

Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to news@portlandobserver.com.

OPINION

You Can Vote Every Day – With Your Dollars

The power from your wallet

BY ELEANOR GREENE

All shopping is not created equal — we all have our preferred soaps and phone brands. I'd rather walk a bit further to my favorite grocery store than the closer one at the end of the block.

Sometimes these choices are based on convenience, familiarity, quality, or price. But how often are they based on the impact they'll make on the world?

Since I started learning about environmentalism, I've discovered the dark sides of products I'd been blissfully ignorant of — like that they come from companies with no regard for the environment, or they're made by people



who don't get a living wage. With politics the way they are, it can feel like big business will soon be able to get away with anything. It can all seem unbearable, and it's not possible to campaign 24/7 — making dozens of phone calls a week or marching every weekend.

So how can I make sure my purchases aren't undermining my values?

By voting with my dollars. Voting with your dollars can be done every day. It's a goal, but it's flexible.

For example, I buy fair trade coffee. It might cost a dollar more, but I know the farmers who grew those beans in Ethiopia, Colombia, or Peru are making a wage they can get by on. Fair Trade works by paying a premi-

um to producers, which is then reinvested into improving the farm or community.

It's a start at least. I could take another step and buy coffee from a local business instead of the chain I go to. I also shop at a grocery chain, but I could do better by going to local businesses or farmer's markets more often. I buy organic dairy and eggs, but if I had a bigger budget I'd go all organic.

When I learned that my bank doesn't treat customers well — and worse, loans money for fossil fuel projects — I changed to a local credit union. It's not like I'm making so much that a big bank will miss me. But in a credit union, my money goes into home loans, local businesses, and development I support.

Last fall, during the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline, we

learned that big banks including Sun Trust and Wells Fargo were giving loans to the company building it.

Now at least I know I'm not supporting that project. And if you write or call your bank when you leave explaining why, they'll know, too.

We can't expect ourselves to be perfect, but we can push ourselves to be better.

Sometimes voting with your dollar means keeping it in your wallet. Every dollar you don't spend on junk is a dollar you can put in a community bank or credit union to finance jobs, housing, and social services that every community needs. Or it can be donated to a charity that helps the less fortunate, combats hate, or takes action on climate change.

The organization I work for is trying to build a green economy. That means more than trying to

avoid supporting harmful corporations — it means actively supporting businesses that adopt green practices, grow local economies, and pay suppliers fairly.

Where you shop and what you buy send a direct message to business owners. If enough of us shift our spending and investments at once, it can force large corporations to reconsider their supply chains and business practices. And it can help small businesses stay afloat.

It can be hard to feel like your voice matters when you vote. But your money has the power to support Earth-friendly practices, fair wages, healthy food, and local economies. It has that power every time you reach for your wallet.

Eleanor Greene is the associate editor of publications at Green America. Distributed by OtherWords.org.

A Prayer for Advocates for Children, Families

Fighting for just policies and practices

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Below is a prayer for child advocates. Teachers and school administrators are always on the front lines advocating for children so maybe one of them could use this today as they prepare for the new school year. They are not alone.

Parents and grandparents and all who care for chil-



dren and strive to be good role models for them are child advocates. Doctors, social workers and others who work with and serve children are child advocates. Librarians and coaches are child advocates. Political leaders who put children first are child advocates.

And all are joined by the millions of people, with or without children of their own, who spend time and talent fighting for just policies and practices that help children and families and all who are vulnerable and needy.

A Child Advocate's Beatitudes

(INSPIRED BY CLARENCE JORDAN'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT)

Blessed are the poor in spirit — who do not measure themselves by money or worldly power but who ask God for what they need and are not mired in pride — for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are those who mourn — who are concerned about the needs of children and the poor and others in need who cannot speak for themselves — for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek — who do not seek only their own good but their neighbors' too — for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness — who do not work for the praise of others or earthly gain or fame and share gladly their talents, energy and money — for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful — who know they are sinners and are dependent on God's and others' forgiveness every minute of every day — for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart — who are not hypocrites but who struggle to live what they preach — for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers — who do not prepare for war while talking about peace, who do not kill others in order to stop killing, who do not love just those who love them but reach out to make their enemies friends — for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake — who do not run or waver in the face of criticism, threats, or death — for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who speak kindly and not meanly of others — who do not tear down others but build them up for the kingdom's work and children's well-being — for they shall receive their reward.

Blessed are the just — who do not adhere to the letter of the law and regulations for some but ignore them for others — for they will hear God's well done.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund.

1480 KBMS

Take Us To Work, Home Or Play

Listen Live At Portlandmedium.com
(Click On KBMS icon)

<p>MONDAY - FRIDAY</p> <p>12 Midnight - 3 A.M. MIKE SHANNON</p> <p>3 A.M. - 7 A.M. TOM JOYNER</p> <p>7 A.M. - 10 A.M. TONI TERRELL</p> <p>10 A.M. - 1 P.M. REV. AL SHARPTON (KEEPING IT REAL)</p> <p>1 P.M. - 3 P.M. KENNY SMOOV</p> <p>3 P.M. - 7 P.M. D.L. HUGHLEY</p> <p>7 P.M. - 9 P.M. PAPA SMURF</p> <p>9 P.M. - 12 Midnight MIKE SHANNON</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p> <p>12 Midnight - 3 A.M. MIKE SHANNON</p> <p>3 A.M. - 6 A.M. TOYA BEASLEY</p> <p>6 A.M. - 12 NOON SUNDAY MORNING GOSPEL W/ANGELA</p> <p>12 NOON - 1 P.M. HIGHLAND C.C. LIVE BROADCAST</p> <p>1 P.M. - 4 P.M. PAPA SMURF</p> <p>4 P.M. - 12 Midnight DOUGLAS WILLIAMS</p>
--	--



Rev. Al Sharpton
10am - 1pm



Tom Joyner
3am - 7am



D. L. Hughley
3pm - 7pm



Portland's best music station

Advertise with diversity
in The Portland Observer

Call 503-288-0033 or email ads@portlandobserver.com