender**<sup>52</sup>, and many homeless shelters and organizations **do not accept LGBTQ+ people**<sup>53</sup>. Not only does Buttigieg have no plans to fix this, his record in South Bend indicates he is eager to make housing problems worse.

As mayor, Buttigieg **tore down housing**<sup>54</sup> in the predominantly Black and Latinx parts of South Bend, oversaw an **increase in people experiencing homelessness**<sup>55</sup>, doubled the **eviction rate**<sup>56</sup>, added **new and arbitrary**<sup>57</sup> home maintenance fines targeting poor communities, oversaw rent increases at **double the national rate**<sup>58</sup>, cleared out **the city's largest homeless encampment**<sup>59</sup> (enforced by **spraying and security cameras**<sup>60</sup>), and **criminalized panhandling**<sup>61</sup>. To make the motivation painfully obvious, these actions came amid a backdrop of a **multi-million dollar tax abatement**<sup>62</sup> for a downtown

office building, exacerbating **gentrification**<sup>63</sup>, **subsidizing luxury apartments**<sup>64</sup>, **sale of public**<sup>65</sup> park land, and **inaction on suggestions**<sup>66</sup> from a working group on homelessness that he assembled himself. In other words, Buttigieg is aware of the consequences of urban planning policy, he was just more focused on creating an “up-and-coming” city than addressing social issues. And as for his platform you guessed it: **no mention**<sup>67</sup> of LGBTQ+ people or issues they face when discussing housing issues.

## Economic Justice

Because LGBTQ+ people are more likely to **live in poverty**<sup>68</sup>, **work for minimum wage**<sup>69</sup>, and **experience wage theft**<sup>70</sup>, economic reforms are critical to any policy response to LGBTQ+ issues.

Though Buttigieg’s platform contains some genuinely good proposals such as **raising the minimum wage to \$15**<sup>71</sup> and supporting the **PRO Act**<sup>72</sup>, many standard progressive proposals are absent and his complete plan falls short of true economic justice. For example, Buttigieg was silent on **breaking up big banks**<sup>73</sup> and **tax loopholes**<sup>74</sup>, did not support **cancelling 99 percent of student debt**<sup>75</sup>, wanted to raise the top marginal tax rate by **just 8 percentage points**<sup>76</sup>, was weak on **financial transactions taxes**<sup>77</sup>, avoided powerful tools like price controls, and often **promoted austerity**<sup>78</sup>. Further, as a **deficit hawk**<sup>79</sup>, Buttigieg repeats **common misconceptions**<sup>80</sup> about the limitations of governance, playing into the idea that artificial spending caps should shape policies (but only when they help poor and middle class people). Given Buttigieg’s **unmatched support from billionaires**<sup>81</sup>, it is hard to know whether he would fully deliver on even his more moderate proposals as President. As Transportation Secretary, he has already suggested taxing drivers per mile to mitigate emissions, something **known to disproportionately affect poor**<sup>82</sup> and working class people, before **backtracking after criticism**<sup>83</sup>.

During his tenure in South Bend, Buttigieg

also failed to remedy the **substantial racial wealth gap**<sup>84</sup> in South Bend, **massive racial disparities**<sup>85</sup> in home loan awards, and oversaw **no progress**<sup>86</sup> in top-line economic indicators such as income per capita. In fact, his economic priorities when running for mayor seemed to focus on the opposite end of the economic spectrum: “to grow jobs by simplifying business processes, to set up a 311 line for customer service, and to deal with the hundreds of boarded-up vacant homes in our neighborhoods” (to make way for new development). Buttigieg did once **claim**<sup>87</sup> to have cut South Bend’s Black poverty rate in half, but more accurate data shows the rate fell by about 6 percent, **significantly slower**<sup>88</sup> than the national rate during that time period. Buttigieg’s **more than 40 billionaire donors**<sup>89</sup> or **lobbyist fundraisers**<sup>90</sup> may have influenced his stance on economic issues. However, in his pre-campaign book, *Shortest Way Home*, Buttigieg **never mentions the economic issues**<sup>91</sup> facing residents of South Bend (despite a quarter of them being poor), and **vividly recounts avoiding**<sup>92</sup> an on-campus labor protest at Harvard in favor of the IOP’s pizza and politics, so economic justice may simply have never been his focus. Once again, his economic agenda **did**<sup>93</sup> **not**<sup>94</sup> **mention**<sup>95</sup> LGBTQ+ people.

## Immigration

Immigration is another arena in which the state disproportionately harms the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ immigrants are **more likely to be deported**<sup>96</sup>, more likely to **experience hate violence**<sup>97</sup>, **97 times more likely**<sup>98</sup> to experience sexual assault in immigration detention, and to experience a **host of other immigration-related issues**<sup>99</sup>. Buttigieg’s **platform on immigration**<sup>100</sup> does not mention any of this. Instead, it advocates for slow, piecemeal solutions that only help the most “worthy.” He wanted crossing the border to **remain illegal**<sup>101</sup> (and therefore a deportable offense), **opposed abolishing ICE**<sup>102</sup>, remained open to **extending the border wall**<sup>103</sup>, and proposed **spending \$1-2 billion**<sup>104</sup> on increasing border security technology.

As mayor, Buttigieg **did not**<sup>105</sup> make South Bend a sanctuary city, unlike nearby **Gary, Indiana**<sup>106</sup>. Given his collectively moderate stances and record, it is hard to believe that Buttigieg would be progressive, and therefore pro-LGBTQ+, on immigration

## Assimilation Politics

All-in-all, Buttigieg's policy platform and record make clear that he is more concerned with white, wealthy, cisgender gay men being able to join the ranks of the oppressor than tearing down systems of oppression. Buttigieg wants military service to be open to all and **mandatory**<sup>107</sup>, not end US aggression overseas. Buttigieg wants to extend the criminal justice system through **adding more hate crime legislation**<sup>108</sup>, not end the criminalization of the LGBTQ+ community. Buttigieg wants to make sure no powerful man is fired for being gay, not end poverty, homelessness, and joblessness that disproportionately affects the LGBTQ+ community. Buttigieg wants a country where LGBTQ+ people can get 75% of the mental health care they need, not a country where LGBTQ+ people are free from the discrimination and oppression that leads to these needs.

Unlike Buttigieg, the LGBTQ+ rights movement does not advocate for inclusion into an unjust world, but for creating a just one. In politics, this means acknowledging your queerness and using it to shape your leadership instead of **covering it**<sup>109</sup>. Not only does Buttigieg's policy platform fail to address the root causes of LGBTQ+ issues, it fails to integrate the LGBTQ+ community's needs, instead compartmentalizing them into a separate section. Buttigieg **has said**<sup>110</sup> (and **many agree**<sup>111</sup>) that we have probably already had a gay president. For a presidential milestone to be meaningful, we need a president who fully supports the LGBTQ+ community and all its needs. Pete Buttigieg does not fit the bill.

*Morgan is an MPP candidate on a leave of absence to engage with grassroots organizing around climate change and progressive policy. Morgan has previously worked in diplomacy, refugee advocacy, and as an elementary school teacher.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/announcements/us-secretary-transportation-pete-buttigieg-deliver-2021-graduation-address-harvard>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/22/south-bend-poor-say-democrat-pete-buttigieg-left-them-behind.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/south-bend-councilman-accuses-pete-buttigieg-perpetuating-systematic-racism-mayor-he-lied-1486429>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/03/pete-buttigieg-on-police-controversy-said-all-lives-matter-in-2015.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2019/11/26/pete-buttigieg-south-bend-marijuana-arrests/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/pete-buttigieg-s-unfinished-business-south-bend-could-come-back-n1106026>

<sup>7</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/03c58d5429448bfb78cfb76fe682d24>

<sup>8</sup> <https://americarisingspac.org/south-bend-suffered-pothole-crisis-under-mayor-pete-buttigieg/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/12/pete-buttigieg-mckinsey/603421/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/buttigiegs-centrist-pivot-may-be-winning-him-a-new-base/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/iowa-caucus-pete-buttigieg-claims-victory-bernie-sanders-949544/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.axios.com/2024-election-poll-democrats-d9007292-27a0-487b-994c-f1555bb7816f.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/12/opinion/sunday/the-first-gay-president.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20200226065902/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/health-care/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://newrepublic.com/article/155130/pete-buttigiegs-health-care-plan-worst-yet>

<sup>16</sup> <https://lithub.com/the-gay-activists-who-fought-the-american-psychiatric-establishment/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/social-justice/blue-cross-illinois-affiliate-sued-over-gender-surgery-exclusion>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/03/12/701510605/fresh-challenges-to-state-exclusions-on-transgender-health-coverage>

<sup>20</sup> <https://transhealthproject.org/resources/health-insurance-medical-policies/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://berniesanders.com/issues/lgbtq-equality/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20200226065902/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/health-care/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-lgbt-employment-insurance-idINKBN1KG36V>

<sup>24</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2770949>



<sup>25</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32527-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32527-9/fulltext)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.thetaskforce.org/transgender-workers-at-greater-risk-for-unemployment-and-poverty/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2020/05/05/484547/sex-couples-experience-higher-unemployment-rates-throughout-economic-recovery/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.kff.org/private-insurance/issue-brief/access-to-employer-sponsored-health-coverage-for-same-sex-spouses-2020-update/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.mentalhealthforus.net/candidate/senator-bernie-sanders/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.healthpartners.com/blog/mental-health-in-the-lgbtq-community/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226065845/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/mental-health-and-addiction/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://readsludge.com/2019/10/18/as-he-attacks-medicare-for-all-mayor-pete-gets-campaign-cash-from-health-care-executives/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2020/02/17/buttigieg-wall-street-democrat-beholden-corporate-interests>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/five-reasons-mass-incarceration-queer-issue>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2019/06/22/pete-buttigieg-asked-black-lives-matter-during-heated-protest-racism-racist-2020-presidential-race/1535958001/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.fox23.com/news/trending/ex-south-bend-officer-cleared-2019-police-shooting-charged-with-soliciting-prostitute/DO3VWKTQYBBYLM3UDUEUWCOPM/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/23/politics/south-bend-tapes-ruling/index.html>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.theroot.com/mayor-pete-s-invisible-black-police-1840727624>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/30/us/politics/pete-buttigieg-south-bend-police.html>

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/publicsafety/south-bend-cop-who-claimed-sex-discrimination-faces-suspension/article\\_8a91ac2e-ec44-11e5-bdfd-33034965e717.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/publicsafety/south-bend-cop-who-claimed-sex-discrimination-faces-suspension/article_8a91ac2e-ec44-11e5-bdfd-33034965e717.html)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/addybaird/mayor-pete-buttigieg-police-shooting-fire>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.theroot.com/mayor-pete-s-invisible-black-police-1840727624>

<sup>43</sup> <https://tyt.com/stories/4vZLCHuQrYE4uKagy0oyMA/5iMSC8eiu3XG1HVYHEVv5>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/douglass-plan.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2019/11/15/pete-buttigieg-campaign-black-voters/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/11/18/pete-buttigieg-black-american-douglass-plan-kenyan-photo/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://filtermag.org/lead-program-police/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://level.medium.com/the-queer-and-trans-fight-for-liberation-and-abolition-caec82374018>

<sup>49</sup> <https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/LGBTQ-Homelessness.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fair-and-equal-housing-act>

<sup>51</sup> <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/serving-our-youth-lgbtq/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> <https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/housing-and-homeless-shelters>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/henrygomez/mayor-pete-buttigieg-south-bend-gentrification>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/what-pete-buttigieg-has-and-hasnt-done-about-homelessness-in-south-bend>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.abc57.com/news/abc57-investigates-south-bend-eviction-rate-3-times-the-national-average->

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/henrygomez/mayor-pete-buttigieg-south-bend-gentrification>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/what-pete-buttigieg-has-and-hasnt-done-about-homelessness-in-south-bend>

<sup>60</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/city-homeless-must-vacate-south-bend-viaduct/article\\_5d3c4c86-cf0c-56a8-a15d-237b2166fc7b.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/city-homeless-must-vacate-south-bend-viaduct/article_5d3c4c86-cf0c-56a8-a15d-237b2166fc7b.html)

<sup>61</sup> <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/06/mayor-petes-war-on-the-homeless>

<sup>62</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/panhandling-in-downtown-south-bend-s-crosshairs/article\\_8b258230-2caa-5b34-b059-f93401d8f94c.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/panhandling-in-downtown-south-bend-s-crosshairs/article_8b258230-2caa-5b34-b059-f93401d8f94c.html)

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/barnesthornburg-moving-to-planned-downtown-south-bend-building/article\\_62cdde33-c387-5bc1-b12a-4e583361e96b.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/barnesthornburg-moving-to-planned-downtown-south-bend-building/article_62cdde33-c387-5bc1-b12a-4e583361e96b.html)

<sup>64</sup> <https://connordemill.wordpress.com/2017/05/03/gentrification-in-south-bend/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/Downtown-apartments-booming-in-South-Bend-18288642>

<sup>66</sup> <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/06/mayor-petes-war-on-the-homeless>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/what-pete-buttigieg-has-and-hasnt-done-about-homelessness-in-south-bend>

<sup>68</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226064208/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/housing/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2012/04/16/11494/the-gay-and-transgender-wage-gap/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2019/7/17/why-raising-minimum-wage-critical-lgbtq-issue>

<sup>71</sup> <https://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/03/CSTT-HT-Final-Report-3.26.19.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/pete-buttigieg-confronted-at-mcdonalds-fight-15-march-2020-2>

<sup>73</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226055955/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/empower-workers/>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.politico.com/2020-election/candidates-views-on-the-issues/economy/big-banks/>

<sup>75</sup> <https://atfactionfund.org/presidentialtaxplans/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.sofi.com/blog/pete-buttigieg-on-student-debt/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://atfactionfund.org/presidentialtaxplans/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://atfactionfund.org/presidentialtaxplans/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://prospect.org/politics/austerity-pete-buttigieg-deficit-economic-policy/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/pete-buttigieg-calls-deficit-reduction-swiping-bernie-sanders-n1133206>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/4/16/18251646/modern-monetary-theory-new-moment-explained>

<sup>82</sup> <https://thehill.com/hilltv/rising/456516-pete-buttigieg-tops-billionaire-donor-list>

<sup>83</sup> <https://grist.org/climate-energy/why-its-a-bad-idea-to-tax-people-for-every-mile-they-drive/>



- <sup>84</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9416289/Pete-Buttigieg-says-plan-tax-motorists-mile-not-conversation.html>
- <sup>85</sup> [https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/resources/RacialWealthDivideinSouthBend\\_ProspertyNow\\_Final\\_Rev.pdf](https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/resources/RacialWealthDivideinSouthBend_ProspertyNow_Final_Rev.pdf)
- <sup>86</sup> <https://revealnews.org/article/mayor-pete-has-a-redlining-problem-in-indiana/>
- <sup>87</sup> <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/an-indiana-economist-looks-at-south-bends-revival-under-pete-buttigieg-2019-04-12>
- <sup>88</sup> <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2019/dec/12/pete-buttigieg/fact-checking-pete-buttigieg-south-bends-black-pov/>
- <sup>89</sup> <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pov/pov-01.2011.html>
- <sup>90</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/pete-buttigieg-billionaire-donations-are-getting-called-out-by-bernie-2020-2>
- <sup>91</sup> <https://readsludge.com/2019/12/09/here-are-the-lobbyists-and-corporate-execs-collecting-checks-for-pete-buttigieg/>
- <sup>92</sup> <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2019/03/all-about-pete>
- <sup>93</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/labor-strike>
- <sup>94</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226055940/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/economic-agenda/>
- <sup>95</sup> [https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20191113204352/https://storage.googleapis.com/pfa-webapp/documents/PFA\\_Agenda\\_for\\_American\\_Families.pdf](https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20191113204352/https://storage.googleapis.com/pfa-webapp/documents/PFA_Agenda_for_American_Families.pdf)
- <sup>96</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226055955/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/empower-workers/>
- <sup>97</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2017/04/12/430325/police-entanglement-immigration-enforcement-puts-lgbtq-lives-risk/>
- <sup>98</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2014/06/10/91233/lgbt-undocumented-immigrants-face-an-increased-risk-of-hate-violence/>
- <sup>99</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-migrants-97-times-more-likely-be-sexually-assaulted-detention-n880101>
- <sup>100</sup> <https://www.glaad.org/vote/topics/immigration>
- <sup>101</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226064704/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/immigration/>
- <sup>102</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/policy-2020/immigration/>
- <sup>103</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/pete-buttigieg-releases-immigration-plan-while-campaigning-iowa-n1106716>
- <sup>104</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/policy-2020/immigration/>
- <sup>105</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/pete-buttigieg-releases-immigration-plan-while-campaigning-iowa-n1106716>
- <sup>106</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/ab60f79dbd7961edc9148a14a3c34196>
- <sup>107</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/363106-gary-indiana-is-the-newest-front-in-the-sanctuary-city-battle>
- <sup>108</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/04/17/pete-buttigieg-national-service-program-civil-service-military-community-2020-mandatory-ameriacorps/3495306002/>
- <sup>109</sup> [https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200225221019/https://storage.googleapis.com/resources.peteforamerica.com/documents/LGBTQ\\_white-paper.pdf](https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200225221019/https://storage.googleapis.com/resources.peteforamerica.com/documents/LGBTQ_white-paper.pdf)
- <sup>110</sup> <https://thinkqueerly.com/how-pete-buttigieg-covers-his-gay-identity-4afa7e6d40b1>
- <sup>111</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/17/politics/buttigieg-us-probably-had-a-gay-president-interview-trnd>
- <sup>112</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/pete-buttigieg-wouldnt-be-americas-first-gay-president/2019/03/26/0b7b1eb4-41de-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/pete-buttigieg-wouldnt-be-americas-first-gay-president/2019/03/26/0b7b1eb4-41de-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82_story.html)
- <sup>113</sup> <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/douglass-plan.pdf>
- <sup>114</sup> <https://theintercept.com/2019/11/15/pete-buttigieg-campaign-black-voters/>
- <sup>115</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/11/18/pete-buttigieg-black-american-douglass-plan-kenyan-photo/>
- <sup>116</sup> <https://filtermag.org/lead-program-police/>
- <sup>117</sup> <https://level.medium.com/the-queer-and-trans-fight-for-liberation-and-abolition-caec82374018>
- <sup>118</sup> <https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/LGBTQ-Homelessness.pdf>
- <sup>119</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fair-and-equal-housing-act>
- <sup>120</sup> <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/serving-our-youth-lgbtq/>
- <sup>121</sup> <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>
- <sup>122</sup> <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>
- <sup>123</sup> <https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/housing-and-homeless-shelters>
- <sup>124</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/henrygomez/mayor-pete-buttigieg-south-bend-gentrification>
- <sup>125</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/what-pete-buttigieg-has-and-hasnt-done-about-homelessness-in-south-bend>
- <sup>126</sup> <https://www.abc57.com/news/abc57-investigates-south-bend-eviction-rate-3-times-the-national-average->
- <sup>127</sup> <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/henrygomez/mayor-pete-buttigieg-south-bend-gentrification>
- <sup>128</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/what-pete-buttigieg-has-and-hasnt-done-about-homelessness-in-south-bend>
- <sup>129</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/city-homeless-must-vacate-south-bend-viaduct/article\\_5d3c4c86-cf0c-56a8-a15d-237b2166fc7b.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/city-homeless-must-vacate-south-bend-viaduct/article_5d3c4c86-cf0c-56a8-a15d-237b2166fc7b.html)
- <sup>130</sup> <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/06/mayor-petes-war-on-the-homeless>
- <sup>131</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/panhandling-in-downtown-south-bend-s-crosshairs/article\\_8b258230-2caa-5b34-b059-f93401d8f94c.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/panhandling-in-downtown-south-bend-s-crosshairs/article_8b258230-2caa-5b34-b059-f93401d8f94c.html)
- <sup>132</sup> [https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/barnes-thornburg-moving-to-planned-downtown-south-bend-building/article\\_62cdde33-c387-5bc1-b12a-4e583361e96b.html](https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/barnes-thornburg-moving-to-planned-downtown-south-bend-building/article_62cdde33-c387-5bc1-b12a-4e583361e96b.html)
- <sup>133</sup> <https://connordemill.wordpress.com/2017/05/03/gentrification-in-south-bend/>
- <sup>134</sup> <https://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/Downtown-apartments-booming-in-South-Bend-18288642>
- <sup>135</sup> <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/06/mayor-petes-war-on-the-homeless>
- <sup>136</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/what-pete-buttigieg-has-and-hasnt-done-about-homelessness-in-south-bend>
- <sup>137</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226064208/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/housing/>
- <sup>138</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2012/04/16/11494/the-gay-and-transgender-wage-gap/>
- <sup>139</sup> <https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2019/7/17/why-raising-minimum-wage-critical-lgbtq-issue>
- <sup>140</sup> <https://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/03/CSTT-HT-Final-Report-3.26.19.pdf>
- <sup>141</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/pete-buttigieg-confronted-at-mcdonalds-fight-15-march-2020-2>

- <sup>141</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226055955/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/empower-workers/>
- <sup>142</sup> <https://www.politico.com/2020-election/candidates-views-on-the-issues/economy/big-banks/>
- <sup>143</sup> <https://atfactionfund.org/presidentialtaxplans/>
- <sup>144</sup> <https://www.sofi.com/blog/pete-buttigieg-on-student-debt/>
- <sup>145</sup> <https://atfactionfund.org/presidentialtaxplans/>
- <sup>146</sup> <https://atfactionfund.org/presidentialtaxplans/>
- <sup>147</sup> <https://prospect.org/politics/austerity-pete-buttigieg-deficit-economic-policy/>
- <sup>148</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/pete-buttigieg-calls-deficit-reduction-swiping-bernie-sanders-n1133206>
- <sup>149</sup> <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/4/16/18251646/modern-monetary-theory-new-moment-explained>
- <sup>150</sup> <https://thehill.com/hilltv/rising/456516-pete-buttigieg-tops-billionaire-donor-list>
- <sup>151</sup> <https://grist.org/climate-energy/why-its-a-bad-idea-to-tax-people-for-every-mile-they-drive/>
- <sup>152</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9416289/Pete-Buttigieg-says-plan-tax-motorists-mile-not-conversation.html>
- <sup>153</sup> [https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/resources/Racial\\_Wealth\\_Divide\\_in\\_South\\_Bend\\_ProspertyNow\\_Final\\_Rev.pdf](https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/resources/Racial_Wealth_Divide_in_South_Bend_ProspertyNow_Final_Rev.pdf)
- <sup>154</sup> <https://revealnews.org/article/mayor-pete-has-a-redlining-problem-in-indiana/>
- <sup>155</sup> <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/an-indiana-economist-looks-at-south-bends-revival-under-pete-buttigieg-2019-04-12>
- <sup>156</sup> <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2019/dec/12/pete-buttigieg/fact-checking-pete-buttigieg-south-bends-black-pov/>
- <sup>157</sup> <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pov/pov-01.2011.html>
- <sup>158</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/pete-buttigieg-billionaire-donations-are-getting-called-out-by-bernie-2020-2>
- <sup>159</sup> <https://readsludge.com/2019/12/09/here-are-the-lobbyists-and-corporate-execs-collecting-checks-for-pete-buttigieg/>
- <sup>160</sup> <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2019/03/all-about-pete>
- <sup>161</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/labor-strike>
- <sup>162</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226055940/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/economic-agenda/>
- <sup>163</sup> [https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20191113204352/https://storage.googleapis.com/pfa-webapp/documents/PFA\\_Agenda\\_for\\_American\\_Families.pdf](https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20191113204352/https://storage.googleapis.com/pfa-webapp/documents/PFA_Agenda_for_American_Families.pdf)
- <sup>164</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226055955/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/empower-workers/>
- <sup>165</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2017/04/12/430325/police-entanglement-immigration-enforcement-puts-lgbtq-lives-risk/>
- <sup>166</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2014/06/10/91233/lgbt-undocumented-immigrants-face-an-increased-risk-of-hate-violence/>
- <sup>167</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-migrants-97-times-more-likely-be-sexually-assaulted-detention-n880101>
- <sup>168</sup> <https://www.glaad.org/vote/topics/immigration>
- <sup>169</sup> <https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200226064704/https://peteforamerica.com/policies/immigration/>
- <sup>170</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/policy-2020/immigration/>
- <sup>171</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/pete-buttigieg-releases-immigration-plan-while-campaigning-iowa-n1106716>
- <sup>172</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/policy-2020/immigration/>
- <sup>173</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/pete-buttigieg-releases-immigration-plan-while-campaigning-iowa-n1106716>
- <sup>174</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/ab60f79dbd7961edc9148a14a3c34196>
- <sup>175</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/363106-gary-indiana-is-the-newest-front-in-the-sanctuary-city-battle>
- <sup>176</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/04/17/pete-buttigieg-national-service-program-civil-service-military-community-2020-mandatory-amicorps/3495306002/>
- <sup>177</sup> [https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200225221019/https://storage.googleapis.com/resources.peteforamerica.com/documents/LGBTQ\\_white-paper.pdf](https://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20200225221019/https://storage.googleapis.com/resources.peteforamerica.com/documents/LGBTQ_white-paper.pdf)
- <sup>178</sup> <https://thinkqueerly.com/how-pete-buttigieg-covers-his-gay-identity-4afa7e6d40b1>
- <sup>179</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/17/politics/buttigieg-us-probably-had-a-gay-president-interview-trnd>
- <sup>180</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/pete-buttigieg-wouldnt-be-americas-first-gay-president/2019/03/26/0b7b1eb4-41de-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/pete-buttigieg-wouldnt-be-americas-first-gay-president/2019/03/26/0b7b1eb4-41de-11e9-922c-64d6b7840b82_story.html)

# Ron Johnson: Senator for the Rich

*Will Mulhern and Adarsh Shah*

Wisconsin's political history has no shortage of embarrassments, from Joseph McCarthy to modern Republican demagogues like Scott Walker and Reince Priebus. Ron Johnson has contributed to that legacy of shame with gusto. Calls for [Johnson's resignation](#)<sup>1</sup> have [begun](#)<sup>2</sup> [in response](#)<sup>3</sup> to the [role he played](#)<sup>4</sup> in fomenting the violence at the US Capitol building. Johnson's [unwavering support](#)<sup>5</sup> of President Trump appears to be the issue that may finally lead to his political unraveling. However, the policies Johnson has supported during his tenure in the Senate have had an equally detrimental effect on the lives of his constituents and the functioning of our democracy. Examination of his record makes it clear that he has prioritized his own interests, and the interests of his wealthy donors, at the expense of his constituents.

In late 2020, the Senate voted to pass a second stimulus package, which includes a \$600 direct payment to American citizens. [Many Americans](#)<sup>6</sup> are deeply concerned that the \$600 payment was not enough, and representatives [on both sides](#)<sup>7</sup> of the aisle — [even President Trump](#)<sup>8</sup> — have echoed these concerns following the bill's passage. The payment was only half of the \$1,200 initially included in a bipartisan proposal, primarily due to Johnson, who twice opposed the earlier proposal – which needed unanimous support in the Senate to pass.

Throughout the COVID-19 economic crisis, Johnson's priorities have remained clear. In addition to reducing the stimulus payments, Johnson sought the inclusion of "[liability shields](#),"<sup>9</sup> in the stimulus package which would have given corporations immunity from lawsuits related to COVID-19. Liability shields put [workers at risk](#)<sup>10</sup> by allowing businesses to put them in unsafe conditions with little recourse.

While Johnson opposed additional stimulus payments to the American people, he had no issue with his largest donors taking advantage of stimulus funds. Using [FEC](#)<sup>11</sup> campaign contribution data and [Accountable.US's COVID Bailout Tracker](#)<sup>12</sup>, we found 11 business executives who made large donations (above \$1,500) to Johnson's campaign in the past two years whose companies received some form of assistance from the CARES Act. On average, these companies received nearly \$1.5 million each. In total, over \$16 million in government funds was sent to these companies in 2020, a figure that will surely grow with the passage of the new stimulus package.

Earlier in 2020, Johnson downplayed COVID-19, [elevated COVID-19 conspiracy theories through a committee hearing](#)<sup>13</sup>, [opposed measures incentivizing people to stay home from work to prevent COVID-19 transmission](#),<sup>14</sup> and expressed concerns that a house [bill for paid sick leave](#)<sup>15</sup> would "incentivize people to not show up for work." All of this while Wisconsin continues to be hit hard by COVID-19. As of January 17th, the state had experienced [566,275 cases and 5,906 deaths](#)<sup>16</sup>.

Johnson's support of the wealthy at the expense of working people was evident well before the pandemic. He supported the GOP tax cuts projected to increase the federal deficit by [\\$1.9 trillion](#)<sup>17</sup> over the next ten years. For context, a recent [study](#)<sup>18</sup> conducted by Cornell University, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, the International Policy Research Institute, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development found that eliminating world hunger would cost \$330 billion over the next ten years. Though Johnson has consistently opposed deficit spending and ran his campaigns on [promises to reduce](#)<sup>19</sup> the federal deficit, he shows little concern when he

**Below is a list of Senator Johnson’s donors whose businesses received COVID-19 relief:**

| <b>Company</b>           | <b>Donor - Title</b>                  | <b>Stimulus Amount</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Russ Darrow Auto Group   | Russell Darrow – Chairman and CEO     | \$7,550,000            |
| RF Technologies          | Glenn Jonas – CEO                     | \$2,960,000            |
| Inpro Corporation        | Stephen Ziegler – Chairman            | \$1,800,000            |
| Jor-Mac                  | Paul Lubber – CEO                     | \$1,580,000            |
| Royal Basket Trucks      | Thomas Carney – President             | \$1,050,000            |
| Custom-Pak               | Jim Berg – VP/Co-founder              | \$594,500              |
| Bell Property Management | Ralph Gorenstein – Owner              | \$235,805              |
| Husch Blackwell          | William “Rocky” Fox – Principal       | \$110,600              |
| The Krizek Group         | Ron Krizek – Financial representative | \$97,500               |
| Roth Feeder Pigs         | Howard Roth – Owner                   | \$80,945               |
| Wisconsin Metalworking   | Joseph Kraemer – Owner                | \$75,921               |
| Total                    |                                       | \$16,135,271           |

and his corporate donors stand to gain. Johnson personally received **\$200,000 in tax benefits**<sup>20</sup> from the passage of the tax cuts.

Johnson’s hypocrisy reaches far beyond corporate tax benefits. He claimed to oppose the initial stimulus package because he did not want to “**mortgage our children’s future**<sup>21</sup>.” Still, Johnson’s policy positions have consistently shown a much more cavalier approach when it comes to protecting the global climate for future generations. Johnson is a **climate change denier**<sup>22</sup> with a **3 percent lifetime score**<sup>23</sup> from the League of Conservation Voters. Again, his positions contrast starkly with the views of the majority of Americans – **63 percent**<sup>24</sup> feel that stricter environmental regulations are worth the potential costs.

The events of January 2021 shook the foundation of American Democracy and have rightfully led to calls from across the political spectrum for accountability for leaders who stoked the violence – including Ron Johnson. This is necessary, but as we move forward into a new administration, we must continue to understand the various other insidious ways in which political leaders on both sides of the aisle seek to undermine the democratic process, including through corporate influence. Ron Johnson’s policy positions made him an unfit Senator long before the events of January 6th. Before he sold out American Democracy in favor of President Trump, he had already sold out the people of Wisconsin in favor of wealthy donors and big corporations.



*Will Mulhern is an editor of the Progressive Policy Review and a Master of Public Policy Student at Harvard Kennedy School. He is passionate about issues of economic equality and fostering a just transition to a more sustainable and equitable economic system.*

*Adarsh Shah is an editor of the Progressive Policy Review and a first-year Master of Public Policy student at the Harvard Kennedy School. He is focused on global issues of economic and racial equity with a particular interest in health policy.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbc15.com/2021/01/09/caravan-against-fascism-calls-for-sen-ron-johnsons-resignation-following-capitol-chaos/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/solutions/2021/01/07/ron-johnson-scott-fitzgerald-tom-tiffany-must-resign-expelled/6585447002/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://madison.com/wsj/opinion/editorial/trumps-shameless-minions-must-go/article\\_28879313-a141-5dbf-aa1d-aa169f8857ea.html](https://madison.com/wsj/opinion/editorial/trumps-shameless-minions-must-go/article_28879313-a141-5dbf-aa1d-aa169f8857ea.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.startribune.com/lawmakers-who-voted-against-biden-are-denounced-back-home/600009012/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/12/15/ron-johnson-trump-political-future-445871>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.wral.com/it-would-be-just-to-pay-the-rent-families-worry-600-isn-t-enough/19439806/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.kmov.com/news/a-step-forward-but-it-s-not-nearly-enough-hawley-bush-weigh-in-on-slimmed/article\\_e20f0d06-437f-11eb-9739-3fee9ce4deca.html](https://www.kmov.com/news/a-step-forward-but-it-s-not-nearly-enough-hawley-bush-weigh-in-on-slimmed/article_e20f0d06-437f-11eb-9739-3fee9ce4deca.html)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/30/trump-calls-for-2000-stimulus-checks-as-600-payments-start.html>

<sup>9</sup> [https://madison.com/ct/opinion/column/john\\_nichols/john-nichols-republicans-are-exploiting-covid-19-desperation-to-shield-corporate-crime/article\\_4ab55278-725b-5c17-af04-3aab195b7489.html](https://madison.com/ct/opinion/column/john_nichols/john-nichols-republicans-are-exploiting-covid-19-desperation-to-shield-corporate-crime/article_4ab55278-725b-5c17-af04-3aab195b7489.html)

<sup>10</sup> <https://time.com/5873388/liability-shields-workers-rights/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/individual-contributions/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://covidbailouttracker.com/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/us/politics/ron-johnson-coronavirus.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/brief/ron-johnson-objects-to-corona-measures-incentivizing-people-to-not-show-up-for-work/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/brief/ron-johnson-objects-to-corona-measures-incentivizing-people-to-not-show-up-for-work/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/wisconsin-coronavirus-cases.html>

<sup>17</sup> <https://budget.house.gov/publications/report/cbo-confirms-gop-tax-law-contributes-darkening-fiscal-future>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/13/ending-world-hunger-by-2030-would-cost-330bn-study-finds>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/in-the-spotlight-blog?ID=06CAE75A-A919-4ECF-8B76-319D77CE2795>

<sup>20</sup> <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/04/10070908/Tax-Bill-Memo-Economic-Final.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/ron-johnson-josh-hawley-1200-checks-mortgaging-our-childrens-future-2020-12>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ron-johnson-climate-change\\_n\\_580e5039e4b0a03911ee05e9](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ron-johnson-climate-change_n_580e5039e4b0a03911ee05e9)

<sup>23</sup> <https://scorecard.lcv.org/moc/ron-johnson>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/21/how-americans-see-climate-change-and-the-environment-in-7-charts/>



# Narrowing the Divide: Addressing Inequities in California's Residential Building Code for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

*Vanessa Warheit, Andrea Marpillero-Colomina, Marc Geller, and Sven Thesen*

**Abstract:** Electric Vehicles (EVs) provide environmental benefits to society while simultaneously providing direct health and financial benefits to drivers who adopt them. While California's progressive state policies have accelerated EV adoption, historic bias continues to be embedded in California's "CALGreen" building code — effectively delivering the most benefits of EV driving to already-affluent single-family homeowners, who are predominately white. A statewide coalition is currently working to address this disparity by influencing the 2022 CALGreen building code update cycle — an effort that seeks to address long-standing economic, health, and environmental inequities and to support California's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals.

## Introduction

Transportation is the largest source of California's greenhouse gas emissions; pollution from this sector also contributes to smog and particulate pollution, which pose significant health risks that fall disproportionately on low-income communities and communities of color. To help clean up the transportation sector, California has issued a series of laws and executive orders over the past seven years, mandating an ever increasing number of light duty **Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs)**<sup>1</sup> in the state. In 2014, SB 1275 called for 1 million ZEVs or near-ZEVs by 2023. Four years later, with 238,000 electric vehicles (EVs) and 5,525 fuel cell vehicles (FCVs) on California's roadways, Governor Jerry Brown increased that goal with Executive Order B-48-18, calling for **5 million ZEVs by 2030**.<sup>2</sup> More recently, in September of 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom

issued **Executive Order N-79-20**,<sup>3</sup> requiring all new light duty vehicles sold in California to be ZEVs by 2035. With continuing declines in battery pricing, an accelerating climate crisis, and increasing awareness of the economic, environmental and health benefits of ZEVs, there is now a push to move that deadline up from **2035 to 2030**.<sup>4</sup>

These increasingly ambitious orders raise, but do not answer, an obvious question: how will California drivers charge all those EV's? They also raise some less obvious but equally important questions: how can that charging infrastructure be equitably and lowest cost deployed? And once deployed, how can we ensure that low-cost electricity is available equally to all EV drivers?

Data on EV driving shows clearly that the majority of EV drivers **charge their cars at home**<sup>5</sup> — yet not all drivers have access to home charging. In a recent Consumer Reports nationally representative consumer survey, 71% of drivers surveyed said they were interested in getting an electric car, but 48% said that lack of access to public charging infrastructure was holding them back, and 43% cited vehicle cost as a **disincentive**.<sup>6</sup> It is not surprising, then, that the lack of public EV infrastructure has garnered increasing attention from policy makers (see, for instance, this **recent op-ed in the LA Times**); however, there remains a fundamental misunderstanding regarding where and how most EVs are **actually -- and most affordably, and conveniently -- charged**.<sup>7</sup> According to Chris Harto, senior sustainability policy analyst for Consumer Reports, "American drivers are accustomed to having ready access to gas stations, and may not realize that if they have

a personal garage or driveway, they'll be doing most of their charging at home with an EV."

It's important to note that convenient home charging access also comes with significant cost savings: Harto authored a 2020 study highlighting the **cost benefits of owning an EV vs. a traditional gasoline-powered vehicle**,<sup>8</sup> which found that "a typical EV owner who does most of their fueling at home can expect to save an average of \$800 to \$1,000 a year on fueling costs over an equivalent gasoline-powered car." The same, however, cannot be said for drivers fueling at public fast-charging stations, where the cost of electricity (which, in California, is **not regulated**<sup>9</sup>) can equal or exceed the **cost of gasoline on a per mile basis**.<sup>10</sup>

Residents of multi-family housing often lack access to the convenience and economies of home-based charging – either because they lack off-street parking, or simply because their off-street parking lacks access to power. This lack of access translates into a cascading lack of financial, health, and environmental benefits which fall largely along racial lines.

In the US, Black and Latinx drivers are disproportionately **low-income**,<sup>11</sup> less likely to **own their home**,<sup>12</sup> more likely to live in multifamily dwellings, and more likely to live in **segregated neighborhoods**.<sup>13</sup> All of these statistics also **hold true in California**,<sup>14</sup><sup>15</sup><sup>16</sup> and the challenges for Black and Latinx drivers to gain access to EV infrastructure are formidable. For one, landlords are less incentivized than homeowners to provide EV charging in residential parking spaces, not least of all because the landlords would have an obligation to manage a highly likely unprofitable system for charging their residents' vehicles. Despite passage of California's SB1016 ensuring tenants the right to install **charging infrastructure**,<sup>17</sup> residents of condominiums face similar challenges to access, even when a certain percentage of parking is "EV capable."<sup>18</sup> Common obstacles to both apartment and condominium residents include: obtaining permission from

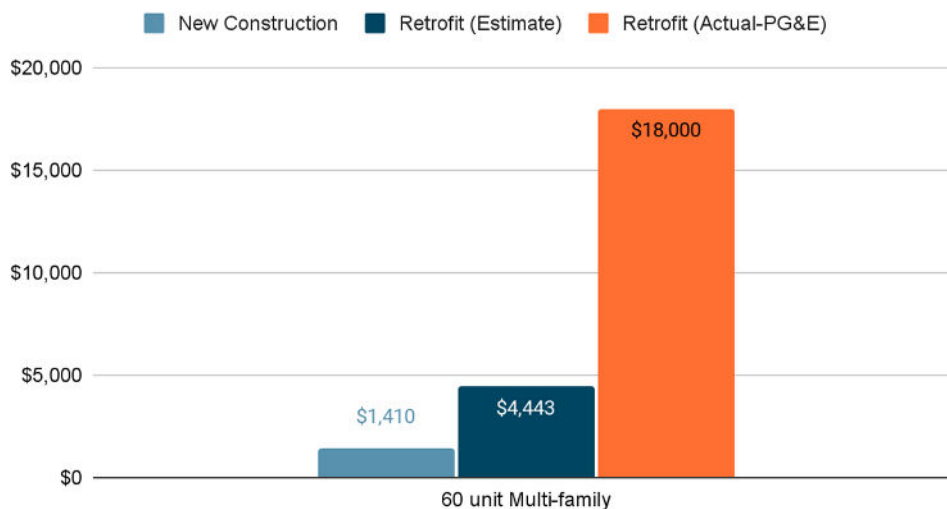
the landlord/ Home Owners Association (HOA); ensuring access for their unit to wired spaces; potentially securing additional liability insurance; paying for and installing the wiring, circuit breaker and receptacle/EVSE. These are often insurmountable **hurdles**,<sup>19</sup> even for the most determined resident. Changing the building codes for multi-family housing to provide more ubiquitous EV charging at the time of initial construction is therefore one important step in dismantling the structural inequities that perpetuate racial disparities in health and economic well-being in the US.

### **Building Codes: Expanding Affordable EV Infrastructure at the Lowest Cost**

While charging at home is typically the most cost-effective and convenient way to fuel an EV, the most cost-effective way to build that access into residential parking is to do so at the time of new construction. A 2016 City of San Francisco study determined the cost of installing EV charging infrastructure via retrofit would be approximately four times what it would cost during **new construction**.<sup>20</sup> Data from a subsequent PG&E retrofit program shows the actual cost of utility retrofits can be considerably **higher**.<sup>21</sup>

Building codes tend to lag the built environment by three to six years, which means that codes being written in 2021 will define construction of new buildings into the mid- and late 2020s. Given California's ZEV mandates — and the exigencies of the increasingly dire climate emergency — it is not a stretch to imagine that these buildings, in service well into the 2050s and 60s, will require retrofitting to accommodate electric vehicle charging in the fairly near future. Affecting the building codes now is therefore a critical step in the transition to electrified transportation, and ensures the infrastructure supporting the lowest cost power to the driver is installed at the lowest cost to the builder.

## Cost per Parking Space: New Construction vs. Retrofit



*Fig. 1 - EV infrastructure cost comparisons show actual retrofit costs in California are substantially higher than estimated, and exponentially higher than installing infrastructure at the time of new construction. Costs include wiring, switch gear, conduit, trenching, and secondary transformer, permitting etc.<sup>22</sup>*

### EV Charging Access for All Coalition and CALGreen

In late 2020, to address these issues, a small group of EV advocates launched the “EV Charging Access for All” campaign to achieve better and more equitable access to EV charging infrastructure in California’s building codes for new multi-family housing.<sup>23</sup> Members of the EV Charging Access for All coalition<sup>24</sup> had worked in 2018 and 2019 with local Community Choice energy agencies to craft model municipal EV **reach codes**,<sup>25</sup> which have helped to democratize and expand access to EV driving in over a dozen cities around the state. However, this piecemeal approach will not be sufficient to meet California’s ambitious EV targets, nor will it equitably distribute the **economic**<sup>26</sup> and **health**<sup>27</sup> benefits of EV driving. Leaving EV infrastructure building codes up to local jurisdictions also threatens to widen the equity gap — leaving behind communities where local leadership is either still largely supported by the fossil fuel industry or does not understand the economic and environmental benefits, plus low-income communities that may lack the resources to adopt new reach codes. Patchwork reach

codes also risk increasing gentrification in ‘EV forward’ communities. A statewide approach was needed.

A similar full-pressure effort was already underway to amend California’s building codes to increase building **decarbonization**<sup>28</sup> — but this effort did not include EV infrastructure. Building electrification is covered by the California Energy Code<sup>29</sup>, which is governed by the California Energy Commission; while EV infrastructure falls under a separate section of the California building code Part 11, affectionately known as CALGreen.

CALGreen is California’s first-in-the-nation mandatory green **building standards code**,<sup>30</sup> developed in 2007 in an effort to meet the goals of AB32, the **California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006**.<sup>31</sup> California’s Housing and Community Development agency (HCD) is responsible for CALGreen in residential buildings (including hotels and motels); HCD receives input from the California Air Resources Board and the Department of the State Architect, and final approval from the state’s Building Standards Commission.<sup>32</sup> The CALGreen code is renewed on a three-year

## Historic Percentage EV Capable, Required in New Construction

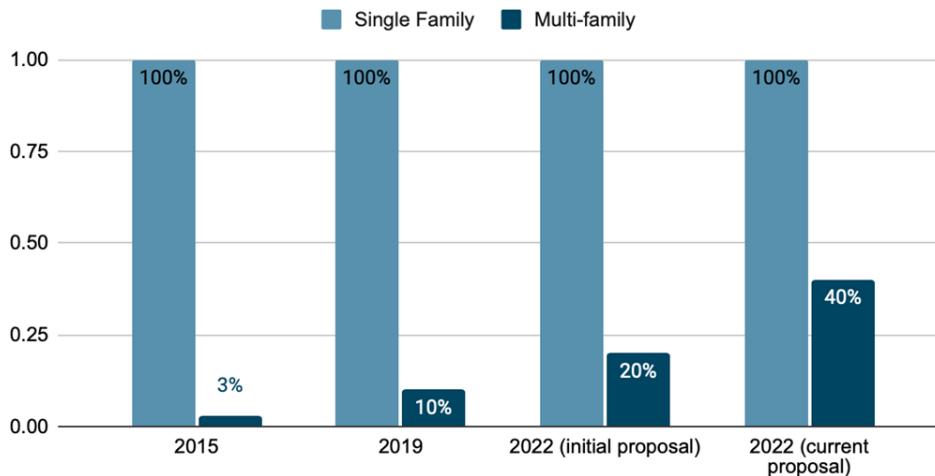


Fig. 2 - CALGreen has required 100% access for Single Family Homes since 2015, while the majority of California’s new Multi-Family Housing still lacks EV infrastructure.

cycle, with intermediate 18-month ‘interim cycle’ reviews. The 2022 cycle is currently (as of publication) being developed, and is the primary target of the EV Charging Access for All coalition’s work to date.

The coalition’s principal demand:

*Every new housing unit with parking, including apartments and condos, must have access to power at the parking space via an electric receptacle or EV charging cordset.<sup>33</sup> Prominent signage must indicate the space is “EV Ready”.*

CALGreen has mandated, since 2015, access to power for EV charging in all new California single-family homes. However, it has lagged far behind in mandating access to power for charging in multifamily housing — starting with only 3% of spaces in 2015, and creeping up incrementally to a proposed 20% at the beginning of the **2022 code cycle**.<sup>34</sup>

The coalition felt it was way past time for California’s multi-family residents to have equitable access to the benefits of electric driving.

### Access and Equity Considerations for Residential EV Infrastructure

Consumer confidence and community buy-in

depend largely on where EV infrastructure is located, and on consumer education about how EV charging **works and how much it costs**.<sup>35</sup> There will be no widespread buy-in and adoption if the people who buy, drive, and depend on cars do not see themselves as EV drivers, and likewise have access to charging infrastructure.

For the uninitiated, EV charging infrastructure is intimidating, both because consumers are unfamiliar with what it entails and because there is a great deal of difference between types of EV charging. Whether there is even charging capacity available at all for multi-family dwelling residents largely depends on the decisions of landlords or a HOA to provide this infrastructure. The limitations on access to private charging — wherein the decision to provide this infrastructure is based on individual actors, rather than driven by public policy — perpetuates access inequities that have disproportionately affected low-income people and communities of color for generations. *It is the 21st century equivalent of the **cold water flat**:<sup>36</sup> until landlords were required by law to provide hot water, they had little incentive to do so since they bore the cost, and many tenants had no choice but to remain.*

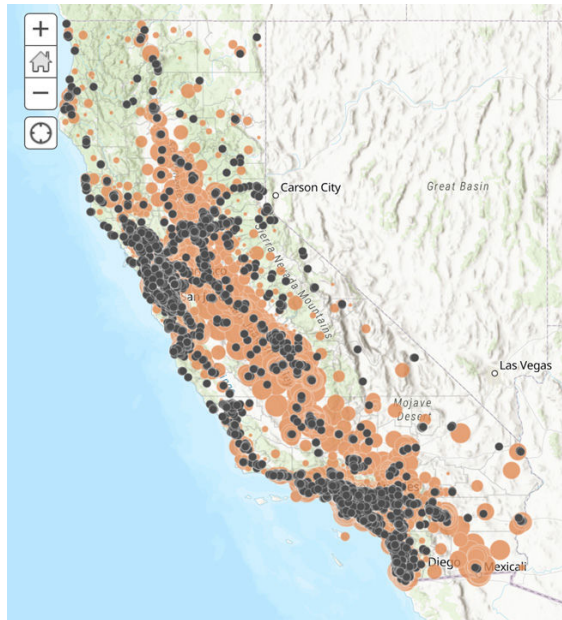


Fig. 3 - Disparities between EV charging infrastructure and disadvantaged communities

Multiple roadblocks must be addressed to create an equitable EV landscape — including changes to both public and private infrastructure. “Charging deserts” are a major barrier to EV adoption throughout the US,<sup>37</sup> and California is no exception. Using publicly available data, the coalition created a map<sup>38</sup> highlighting the discrepancies between disadvantaged communities (as defined by CalEnviroScreen) and California’s public and private charging infrastructure. (See Fig. 3.)

Unfortunately, much of the policy work regarding providing equitable access to EVs has centered exclusively on the need for public charging – ignoring the fact that the vast majority of EV drivers charge their cars at home, and that charging at home is the most economical way to fuel an EV. Because home charging is not just more convenient, but also enables access to the lowest rates offered by an electric utility, equity demands that multi-family residents be offered this same access.

Projects like a recent effort to install 100 charging stations at curbside locations on **New York streets**<sup>39</sup> are important for increasing the visibility of EV driving; if people do not see or have access to EV infrastructure in the neighborhoods where they live, the likelihood

that they will feel comfortable transitioning to this technology or that they will believe that EVs are “for them” are slim to none. But these efforts, while important, are not guaranteed to be affordable; nor do they address the underlying inequities built into our housing infrastructure.

And while California is recognized for its progressive state policies, and its public attention to the climate crisis, California has not been as forward thinking when it comes to housing. From NIMBYism to restrictive building codes to the homelessness crisis, the state’s legacy is mixed at best. The extant disparities in homeownership by race in the state of California are significant (and not much different from nationwide trends). In 2019, California homeownership among whites was 68 percent, versus 49 percent for Latinos, and just **41% for Black Californians**.<sup>40</sup> Historic trends in discriminatory practices, including exclusionary zoning, predatory lending, and outright racial discrimination have created a housing landscape that is inequitable and **inaccessible to many Californians**.<sup>41</sup> To adequately address and remediate the inequities that exist, the state must enact residential building codes that seek to redress the limitations placed on renters, particularly





Note: Data above is from the 2019 homeownership data collected by the U.S. Census.

Fig. 4 - Home Ownership in California, by Race

those who are low-income and often subject to the whims of policymakers, landlords, and other private sector actors. Enacting building codes to provide equitable EV infrastructure access should be an integral piece of that effort.

The EV Charging Access for All coalition is therefore advocating for equitable building codes which acknowledge that parking access and decision-making power for multi-family residents is different than it is for single family homeowners. An equitable multi-family housing code would mandate the following:

1. wiring an EV space directly to the corresponding housing unit's electricity meter;
2. installing true EV Ready 'plug-and-play' charging access;
3. making that access available to every new unit with parking; and
4. prominently labeling EV charging access with highly-visible signage.

Without this kind of equitable access, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx drivers are more likely to be left behind or to be completely excluded — while wealthier, white homeowners reap the immediate benefits of at-home EV charging and the state fails to achieve either its climate goals or the societal benefits of electrified driving.

### Cost/Benefit Analysis and Actions Taken

Providing access to EV charging for all new

California Multifamily Housing (MFH) units enables significant cost savings — both to the families living in the projected 150,000 new MFH units projected to be built during the three-year (2023-2025) code cycle, and to California as a whole.<sup>42</sup> One member of the coalition conducted a preliminary **cost/benefit analysis**<sup>43</sup> which estimated the cost of providing access to power to be \$1,366 per receptacle, or approximately 0.6% of a typical new MFH unit's construction cost of \$300,000. The analysis showed that this (small) upfront investment would provide \$1.1 billion in direct savings for those that live in new Multifamily Housing, while avoiding 4.2 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions. It also showed that, by providing access to power at the time of construction, the state would avoid \$1.6 billion in utility **retrofit costs**.<sup>44</sup> (Actual benefits would be significantly higher, as these estimated cost savings do not take into account the avoided health, economic, and climate costs from carbon emissions and local air pollution.)

The coalition shared these findings with the code-writing agencies, and encouraged them to incorporate holistic and systemic cost reductions into their analyses of any proposed EV-related code changes. This was one of many tactics the coalition employed to influence the code-making process, which included:

1. Educational webinars for coalition members on EV charging and the code-making process

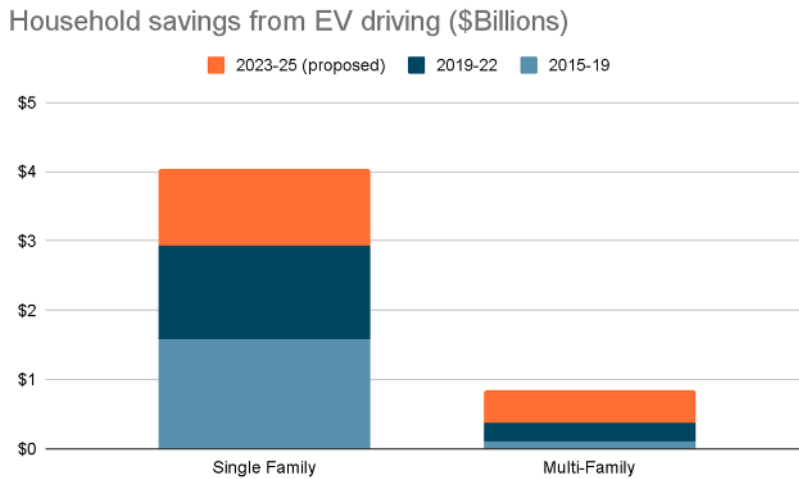


Fig. 5 - Savings from EV driving, based on existing CALGreen building code, disproportionately goes to Single Family Home residents.<sup>45</sup>

2. Participation in public stakeholder meetings
3. Submission of cost/benefit analyses of the draft proposals
4. Submission of formal sign-on letters after each public meeting
5. Private meetings with staffers and other stakeholders
6. Coordination with state legislators (who subsequently sent their own letters to the agencies, echoing the coalition's demands)
7. Coordination with the California Democratic Party, leading to a priority resolution calling for access to EV charging for Multifamily Housing in the party's 2021 platform
8. (Planned: Coordination of public comments during the current 45-day comment period)

While all but the last of these efforts happened in the ten months prior to the second to final 'public comment period,' agency staff repeatedly informed the coalition that its efforts were 'late in the process.' It seems that the code-making process begins immediately after any given cycle is complete, and meaningful influence needs to happen from the very beginning in order to be most effective.

### Special Interest Influence - Triangulating between the for-profit building industry and the for-profit EV industry

As Leah Stokes points out in her recent

award-winning book *Short-Circuiting Policy*,<sup>46</sup> "the public rarely pays attention" in highly technical policy arenas. The coalition found this to be notably true of the code-writing process for EV infrastructure in California. The agencies' public hearings, held remotely via Zoom due to pandemic protocols, were structured as small 'stakeholder meetings' – during which it became clear that they were not used to robust public participation. It also became clear that the chief lobbyist for the building industry and the apartment owners association, who refers to himself as an 'engineer,' is a long-time, close ally to the agency staffers. This lobbyist also has a leadership role on the Building Standards Commission's Green Code Advisory Committee, which is charged with reviewing residential code recommendations put forward by the Housing and Community Development agency.

Additionally, in conversations with staff and policy makers responsible for developing CALGreen, the coalition found that these decision-makers often lacked direct experience with EVs, never mind charging technology. (Many also lacked lived experience as residents of multi-family housing — which may help to explain CALGreen's overt focus on owner-occupied single family homes.) Lack of experience with this technology on the part of policy makers serves to increase their risk of

influence by industry lobbyists. “Interest groups are able to control policy in these kinds of domains because legislators defer to interest groups, believing they hold greater expertise,” writes Stokes, citing research by Pepper Culpepper.<sup>47</sup> “Over time, lobbyists build strong relationships with legislators and their staff, providing them with information... [and] lobbyists sometimes become de facto additional staff members for legislators.” Notably, Stokes also argues that “interest groups are more likely to dominate in regulatory bodies because these venues are invisible to the public” (emphasis ours). The regulatory bodies charged with creating CALGreen appear not to be immune from this tendency.

While the building industry has the longest history of influence in California’s code-making process, additional for-profit special interests weighed in during this code cycle, including automakers, public and investor-owned utilities (IOUs), and the burgeoning Electric Vehicle Service Provider (EVSP) industry. (During the 2022 cycle, IOUs chose to keep their direct advocacy ‘quiet’ — notably attending public meetings but not making public comments.)

The coalition sought to work with the EV industry, with some success. The biggest point of difference was on the amount of power to be delivered at parking spaces. Tesla, the only automaker that manufactures vehicles (electric or otherwise) at scale in California, has a policy of never advocating for Level 1<sup>48</sup> charging — despite it being widely known that Tesla owners (like all plug-in car owners) often charge on 120v at home. Similar to the Alliance for Automotive Innovation (which represents all other major automakers in the EV space), Tesla typically advocates for a minimum of “full Level 2” (i.e. 6.6 kW, delivered via 208/240v on a 40A circuit). A compromise was reached within the coalition to advocate for a minimum “floor” of 208/240v on a 20A circuit, also known as “low power level 2,” with an option to use **Automated Load Management Systems (ALMS)**.<sup>49</sup>

## Updated CALGreen Proposal: Significant, but not Sufficient

As a result of the coalition’s efforts, HCD in March came back with a revised draft **proposal**,<sup>50</sup> doubling the amount of mandated EV infrastructure from 20% to 40% of new spaces – but only for buildings over ten units.<sup>51</sup> While the participating EV industry representatives were pleased with this result, the EV Charging Access for All coalition’s leadership recognized that the new code proposal, while an improvement, was still far from equitable. The draft proposal still mandated EV Capable rather than ‘plug and play’ EV ready; left out all MFH sites with under ten units; used parking spaces rather than housing units as a basis for assessment; did not include signage; and depending on the ratio of MFH units to parking spaces, had the potential to leave up to 60% of multifamily residents in new buildings completely without access to power for EV charging. Ironically, the new proposal mandated higher power than the coalition had requested.

In response, to the March HCD proposal, the coalition (this time without the support of Tesla or the other EV industry coalition members) proposed a compromise with HCD for the 2022 cycle: in addition to the code proposed by HCD, include an alternative compliance pathway (ACP) within CALGreen. The coalition’s proposed ACP is and less prescriptive for builders, while ensuring that 100% of units had access to EV charging but at a lower **average power level**.<sup>52</sup> In April, 2021, as part of the formal code development process, the Green Code Advisory Committee (CAC)<sup>53</sup> reviewed HCD’s proposal and the coalition’s suggested ACP, and recommended that HCD explore adding the ACP to its final proposal.

HCD staff immediately informed the coalition that they did not intend to comply with the CAC’s recommendation. Since then, however, the coalition has learned that the agencies have “made significant edits to the proposed EV regulations based on the April 2021 GREEN Code Advisory Committee (CAC)

recommendations and public testimony,” but that “the revised CALGreen regulations do not contain [the coalition’s] requested ACP.”<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusions and Next Steps

In the ongoing effort to advance light duty vehicle electrification, there has been a significant lack of attention to building codes as a means to increase and democratize access to EV driving. Our experience advocating for improvements to CALGreen in California indicate that this is an area ripe with possibility for rapid improvement. Building codes that ensure all new residential construction includes access to power for EVs serve to avoid the expensive process of retrofitting, and provide a basis for equitable future access to EV charging. Work focusing on building codes for EV infrastructure needs to continue in California, and should extend to other US states as quickly as possible.

Note: The 2022 CALGreen cycle will be completed by January 1, 2022, and a final analysis of EV Infrastructure in this code cycle will be available online at [acterra.org](https://acterra.org).

---

### Vanessa Warheit, Acterra

*Vanessa currently co-leads EV Charging Access for All — a coalition of over a thousand organizations, companies, faith communities and individuals advocating for equitable access to affordable electric vehicle charging infrastructure. She was formerly Executive Director of Fossil Free California, and California Organizer with 350.org of Rise for Climate Jobs & Justice. Vanessa holds a masters degree in Communication from Stanford University; she produced the PBS documentary The Insular Empire, and the award-winning kids video Worse Than Poop!*

### Andrea Marpillero-Colomina, GreenLatinos

*Andrea researches the intersections of people, policy, and place. She is currently the clean transportation advocate at GreenLatinos and*

*faculty at The New School, where she teaches undergraduates at Parsons School of Design and Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts.*

### Marc Geller

*Marc has been driving electric cars since 2001. He has driven over 250,000 electric miles, including two cross-country trips. He is the Vice President of Plug In America and on the Board of Directors of the Electric Vehicle Association and AdoptaCharger. He appears, briefly, teary-eyed, in the 2006 documentary “Who Killed the Electric Car?” He writes and agitates for transportation electrification.*

### Sven Thesen

*Sven is a chemical engineer and founder of Project Green Home and Sven Thesen & Associates, a boutique consulting firm focused on the economic and environmental impacts of electric vehicles. He has demonstrated vehicle-to-grid technology, the secondary use of transportation batteries in the stationary sector, and intelligent charging with Pacific Gas & Electric, Tesla, Better Place, and Peninsula Clean Energy, among others.*

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Within CA’s ZEV population, as of December 2020, there are currently 834,518 electric vehicles (EVs) and 7,129 Fuel Cell Vehicles (FCVs) -- with only 8,931 FCVs nationwide. The coalition’s work, therefore, is focused on EVs. (See: <https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/energy-insights/zero-emission-vehicle-and-charger-statistics>)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ca.gov/archive/gov39/2018/01/26/governor-brown-takes-action-to-increase-zero-emission-vehicles-fund-new-climate-investments/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/09/23/governor-newsom-announces-california-will-phase-out-gasoline-powered-cars-dramatically-reduce-demand-for-fossil-fuel-in-californias-fight-against-climate-change/>

<sup>4</sup> ZEV2030.org

<sup>5</sup> [https://afdc.energy.gov/fuels/electricity\\_charging\\_home.html](https://afdc.energy.gov/fuels/electricity_charging_home.html)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.consumerreports.org/hybrids-evs/cr-survey-shows-strong-interest-in-evs/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.fleetmanagementweekly.com/charge-anxiety-stop-worrying/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.consumerreports.org/hybrids-evs/evs-offer-big-savings-over-traditional-gas-powered-cars/>

<sup>9</sup> See AB631 (Ma - 2011) [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201120120AB631](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120AB631)



<sup>10</sup> <https://www.myev.com/research/ev-101/what-it-costs-to-charge-an-electric-vehicle>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/poverty-rates-for-blacks-and-hispanics-reached-historic-lows-in-2019.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2020/07/inequality-in-us-homeownership-rates-by-race-and-ethnicity/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/neighborhood-segregation-persists-for-black-latino-or-hispanic-and-asian-americans/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.welfareinfo.org/poverty-rate/california/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://stage.racecounts.org/updated-data-homeownership/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/roots-structural-racism>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.kts-law.com/electric-vehicle-charging-stations-for-california-landlords/>

<sup>18</sup> Defined as available power at the electrical panel and conduit running from the electrical panel to the “EV Capable” parking space but no wiring or breaker.

<sup>19</sup> <https://cleantechnica.com/2021/02/18/pushing-for-ev-charging-at-your-multi-family-property-share-this-webinar/>

<sup>20</sup> Plug-In Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Cost-Effectiveness Report for San Francisco: <http://evchargingpros.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/City-of-SF-PEV-Infrastructure-Cost-Effectiveness-Report-2016.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.pge.com/pge\\_global/common/pdfs/solar-and-vehicles/your-options/clean-vehicles/charging-stations/program-participants/EV-Charge-Network-2021-Q1-Report.pdf](https://www.pge.com/pge_global/common/pdfs/solar-and-vehicles/your-options/clean-vehicles/charging-stations/program-participants/EV-Charge-Network-2021-Q1-Report.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Estimates based on Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Cost Analysis Report by Energy Solutions for Peninsula Clean Energy and Silicon Valley Clean Energy. Actual costs based on Pacific Gas & Electric Company EV Charge Network Quarterly Report, Q1 2019.

<sup>23</sup> While the coalition advocated for changes to both residential and non-residential building codes, the focus of this paper is on the residential campaign.

<sup>24</sup> Principal coalition leads include Sven Thesen, Vanessa Warheit, Marc Geller, Dwight MacCurdy, and Guy Hall - representing over 75 years of combined EV policy, advocacy, and technical expertise.

<sup>25</sup> See: <https://peninsulareachcodes.org> and <https://www.swenergy.org/cracking-the-code-on-ev-ready-building-codes>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.consumerreports.org/hybrids-evs/evs-offer-big-savings-over-traditional-gas-powered-cars/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.lung.org/getmedia/99cc945c-47f2-4ba9-ba59-14c311ca332a/electric-vehicle-report.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.buildingdecarb.org>

<sup>29</sup> Building electrification is covered by Part 6, Title 24, of the California state building code.

<sup>30</sup> CALGreen is Part 11, Title 24 of the California state building code. <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/CALGreen>

<sup>31</sup> See [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=200520060AB32](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200520060AB32)

<sup>32</sup> The Building Standards Commission (BSC) has full authority over non-residential CALGreen code.

<sup>33</sup> Also known as an electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)

<sup>34</sup> 2020 Status of the California Green Building Standards Code: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/building-standards/calgreen/docs/2020-calgreen-report-to-legislature.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> <https://cleantechnica.com/2019/03/31/if-we-want-to-see-more-ev-adoption-we-need-to-educate-the-masses/>

<sup>36</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold\\_water\\_flat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_water_flat)

<sup>37</sup> <https://energynews.us/2020/12/14/in-chicago-another-roadblock-for-would-be-ev-drivers-charging-deserts/>

<sup>38</sup> Data mapping assistance by Tiernaur Anderson. Note that residential EVSE locations and “wall outlets” not designated for vehicle charging are not included in the Station Locator, but workplace charging locations are.

<sup>39</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/new-york-city-new-york-canada-business-8b1bd4410763cb7ddcbb05af2435953c>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.calhfa.ca.gov/community/index.htm>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/Color-Law-Forgotten-Government-Segregated/dp/1631492853>

<sup>42</sup> 2023-25 Housing Production extrapolated from 2004-2020 Housing Production data provided by Bob Raymer, CBIA

<sup>43</sup> Sven Thesen & Associates, Draft: Providing Access to Power for All, 2022 CALGreen Residential Code, Economic and Environmental Benefits

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.pge.com/pge\\_global/common/pdfs/solar-and-vehicles/your-options/clean-vehicles/charging-stations/program-participants/EV-Charge-Network-2021-Q1-Report.pdf](https://www.pge.com/pge_global/common/pdfs/solar-and-vehicles/your-options/clean-vehicles/charging-stations/program-participants/EV-Charge-Network-2021-Q1-Report.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Sven Thesen & Associates, *Ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> Stokes, Leah (2020). *Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States*. New York; Oxford University Press. <https://www.leahstokes.com/book>

<sup>47</sup> Culpepper, P.D. (2010). *Quiet Politics and Business Power: Corporate Control in Europe and Japan*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

<sup>48</sup> Level 1 charging is from a standard 3-prong receptacle, 120 volts and 15 or 20 ampere breaker at the panel.

<sup>49</sup> For examples of third party ALMS systems, see: <https://semaconnect.com/products/load-management/> and <https://driivz.com/glossary/ev-charging-load-balancing/> and <https://evocharge.com/resources/how-electric-vehicle-charging-load-management-works/>

<sup>50</sup> See: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/building-standards/building-code/index.shtml#dev>

<sup>51</sup> Note that in California, municipalities are allowed to determine the number of parking spaces required for each newly-built housing unit. The agency calculated an average of 1.8 spaces per unit.

<sup>52</sup> See: STA Residential EconEnvi Analysis 28April 21

<sup>53</sup> The majority of CAC members are considered independent experts and come from diverse backgrounds such as architecture, code implementation, engineering, etc.

<sup>54</sup> Email from California Building Standards Commission Executive Director, Mia Marvelli, July 31, 2021



## Endnotes

- 1 Matthew 22:39
- 2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Rule)
- 3 Matthew 7:12
- 4 <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- 5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/31/opinion/republicans-biden-taxes.html>
- 6 <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/trumps-pardons-have-been-sparse-and-self-serving-and-thats-without-even-pardoning-his-kids/>
- 7 <https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/5/30/21275588/trump-policing-policies-doj-george-floyd-protests>
- 8 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewsolender/2020/09/14/trump-said-hes-cozier-with-tougher-and-meaner-dictators-calls-them-smarter-than-biden/?sh=4f94947b5392>
- 9 <https://time.com/5645501/trump-anti-immigration-rhetoric-racism/>
- 10 <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/30/940116088/supreme-court-weighs-trump-plan-to-cut-undocumented-immigrants-from-census>
- 11 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2020/dec/08/us-election-results-2020-joe-biden-defeats-donald-trump-to-win-presidency>
- 12 <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-testing-rich-people/608062/>
- 13 <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/8/7/21357400/anti-mask-protest-rallies-donald-trump-covid-19>
- 14 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>
- 15 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/health/covid-race-mortality-rate/>
- 16 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/06/15/patients-with-underlying-conditions-were-12-times-more-likely-die-covid-19-than-otherwise-healthy-people-cdc-finds/>
- 17 <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/opinion/sunday/nicholas-kristof-the-trader-who-donates-half-his-pay.html>
- 18 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/crime-and-punishment/201804/why-punishment-doesnt-reduce-crime>
- 19 <https://www.epi.org/publication/schools-are-still-segregated-and-black-children-are-paying-a-price/>
- 20 <https://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-compensation-2018/>
- 21 <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/how-many-us-deaths-are-caused-poverty-lack-education-and-other-social-factors>
- 22 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>
- 23 <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/reparations-green-new-deal-aoc/>
- 24 <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Colour-Coded-Health-Care-Sheryl-Nestel.pdf>
- 25 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/health/coronavirus-vaccine-trials-african-americans.html>
- 26 <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20181446>
- 27 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/health-indigenous-racism-miller-1.5764659>
- 28 <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/312282/9789289054096eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&ua=1>
- 29 <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2021/01/21/street-safety-groups-to-president-biden-commit-to-a-federal-vision-zero-plan/>
- 30 <https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/>
- 31 <https://wiphilanthropy.org/news/115-ways-to-donate-in-support-of-black-lives-and-communities-of-color/>
- 32 <https://grist.org/justice/solidarity-not-charity-mutual-aid-groups-are-filling-gaps-in-texas-crisis-response/>
- 33 <https://www.khalsaaid.org/news/farmers-protest-2020>
- 34 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social/rights>
- 35 <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674248663>
- 36 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6395>