CALL TO ACTION – May 6

PROTECT OUR QUALITY OF LIFE
Protect Vulnerable Families and People Who Have High Medical Expenses

HUD Secretary Ben Carson has proposed raising rents for low-income renters in public housing. The proposed changes to federal subsidies would triple the rent for the poorest households. About half of the 4.7 million families receiving housing benefits would be affected. The cap on rent for the poorest families would rise to about $150 a month. That is three times higher than the existing $50 ceiling. In addition, HUD wants to scrap rules allowing deductions for medical and child-care costs when determining rent.

Carson’s proposed bill would allow public housing authorities to impose work requirements. Currently, only 15 out of 3,100 housing authorities require some sort of work or job training in return for benefits. Seniors over the age of 65 and individuals with disabilities would be exempt from rental increases for the first six years. They would also be exempt from any work requirements.

ACTION: Call our Senators: Senator Maria Cantwell (253)572-2281 Senator Patty Murray (253)572-3636

Script for Murray and Cantwell:

My name is ____________, and I am a member of Olympia Indivisible. I am calling to express my deep concern about HUD Secretary Ben Carson’s plan to triple rent costs for millions of our nation’s most vulnerable families. His proposal would disproportionately affect families with children and people with high medical expenses. I want my tax dollars to support my neighbors in need. I am asking Senator ______________ to oppose Ben Carson’s plan and stand up for our vulnerable citizens. Thank you.

Oppose the Trump Administration’s Inhumane Efforts to force 57,000 Honduran Refugees to Leave the US

The Trump administration announced on May 4 their intent to force 57,000 Hondurans, currently living legally in this country, to return to their homeland even though it has had one of the higher homicide rates in the world since 2010. It is also politically unstable, irregularities in last November’s presidential election have led to massive street protests, which have turned violent. Many Hondurans in this country were initially granted Temporary Protected Status when Hurricane Mitch devastated their country in 1999. The Trump administration argues that Honduras has recovered from the effects of the hurricane in the last twenty years, a claim that is not generally supported, and certainly one that ignores that Honduras has become one of the more violence-torn countries in the world. Consider that the US State Department currently provides the following warnings to travelers to Honduras:

Reconsider travel to Honduras due to crime. Some areas have increased risk. Read the entire Travel Advisory.

Violent crime, such as homicide and armed robbery, is common. Violent gang activity, such as extortion, violent street crime, rape, and narcotics and human trafficking, is widespread. Local police and emergency services lack the resources to respond effectively to serious crime.
The Honduran government has expressed concern about this action as well, noting that “we deeply regret it.”

Contrary to Trump Administration myths about Central American refugees, these 57,000 people lead successful lives in the U.S. According to the Center for Migration Studies, Hondurans with protected status have 53,500 American-born children; 85 percent participate in the labor force, compared with 63 percent of the overall United States population; and nearly 20 percent have mortgages. The administration seems to acknowledge in their own decision to terminate TPS status but provide a 22 month period until the order becomes effective in order to: “To allow for an orderly transition, the effective date of the termination of TPS for Honduras will be delayed 18 months to provide time for individuals with TPS to arrange for their departure or to seek an alternative lawful immigration status in the United States, if eligible”.

**ACTION:** Contact our MOCs to let them know of your opposition to the removal of TPS protections for the Honduran refugees in our County, and to request that they take a stand against the administration’s action. Also, contact the Department of Homeland Security to voice your opposition to their decision to terminate the TPS status of 57,000 Hondurans. Their contact information is: https://www.dhs.gov/contact-us

Script for our MOCs: Hello, my name is ___________, and I am a member of Olympia Indivisible. I oppose the Trump administration war on immigrants, most recently their decision to force 57,000 Honduran refugees to return to their country even though it is politically unstable and violence-ridden. I urge (Senator Cantwell, Senator Murray, Representative Heck) to speak out against this inhumane action by an administration that seems to only care about attacking immigrants for political reasons and is unbothered by the prospect of uprooting productive residents who are living in peace here and forcing them to return to a country that our own Department of State characterizes as having “serious problems” with “crime and violence”.

Script for Department of Homeland Security: My name is ___________. I oppose the Department of Homeland Security decision to revoke the Temporary Protected Status for 57,000 Honduran residents in our country. The DHS decision to revoke TPS, based on their assessment that Honduras has largely recovered from Hurricane Mitch, does not reflect the remaining long-term damages that Mitch did to this impoverished country, and worse, completely ignores the high levels of violence and political instability that plague this poor country. The US Department of State advises that travelers “reconsider” travel to Honduras, and characterizes the country as having “serious problems” with “crime and violence”. The DHS decision to uproot 57,000 productive residents of our country and force them to return to a violence-torn country is inhumane, and should be reversed.

**SAVE OUR DEMOCRACY**

**Oppose Gina Haspel’s Nomination for CIA Director**

Gina Haspel has been nominated by Trump to be the next CIA Director. Gina Haspel was already passed over for a promotion within the CIA once before because of her tortured past. The Senate torture report indicated that the CIA committed crimes that went beyond what they were authorized to do, and they lied to Congress about the brutality and torture. Gina Haspel tried to cover up the evidence by ensuring videotapes of the torture sessions were destroyed. She was never held accountable. It is too dangerous to let Gina Haspel lead the CIA. Send a clear message to the other nations that America will stand by the 2015 McCain-Fienstein Anti-Torture Amendment and not confirm Gina Haspel for Director of the CIA. Today’s Washington Post says she may be withdrawing her nomination so keep the pressure on.

**ACTION:** Call our Senators:

Senator Maria Cantwell (253)572-2281 Senator Patty Murray (253)572-3636

**Script for Murray and Cantwell:**

My name is ____________, and I am a member of Olympia Indivisible. I am calling about the nomination of Gina Haspel. I want Senator ____________ to publicly commit to opposing this nomination. Gina Haspel carried out torture and destroyed the evidence. She is completely unqualified to lead the CIA. Please oppose her nomination. Thank you. Send a clear message to our foes and friends alike that the US will not go back to failed methods of torture by voting NO for the confirmation of Gina Haspel for Director of the CIA.
Thurston Conservation District (you will recall we got involved with the election a couple months back) is exploring the option to establish a system of “Rates and Charges”. The info below came from recently elective progressive Paul Picket. At the bottom it asks you to write, but it also requested you attend the Thurston CD Rates and Charges Hearing if you can on Thursday May 10, 6 - 8 PM at Thurston Conservation District 2918 Ferguson St SW, Ste A, Tumwater, Washington 98512

Here’s the lowdown from Paul:
Thurston Conservation District is exploring the option to establish a system of “Rates and Charges”. Many Thurston County citizens have questions about this process. Here are a few “Frequently Asked Questions” to help explain the process.

What are Rates and Charges?
Rates and Charges (R&C) are a District-wide fee levied on properties to support Thurston CD work. It’s like a property tax assessment, except instead of being based on the value of your property, it’s typically a flat fee per parcel and per acre based on land use. One possible Thurston CD proposal is for an R&C of $5/parcel and $0.10 per acre, which would generate revenues of around $600,000 per year. R&C could be in place for up to 10 years. Many of Washington’s Conservation Districts are using R&C to support their work.

Why does Thurston CD need R&C?
R&C provides a stable source of funding for Thurston CD. The funds will go towards their core work, such as water quality and quantity, protecting and restoring ecosystems, preserving working lands, property stewardship, supporting local food, building climate resilience, community outreach and education, and operations. This funding will provide about one-third of Thurston CD’s budget, the rest provided mostly by state and federal grants. R&C funding also leverages additional grants by providing local matching dollars and capacity for grant writing.

Is this new? What did Thurston CD use in the past?
Thurston CD has had a property tax assessment since 1993, and for the last 10 years it provided a similar percentage of revenue. In 2017, Thurston CD chose R&C instead of a property tax. (The legislature provided the R&C process as an alternative due to legal challenges over the fairness of a property tax for CD work.) Thurston CD’s attempts to establish R&C last year were unsuccessful when they missed critical deadlines, and the tax assessment for Thurston CD expired at the end of 2017.

What happens to Thurston CD without R&C?
In 2018, Thurston CD stabilized its budget by using carry-over funding from 2017 and delaying the hire of several vacant positions, including Executive Director. The budget shortfall has resulted in cutting back programs such as salmon recovery, stormwater treatment, low-impact development, forest management, support for local agriculture, technical support, and outreach and K-12 education. The absence of R&C in 2019 will result in deeper cuts and additional reductions and loss of services.

What is the process for Thurston CD to establish R&C in 2019
• May 10th, 6-8pm: Public hearing on proposed Thurston CD Rates and Charges.
  Thurston Conservation District, 2918 Ferguson St SW Suite A, Tumwater
• May 29th: Vote on R&C proposal at the Thurston CD Board meeting
• August 1st: Deadline to submit R&C package to Thurston County Commissioners, who must approve the package.

There are other deadlines for hearings and actions that must be met for Rates and Charges to be in place by 2019.

What can you do to support Thurston CD’s Rates and Charges?
Since both the Thurston CD Board of Supervisors and the Thurston County Board of Commissioners must approve R&C, it is critically important they hear from you that you value Thurston CD and support their Rates and Charges proposal.
• Attend public hearings and testify
• Write the Thurston CD Supervisors
• Write the Thurston County Commissioners
Let your voice be heard!


Americans of Conscience Action Checklist By Jen Hofmann has some good actions this week. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kKQ3Xyt_2u-uYRdpKngivxF_WZ9ouhhUuyqvy60PPio/edit

COMING SOON

May 10 Thursday 6 - 8 PM
Thurston CD Rates and Charges Hearing
Thurston Conservation District 2918 Ferguson St SW, Ste A, Tumwater, Washington 98512

May 11 Friday 6-8:00 pm
Olympia Indivisible Members TGIF Gathering!
Ol fellowship abounding! RJ’s Gourmet Grill 318 4th Ave E Olympia

Early Warning MARK YOUR CALENDAR
May 30 Wednesday 7 - 8:30 pm
O.I. Electoral Engagement 2018
Candidate Info to Prepare Members for OI Endorsement Vote
Room 152, Bldg. 1, Thurston County Courthouse

May 16 Wednesday 7:00pm – 8:30pm
Book Discussion: On Tyranny (Epilogue)
Northwest Olympia (contact Glen at glen.f.hubbard@gmail.com)

This week's Call to Action brought to you by Mindy Allen, Joni Brill, Karen Lichtenstein, Bill Twiet and Tom Dyer.