

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



*Justice for Immigrants*

## What Would *Real* Immigration Reform Look Like?

**General Membership Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 15, 12:30—3:00 PM**

**Speaker from Immigrant Alternative Legislation Working Group  
Unitarian/Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin (near Geary)**

**Bring a snack to share.**

### **GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS**

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

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM  
Wednesday, June 2 & July 7**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM  
Wednesday, June 9 & July 14**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon  
Thursday, June 3 & July 8**

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 11:00 AM  
Monday, June 14 & July 12**

**Health Committee 1:00 PM  
Tuesday, June 8 & July 13**

**Book Club 10:30 AM  
Monday, June 21 & July 26**

## Who Is to Blame for Muni's Troubles?

The local media is scapegoating Muni drivers and fare cheaters for Muni's financial woes and service cutbacks. At our May meeting, Muni driver Hedy Griffin described the life of a Muni operator: the so-called excessive pay she gets (\$28/hour), the necessity for overtime because of chronic understaffing, and the emphasis on speed and schedules over safety and passengers needs.

Muni runs 2200 buses, and carries thousands of passengers a day. Who benefits from Muni? Obviously the passengers. Just as obviously the downtown interests that get a dependable supply of employees. The passengers keep paying more and more for less and less. Why doesn't Downtown get charged for its fair share?

Is it possible that the ongoing attacks on Muni drivers and attempt to pit drivers against riders is a diversionary tactic to hide the role of downtown big business in not paying for the service they get?

## Immigrants' Rights March on May Day

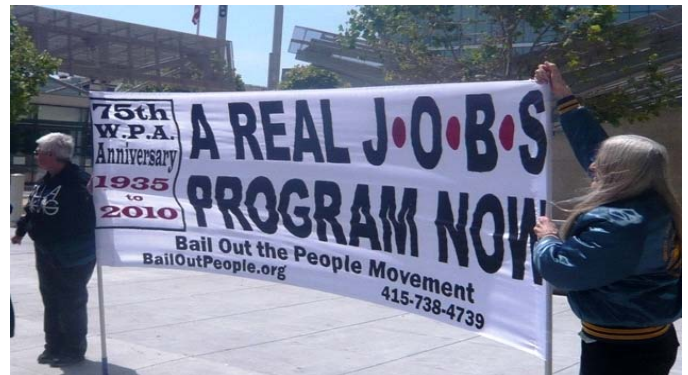
Holding signs reading "We Are All Arizona," and "Reform Now," and chanting "Las luchas obreras, no tienen fronteras" (workers' struggles have no borders), thousands of immigrant families and their supporters marched from 24th and Mission to Civic Center on May 1st, International Workers' Day. Gray Panthers were there, calling for a world without borders and sanctuary for undocumented workers in San Francisco. Demonstrations were also held in Oakland, San Jose, and Santa Cruz .



## June Meeting

At our June General Meeting we will hear from a representative from the Bay Area's Alternative Legislation Working Group, a coalition of immigrant activist groups (see page 5). Gray Panthers members have been attending meetings of the Group to educate ourselves, with an eye to possibly joining the coalition.

This is your chance to hear from local activists who are working to create real national reform and to learn what is wrong with the current bills in Congress. We need your input on our position. . Be there!



## Bail Out the People: Jobs Now!

SF Gray Panthers was part of a coalition sponsoring a *Bail Out the People* demonstration, on May 8th, the 75th anniversary of the Works Projects Administration. The demonstration, one of several across the nation, demanded a massive program of direct government hiring to combat the worst, most persistent unemployment since the 1930s Depression and rehabilitation of the nation's crumbling infrastructure of public roads, bridges, schools, housing, and hospitals. The banks and corporations say they have recovered, but tens of millions of lost jobs will never come back. Meanwhile, they want to gut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We need a real job program for today's 30 million unemployed and under-employed workers. Gray Panthers is helping continue this movement by hosting one showing of WPA videos, with more to come. Stay tuned.

Dear Board of Supervisors: Sign the implementing legislation for Community Choice Aggregation before June 8th!

## Look Before You Vote

June 8 is primary election day. In last month's newsletter, we summarized the State propositions. Here we look at the seven local measures.

**Prop A:** Schools Facilities Special Tax. It extends the current real estate parcel tax that expires this year for another 20 years. This tax helps finance seismic upgrades, structural repairs and childcare centers. Vote YES.

**Prop B:** Earthquake Safety Bonds. Provides funds to upgrade police, fire and water facilities against collapse when the next earthquake hits. Has serious accountability questions about how the money will be used. No Recommendation.

**Prop C:** Film Commission. Streamlines the permitting process to shoot films in San Francisco. Changes how the film commission is appointed—currently all eleven commissioners are appointed by the Mayor—to six by the Mayor and five by the Supervisors, and requires that said commissioners meet certain qualifications to serve. Vote YES.

**Prop D:** City Employee Retirement Benefits. Changes the salaries on which pensions are calculated from last year's salary to the last two years to cut down on "spiking" - a sudden jump in salary in the last year before retirement. Vote YES.

**Prop E:** Budget Line Items for Police Security. Requires city budget report on how much is spent on security for city officials and visiting dignitaries. A public right to know issue. Vote YES.

**Prop F:** Renters Financial Hardship Applications. Allows renters in financial trouble to apply to the Rent Board to delay rent hikes. Vote YES.

**Prop G:** Transbay Transit Center. This is a policy recommendation—the will of the voters but with no teeth—to bring the proposed bullet train service from LA to SF to the downtown transit terminal. It is a moot point now because the High Speed Rail Authority has voted to do just that. Let them know you agree. Vote YES.

<b>Prop 13: YES</b>	<b>Meas. A: YES</b>
<b>14: NO</b>	<b>B: None</b>
<b>15: YES</b>	<b>C: YES</b>
<b>16: NO</b>	<b>D: YES</b> <b>F: YES</b>
<b>17: NO</b>	<b>E: YES</b> <b>G: YES</b>

Fewer voters turn out for June primaries than for general elections in November. That makes your vote count more. Be sure and vote this June.

## Join the UDHR Players!



The UDHR Players gave three performances in April, and one in May, bringing our message about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to audiences at Vintage Retirement House, Coventry Park Assisted Living Residence, the Marin Gray Panthers meeting at the Redwoods in Mill Valley and a large fundraising affair for the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute in Corte Madera. Gray Panthers Ruth Prinz and Marge Lee and good friend Joan Marie Shelley helped set them up.

Our Civil Liberties/Human Rights Committee invites you to join us as part of these presentations. We always need readers. We also need bookings and your help in finding and facilitating them.

### Letter to Assemblyman Tom Ammiano

When we present our UDHR dramatization, we ask our audiences to sign the following letter:

Dear Tom:

In 1998, under your sponsorship, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted the Universal Declaration of Human rights. Now we are asking you to take this a step further to get the UDHR incorporated as part of the State Constitution.

Three years ago, the San Francisco Gray Panthers' Human Rights committee met with you regarding our interest in expanding the reach of the UDHR. We were encouraged by your support of our focus on human rights,. You offered then to do for the State what you did for San Francisco: to work to incorporate the UDHR as part of Article 1 of the California State Constitution.

We have prepared a program about the UDHR and Eleanor Roosevelt's part in its drafting and passage. In order to mobilize grass roots support for this project, we are presenting this program to various groups in the Bay Area.

We are asking you to introduce legislation into the Assembly to make the UDHR part of our State Constitution.

The SF Gray Panthers Human Rights Committee

## SF Town Hall: Hands Off Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid!

Seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income people met May 8 at a Town Hall meeting to prepare a defense for Social Security and Medicare. The meeting was sponsored by CARA, Gray Panthers-SF, OWL, SAN, SEIU 1021 Retirees, and United Educators-SF. Similar meetings are being held elsewhere, coordinated by CARA.

In the name of deficit reduction, Congress, the President, business, and the media are calling for significant benefit cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The President's Deficit Commission is heavily stacked with members who are either openly hostile to these programs or who believe they must be sacrificed in the national interest. The Commission's report is due Dec. 1.

Multi-billionaire Peter Peterson, a notorious opponent of these programs, recently hosted a Fiscal Summit featuring Bill Clinton, members of the President's Deficit Commission, plus Robert Rubin and Alan Greenspan, whose policies of deregulation led to our current fiscal crisis and the huge deficit that supposedly requires cutting these programs. Peterson now plans nationwide public meetings to build support, on June 26 in various cities, including San Jose. We'll be outside.

Obama and Peterson both lie. The truth is this: (1) The financial difficulties of these programs are greatly exaggerated. (2) They can be stabilized without privatization or benefit cuts. (3) Seniors, kids, the poor, and people with disabilities depend on these programs for survival. (4) Recipients of Social Security and Medicare hospitalization have already paid for their benefits. (5) These programs are not responsible for the fiscal deficits. Actually, their surpluses were appropriated to hide the real deficits caused by wars, upper-income tax cuts, and bank bailouts. Hands Off Social Security!



## When Will They Ever Learn?

In 1969, a massive oil spill off Santa Barbara's coast led to the declaration of Earth Day, and the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA. The NEPA mandates thorough environmental assessments *before* issuing any major off shore drilling permits. Yet, Interior Secretary Salazar has given 500 drilling permits without these reviews. Just days before the April 20th Deepwater Horizon explosion, BP lobbied for an exception and was granted one by Salazar after assuring him a major oil spill in the area was unlikely, and wouldn't reach the coast.



BP has the worst safety record in the world. They have paid \$750 million in fines and were put on probation

in 2007 for a 200,000 gallon spill in Alaska. Why then is BP the lead of this massive clean up operation? They have never developed a disaster plan. Norway and Brazil require off shore drilling emergency systems, but the US doesn't even require shut-off valves for blow-outs, and BP, making \$6 billion every three months, doesn't bother to install them for only a half-million each. At this point the oil spill, on-going for weeks, has exceeded the Exxon Valdez disaster. BP's solutions, from spewing chemicals over the ocean with hydrogen sulfides at 100 times over safety rates, lowering a gigantic iron box onto the ocean floor, and shoving ocean detritus into the blow hole, have been disasters themselves.

Let's just say NO. No more oil drillings, no coal fire plants, no nuclear power plants. Sustainable, earth-friendly alternatives exist. Indigenous peoples all over the world have existed in harmony with Pachamama for thousands of years. Evo Morales' UN initiative states: "The right to life, which signifies the right to exist. The right of which not one ecosystem, neither one species of animal nor vegetable, not one snow-capped mountain, neither river nor lake would be exterminated or eliminated by an irresponsible attitude of human beings....Mother Earth has to be able to regenerate her bio-capacity...the right to a clean life, which means the right of Mother Earth to live without pollution...the right to harmony and balance with all and among all." ([http://axisoflogic.com/artman/publish/Article\\_55711.shtml](http://axisoflogic.com/artman/publish/Article_55711.shtml))

## **We Want *Real* Immigration Reform**

“My God, this is like a repeat of the health bill!” exclaimed someone. Scores of Northern California immigrant rights activists, were discussing the two “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” plans in Congress, both of which allow employers to hire highly-exploitable “guest” workers; both demand tracking down and expelling undocumented immigrants; both beef up the borders; and both have unworkable paths to legalization.

The Bay Area’s Alternative Legislation Working Group, a coalition of immigrant activist groups, has worked a year on a 20-page plan for real immigration reform. This May 15th meeting was to introduce their plan and use it to raise consciousness of what genuine reform would be, and to demonstrate the glaring faults and dangers of the “CIR-ASAP” bill of Rep. Luis Gutierrez, and especially of the developing “REPAIR” proposal of Sen. Charles Schumer, and Obama.

Although the Alternative Legislation plan has attracted attention from immigrant advocates nationally, more mainstream immigrant advocates favor the Congressional plans because they are “possible.” After seeing the debate over health reform, these dynamics should be familiar to us.

The Schumer plan proposes an intensification of raids, detentions, deportations and militarism of the border; a biometric national identity card that everyone, including U.S. citizens, would have to carry; people working without papers would be fired and imprisoned; guest worker programs expanded; and legalization that penalizes current undocumented workers.

The Gutierrez bill increases border militarization, enforcement, raids and deportations; mandates an “Employment Verification System” (E-Verify) requiring all employers to fire workers whose names do not match their Social Security numbers; sets up a commission to analyze labor needs as a step toward a guest worker program; and its legalization offers benefits to some, but criminalizes the vast majority of undocumented immigrants.

Our June meeting will feature proposals for a different immigration policy that will emphasize equality and justice.

## **Sanctuary City—Alas**

We have been reporting on San Francisco policy regarding forwarding to immigration authorities the names of juveniles accused of felonies but not convicted thereof. Today we are talking about adults. San Francisco’s Sanctuary City policy gave City officials discretionary power on reporting adults. As of June, San Francisco will lose that discretionary ability. Under the Department of Homeland Security program called “Secure Communities,” the fingerprints of all adults booked into County Jail for whatever reason will be automatically added to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) database. Both Sheriff Hennessey and six members of the Board of Supervisors have urged the state and local officials to opt out of the Secure Communities program. ICE claims there is no “opting out.”

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” In the name of protecting us from terrorism—the never-ending war—the Department of Homeland Security is using fear to undermine all our individual rights under the Bill of Rights. The Department of Homeland Security = Department of Personal Insecurity. Big Brother is watching you ever more closely.

## **Wealth Tax Anyone?**

In 2007 America’s 400 richest households reported their highest incomes and lowest tax rates on record, largely the results of capital gains tax cuts in 1997 (Clinton) and 2003 (Bush).

Here are a few examples of Health Insurance executives: salaries, bonuses, stock options:

Ronald Williams (Aetna, Inc.) \$47,345,946 for 2008-2009, \$64,857/day, \$2702/hr, every day, every hour of the year  
H. Edward Hanway (Cigna) \$25,839,777 in 2007, \$12,236,740 in 2008  
Stephen Hansly (United Health) \$13,164,529 in 2007, \$3,241,243 in 2008  
Michael McCallister (Humana) \$10,312,557 in 2007, \$4,764,309 in 2008  
Angela Braley (Wellpoint) \$9,094,271 in 2007 \$9,844,212 in 2008, \$13,200,000 in 2009

I could live on that!

## Gray Panthers of SF

1182 Market Street, Room 203  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4916  
415-552-8800  
graypanther-sf@sbcglobal.net  
http://graypantherssf.igc.org

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
San Francisco, CA  
Permit No. 12977

ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED

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

**JUNE 2010**

## Actions and Events

### Wednesday, June 2, 7:00 PM

Anti-Nuclear Weapons Campaign  
Speaker: Jackie Cabasso of Western States Legal  
Foundation, sponsored by WILPF  
Friends Meeting House, 65 9th Street

### Thursday, June 3, 11:30 AM

March for State Budget Justice! Take it to the  
Streets! Speak out for a budget that benefits the  
people, not big corporations!  
Powell Street BART, Powell and Market  
Info lieu@health-access.org

### Friday, June 4, 12:00—1:00 PM

Nuclear Abolition Day, a day of global action  
against war profiteers. Demonstration at Bechtel,  
50 Beale Street. Sponsored by Tri-Valley-Cares.

### Sunday, June 6, 11:00 AM—1:00 PM

Nancy Pelosi speaks @ Mark Hopkins  
One Nob Hill Circle. Probable demo outside  
\$35 to attend inside, a sign to attend outside.



### Saturday, June 26, 10:00 AM—Noon

OWL SF June Meeting, 870 Market Street  
Understanding the New Health Reform Package:  
What It Will Mean to You—with Ellen Shaffer,  
Co-director of the Center for Policy Analysis



Joel Pett, SF Chronicle May 19, 2010