

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Special Edition:
* **May 19 Election Pitfalls**
* **State and City Budget Crisis**
* **Cuts that kill**

Prop 1D
Cuts to Kid's Programs

Medi[Cal cuts
SSI/SSP Cuts

Prop 1A
Spending Cap

Prop 1E
Mental Health Cuts

**SFGP Board
Recommends:**

Prop. 1A—NO NO NO
Prop. 1C—NO
Prop. 1D—NO
Prop. 1E—NO

**General Membership Meeting on the Budgets
Tuesday, April 21, 12:30—3:00 PM
Unitarian/Universalist Center, Fireside Room
1187 Franklin (near Geary)**

GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

**All meetings and events take place at 1182 Market, Rm. 203, unless otherwise noted.
All members are welcome.**

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM
Wednesday, April 1 & May 6**

**Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, April 14 & May 12**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, April 2 & May 7**

**Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM
Wednesday, April 15 & May 20**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, April 8 & May 13**

**Book Club: 10:30 AM
Monday, April 27 & May 25**

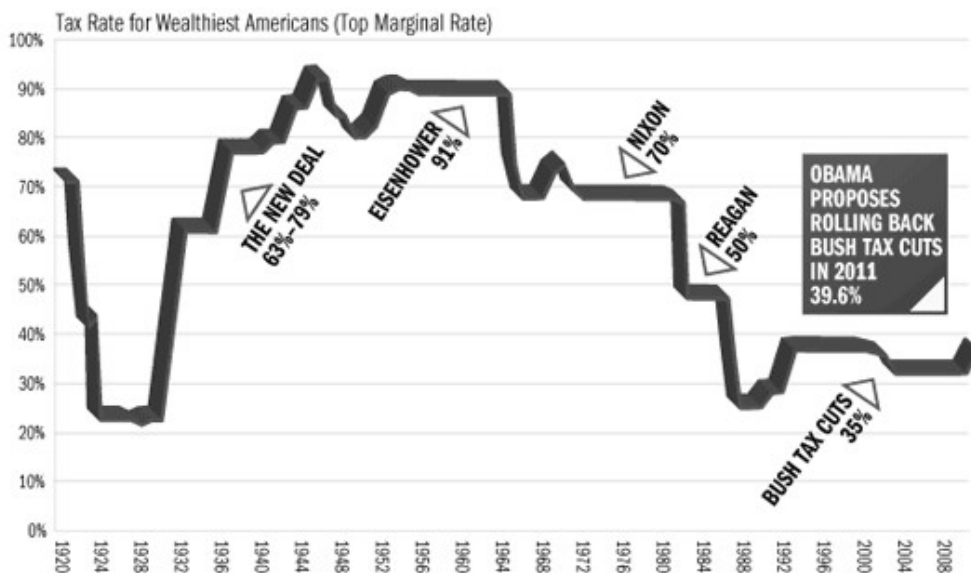
Give Us A Trillion Dollar Budget

In a check-out line last week at Big Lots, a woman waited with a shopping cart full to the top with all kinds of items. Before the cashier could announce the final total, the woman pulled out three \$10 bills and handed them over as a \$29.35 total appeared. We poor and low income people know how to budget; rich people don't have to count each penny. CEOs cry about Bail Out limitations; they can't live on a \$500,000 bonus; can't take a small tax increase on their \$250,000 a year (\$20,000 a month!) incomes. For decades the tax burden has been shifted onto the 90% of us at the economic bottom, while tax cuts went to the top one percent. The average CEO pay is 400 times that of the average worker. Giving AIG \$170 billion did nothing for the struggling 90% of us. The largest bailouts were given to the eight largest banks, including Bank of America, Citigroup, and JP Morgan Chase. These corporations are now buying up other banks, creating even larger corporations, and in their words, "*too large to fail.*" Capitulation and compromise with Republicans in Washington, Sacramento, or with the Mayor of San Francisco is no solution.

This GP newsletter and this month's meeting is devoted to exposing the state's outrageous propositions, and the injustice of cuts in the city budget.

Both are attacks on human services and programs for the majority of us. Prop 1A, the cap on spending, is just another way of reducing resources for "entitlements." Yes, we *are* entitled and expect *our* government to provide for all people's basic needs. This is the time for federal, state and local governments to combat economic depression, job losses, unemployment, hunger, homelessness and hopelessness. Yet Newsom's solution is to cut human services, lay off hundreds of workers while offering the wealthy a break on condo conversions and tax incentives to businesses. Both the Mayor and the Governor are forcing workers to give up days of pay and/or give back raises. We need more jobs and more people working at real wages.

► UNDER OBAMA'S PLAN, THE WEALTHIEST AMERICANS STILL PAY FAR LESS IN TAXES THAN UNDER REAGAN OR NIXON



GPs from San Francisco and Berkeley marched and staffed a table in the March 21 Stop the War Bring the Troops Home demonstration

Stop Cutting and Start Collecting

In July, 2008, as the state budget battle began, Democrats proposed very modest tax increases on the state's rich individuals and corporations. Incomes above \$321,000 now paying tax at 9.3% would increase to 10%; incomes above \$642,000 to 11%. This alone would generate \$5.6 billion. But, Republicans raised their usual whining about "No new taxes." Yet, top corporate taxes are now only 8.84%. Revising Prop 13 could also increase revenue. We could restore the vehicle registration fees reduced by Schwarzeneger in order to win his election.

Raise our voices with solutions Demand the services we need.
Let them know, it is still, "We the People!"



Fighting Medi-Cal Cuts, Feb. 18, 2009

Budgets, Ballot Propositions That Kill

California's recent budget agreement is a disaster for seniors, kids, people with disabilities, and low-income working families, with devastating cuts to schools, medical care, income support, home care, and many other vital services. The budget also includes \$690 million in tax cuts for big business.

But as bad and as oppressive as this state budget is, it depends on passing six May 19 Special Election Propositions, some of which are even worse than the budget itself. They must be rejected for our survival, but union opposition is fragmented and thus the responsibility for grass-roots organizing is greater.

Prop 1A, A Permanent Spending Cap. This "hard" state spending cap would make the severe cuts of the last few years permanent, including \$15 billion this year, and \$19 billion in the past three years. State spending could only increase in step with the Consumer Price Index (which is much lower than the rate of inflation for health care and social services in a depressed economy) or with increased population (which ignores other changes like increased poverty or near-doubling of the over-65 population). Regardless of future needs, the spending cap could be lifted only by a 2/3 vote in a state-wide election. Ironically, Prop 1A itself only needs a majority vote to pass. In return for permanently limiting future spending, Prop 1A extends this year's temporary increases in sales, income, and vehicle taxes from two to four years.

The complex language of Prop 1A creates a constitutional amendment limiting the amount of revenue that can be appropriated to the General Fund, which finances education, health care, and most other core services. Remaining revenue is diverted into a Budget Stabilization Fund, dedicated to defi-

cit reduction, or highly restricted rainy-day relief (or to education if companion Prop 1B passes).

If the economy recovers, future increases in state revenue above today's depressed levels would be considered "unanticipated revenue" and be diverted to the Budget Stabilization Fund, effectively freezing state spending at today's values.

The California Budget Project has calculated that if Prop 1A had been implemented in 1995, using that year's budget as base, there would have been about \$40 billion less dollars last year to pay for all state spending. In addition to freezing future state spending, Prop 1A gives the Governor the ability to cut certain spending like CalWORKs and SSI/SSP Cost-of-Living-Allowances mid-year without legislative approval.

Prop 1C, Borrowing against the Lottery. Attempts to solve the current budget gap by allowing California to borrow \$5 billion against future proceeds of the State Lottery, providing the General Fund with a lump sum now. Future profits would repay the loan and after that would go into the General Fund. Lottery profits would no longer go directly to schools. There is no limit on similar borrowings in the future against anticipated profits.

Prop 1D, Robbing Early Childhood Programs. Attempts to solve the current budget gap by allowing California to redirect \$608 million in "First 5" money, which voters set aside in 1998's Prop 10 for early childhood development. For five years, the money would be redirected to existing children's programs that are supposed to be supported by the General Fund.

Prop 1E, Robbing Mental Health . Attempts to solve the current budget gap by allowing California to divert Mental Health Services Act money, which voters set aside in 2004's Prop 63 for supplementary mental health care. For two years, the money would be redirected to existing children's mental health services that are supposed to be provided by Medi-Cal.

Vote in the May 19 election!

Prop 1A —Vote No
Prop 1C—Vote No

Prop 1D—Vote No
Prop 1E—Vote No

Crisis in SF Budget and Services

“You’re doing a heck of a job, Gavin.” San Francisco’s Chamber of Commerce and Committee on Jobs should say that to their good buddy Mayor Gavin Newsom for resisting revenue measures that could save SF’s budget from total collapse. In cities and states all over the nation, the budget crisis is being used as an excuse to permanently kill social and safety-net programs that took us decades to win.

San Francisco faces a \$576 million shortfall, half of its normal discretionary spending. Mayor Newsom has eliminated \$115 million from *this year’s* budget, 40% as devastating cuts to the Public Health Department. He has asked city workers to give back \$90 million in pay; Police officers and firefighters have already refused. He plans to take \$49 million from the Rainy Day Fund. And he plans to take 12.5% from the 2009-2010 budget of each department, for an additional \$144 million.

His so-called “plan” for the remaining \$178 million budget shortfall is a special election to lift caps on condominium conversions and sell them for \$10,000 (which won’t pass the Supervisors because it would decimate rental housing stocks), and to auction off more taxi medallions (a plan which voters have rejected over and over.)

Other proposals of Newsom’s make the budget crisis worse, not better: redirecting federal stimulus money (intended for existing health and human services from Oct. 2008 through Dec. 2010) to one-time construction and beautification; tax breaks and no-interest loans for business.

Many think Newsom’s real plan is to let the city budget crash and then force through a second round of 12.5% “contingency” cuts to all departments, making \$100 million in health cuts. Implementing this second round of cuts will mean massive contracting out and slashing of city and non-profit health, homeless, family, and other human services. At a town hall meeting on the budget crisis on March 2, the Coalition to Save Public Health presented as much as is currently known about the impact of past, present, and future cuts:

Mental Health: Total loss of outpatient care for 6,500 clients. Uninsured get only crisis care. 2+

month wait for individual outpatient care. Loss of 50+ city positions in outpatient clinics. Half of SF General Hospital acute inpatient beds lost.

Substance Abuse: Half of funding lost. Services lost for 3,500+ individuals. Treatment on Demand Ordinance redefined as only detox and methadone treatment. Loss of outpatient treatment targeting Tenderloin and Central City.

SF General Hospital: Half of nurses in General Medical Clinic and Women’s Clinic laid off. Rape Treatment Program eliminated. Untrained clerical workers substituted for clinically-trained Unit Clerks. Less-trained health workers substituted for Certified Nursing Assistants.

Laguna Honda Hospital: No more low-income seniors or disabled accepted as nursing home patients. Closure of Adult Day Health Center, where families who needed to work could bring Alzheimer patients during the day, but still have them at home at night.

Healthy San Francisco, Universal Healthcare: With layoffs at city clinics, wait time increased from 3 to 6 months. An estimated 50 members per day, many paying premiums, unable to get visits, yet program expands to include still more patients.

The Alternative:

Make the Bosses Take the Losses

1. Cut the Fat. The Coalition to Save Public Health has identified \$70 million in wasteful or unnecessary costs, including 400 managers hired since a hiring freeze, PR executives for the Mayor or departments, salaries over \$150,000, and \$1 million in police overtime investigating construction sites.
2. Pass Revenue Measures. An income tax on high-earning workers in the city, a gross receipts tax on big business, a transit assessment tax on downtown business, a realistic charge to PG&E for gas and electricity privileges, and a city vehicle tax.
3. Community/Supervisor Input and Transparency. Remove the Mayor’s right to set the total amount of the budget. Provide Supervisors and the community the same budget resources and information as the Mayor’s office.

This is *our* city, not a playground for the wealthy! Gray Panthers, we need to take it back!

The Elephant (or Donkey) in the Room

Looming unnoticed in the debate on the US financial crisis is the outsized and out-of-control military spending, which sprawls from the Pentagon to the Departments of Defense, Energy and Veterans Affairs to the so-called “black budget” of the CIA.



Everybody else is getting cut, why not the military? In a recent conference, “Security Without Empire,” Zia Mian, who directs the Princeton Project on Peace and Security in South Asia, reported that 50% of the US population believes national security threats would be diminished by reducing US military presence, now more than 1000 bases around the world. Yet the 2009 Pentagon budget is actually expected to *increase* by about 8%. (Since 2001, according to Rep. Barney Frank [D-Mass.], there’s been a 77% increase in the regular Pentagon budget.)

“Zia suggested that Obama’s version of ‘change’ in foreign policy would be manifested by outsourcing wars to local client states as we are now doing with the creation of Africa Command (AfriCom),” Bruce Gagnon writes. “The Obama administration is calling it ‘soft power’ which will translate to the US training more local troops in contested regions and the ‘interoperability’ of weapons systems where host nations purchase weapons from the US that can then be integrated into US war fighting operations by satellite and computer technology.” (“Report from Washington,” March, 2009).

Great. We can sell robotics around the world and guide them by satellite from Nevada. That’ll make us a lot of friends. What a plum for weapons contractors, whose lobbyists already hold much of DC in their sway. Our elected officials contemplate cutting Medicare, Social Security and what’s left of other safety-net programs. But would cuts even be on the table if they had the courage to confront the corrupt and tangled web of military spending?

A Terrific Meeting in March

Our March membership meeting was truly outstanding. Arranged by Virginia and Kay, it featured a panel of four speakers on labor. Kay McVay of the California Nurses Association described how the CNA morphed from a pointedly professional, non-union association into an activist union dedicated to patient advocacy and to universal single payer health care. GP member Earl Gilman, of SEIU Local 5535, drew a scathing picture of business unionism, well-paid union leaders, denying class warfare, narrowly focused on “more of the pie.” He argued strongly for local union autonomy and leadership from the bottom up; for union solidarity; for unions being part of their home communities.

Michael Rubin of SMART (SEIU Member Activists for Reform Today) brought his remarks into sharp focus by describing SEIU today. SEIU once had a weak national organization and strong locals. It has changed to a strong national office which is working hard to consolidate, dominate, and weaken locals by putting them into trusteeship, appointing their officers from above, and changing from militancy to labor-business partnerships. In San Francisco, that meant consolidating 10 locals into one, imposing new leadership, getting into bed with nursing home operators. One local group withdrew from SEIU and is organizing its own union. Another group—SMART—has stayed in SEIU and is trying to reverse its policies. Finally, we heard from Denis Mosgofian for the San Francisco Labor Council. The Council set up an Economic Crisis Committee to formulate recovery guidelines and proposals. They include: 1) Bailouts for everyday people. 2) Job retention and creation, including in the public sector, and halting overseas outsourcing. 3) No scapegoating immigrant workers. 4) Economic security—housing, health care, pension protection, wages, union organizing—Employee Free Choice Act. 5) Financing—make the rich pay their fair share. 6) Fund human needs, not war. A copy of their excellent report is in the office.

Our meetings keep getting better and better. Many thanks and kudos to Virginia and Kay and their helper Winslow for a splendid meeting.

Gray Panthers of SF

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We believe ALL people are
entitled to certain fundamental
rights:

meaningful employment
economic security
decent and affordable housing
quality health care
a life of dignity from birth to
death free from fear and abuse
a world in peace



Age and Youth in Action

Call the office for membership information.

Labor Donated

APRIL 2009

Actions and Events

Complete listing at <http://graypantherssf.igc.org/calendar.htm>.

Wednesday, April 1, Noon

St. Stupid's Day Parade—Blessing of the Banker's
Heart, Sock Exchange & The Leap of Faith
Embarcadero Plaza www.saintstupid.com

Thursday, April 2, 4:30 PM

Save Children's & Family Services in the Mission
March from Mission & 16th St. to Mission & 24th
Call Vanessa or Emily, 282-6209, x19 for info.

Tuesday, April 14, 7:30 PM

Fred Goldberg on his book, *Low-Wage Capitalism*
Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia

Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 PM

Permaculture Transformation. "How can urbanites
begin immediately to move towards self
sufficiency?" CounterPulse, 1310 Mission @ 9th

Ongoing until May 7

Exhibit: Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence—30 Years
Photographs, their holy vows & more
SF Public Library, Main Branch

Sunday, April 5, 2-4 PM

Put in Your Two Cents Worth...

...at an informal discussion of the economy
hosted by two GP members. Bring books, arti-
cles, ideas and a yummy snack to share .

Call the office or 215-7575 to RSVP and get
location and directions.



San Francisco Gray Panthers
& Unitarian Universalist Sunday Forum
Present:

Obama's First 100 Days

with Norman Solomon

Sunday May 3, 2009 9:30 AM

First Unitarian Universalist Society of SF

1187 Franklin (near Geary)

Breakfast contribution \$3