

The People's Budget invests in safe and productive infrastructure, education, affordable housing, health care and nutrition, childcare and working-family tax credits. It calls for increasing the minimum wage.

These investments will create 3.6 million jobs, and set us on a path to cut poverty in half in 10 years. The People's Budget invests \$2 trillion in infrastructure spending, expanding rural broadband, universal Pre-K and free college tuition at state and community colleges.

Every year without fail, our elected representatives give more than half of the discretionary budget to the Pentagon, leaving less than half to be divided up to fund education, health care, environmental spending, infrastructure and everything else.

Charles Hung
Eugene

DEPORTATION DAMAGE

Deportation puts added pressure on students, their teachers and schools. PTSD, so-called "scripts of silence," isolation, depression and panic attacks roll through besieged communities — of the nation's 50 million public school students, about 10 percent have one or two undocumented parent(s). Most are U.S. citizens, and may stay when the parent(s) go, or go when the option to stay was open: a de facto *deportation* into the war zones of spoils, extortion, slavery and random, arbitrary death.

Policy is wonky and unsatisfactory to anyone because it is a wrong policy built awkwardly to fit around untruths. Immigration is political, not criminal, but the point is moot when mercenaries, gangs, corruption and structural unemployment inevitably push people to the fabled land where cessation of hunger and the beginning of existential safety is blatantly advertised with every cell phone upgrade, pop song, blockbuster movie, designer jeans.

We have plenty of everything, but it's in the hands of a few billionaires who think they are fixing the world *just fine* by starving it to death ... like Jack and the Beanstalk, the Giant kills children with the audacity to steal crumbs.

Jesse Cox
Eugene

KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

An activist and a poet, I have some-

times twisted both together into barbed-wire arguments for our general freedom, often doubling as a plea for friends who have less of it than I enjoy.

But we are caught in the snarling teeth of this administration, in the sinking ship of democracy, in the wide-eyed, breast-beating violence they sharpen and wield against us lovers of democratic life — against anyone with the audacity to love.

I sometimes feel an obligation to write something, anything. To witness. To document. To kick against these pricks. To throw out the hazelnut-latte liberals clogging up the coffee shops where we used to brew up revolution and revelation. Let us empty those pots and fill these streets.

But I'm silent inside. There is a dull, aching soundlessness living inside me now. Ten years — organizing 80 hours a week and getting paid for 40 — has come to this:

A country where gasoline bigotry pours out from shore to shore.
One matchstick man, his head lit up like orange flame, dropped down onto our oil fields of impatient hate.
A single prayer:
after all the burning,
let there remain some breathing life under the heaps of smoldering char — the place I used to live and call my home.

Steve Coatsworth
Eugene

SOME RELY ON POETRY

Freedom of thought.
Freedom of speech.
Some rely on lies and some yell
impeach.

The gulf in between has been filled with hate.

How did it become so hard to make this nation great?

Racism, false facts and greed.

Those who want more ignoring those in need.

I hope I never rise me up just to bring another down ...

For no matter who we are ... our feet all meet the ground.

I hope I walk lightly and never understand why you would demean another instead of holding out a hand ...

Melissa Hasforth Quinn
Springfield

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